

January • February • March 2012



AMERICAL JOURNAL

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

The Birth Of the Americal



UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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Commanders Comments By Jay Flanagan



Elections

Please be sure to vote in the elections. This is your Association, vote for your leadership.

Facebook

Our Facebook Page has become quite popular. We have 273 members and more are joining us every week. There are posts about how to get records and help with VA benefits. Pictures of LZs, squads, platoons, reunions and memorabilia are posted for sharing. If you have internet access consider joining us and possibly find helpful information and old friends.

One new member is the young daughter of a Company G, 75th Infantry (Ranger) Battalion which was attached to the 196th LIB. Her father died in an accident a few years back and is looking for information on her father's service. Like many of us, he didn't speak about it to her very much. His name is Vincent Scotti. If you served with him consider joining the Facebook page to communicate with her. If you don't wish to join Facebook contact me and I'll pass on whatever you can tell me to Ariel Scotti.

Legacy Committee/2012 Reunion

Ron Ellis and Roger Gilmore have done a great job putting together this year's reunion in Atlanta, GA. The reunion, September 13-15, 2012 will include the dedication of our Americal Monument memorial at the Fort Benning/National Infantry Museum Walk of Honor. There is more information and forms in this issue and on our website: <http://www.americal.org>. For website information go to www.americal.org, then to **PROGRAMS**, then to **REUNIONS**. A registration form can be completed and downloaded for printing. This is the same form as in this issue of the Americal Journal. Be sure to make your hotel and event registrations early.

Website Upgrade

Dutch DeGroot has redesigned the website to make it easier to navigate and help ensure the privacy of our members. Gary Noller did an outstanding job with the original site but it was not his area of expertise so Dutch helped out. We appreciate Gary's fine work in the past and how it helped the Association to reach out to many, like myself, who may never have found the ADVA and many of my old friends without it.

As you will see, Dutch has done a great job upgrading our website and we cannot thank him enough for doing this. I think this will continue to be a great means for other Americal Veterans to find us. The change in the website is a work in progress. Check back often to see how the new features can be used and of benefit to you.

Reunions in the future

Ron Green is putting together the finishing touches for the 2013 reunion in Nashville, TN. The dates are tentatively September 11 through 13, 2013. That should be a great reunion at a very entertaining city.

1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment

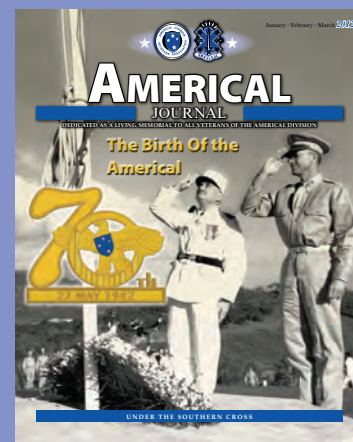
I'm glad to report the Friends of the 182nd Regiment (FF-182) has been very active in supporting the troops since they've been deployed to Afghanistan. Most recently, in Massachusetts, FF-182 attended Walpole's Veteran's Day ceremonies and held a packing event at Blackburn Hall. Over 100 volunteers attended and over 360 boxes were packed with items to send to Afghanistan to assist the 182nd in their humanitarian mission.

If you missed or don't remember my previous story, the 182nd was one of the Infantry Units that, along with the Artillery and other units made up the original Americal Division in the South Pacific in World War II. My wife, Mary Ann, and I attended their send off in Boston College's Conte Forum. We hope to attend the welcome home celebration if invited and we are not previously committed.

By-law amendments

There will probably be two amendments for your consideration on the ballot this year. As I write this the Executive Council is in the process of reviewing them for comment. One amendment would add the 182nd Infantry Regiment, if they so desire, to our field of membership. The other would create the post of Assistant National Adjutant.

The first would recognize the 182nd and their ties to the Americal Division. Since they are veterans it will not affect our status as a Veterans Association. Rich Scales made the motion at last years annual meeting and it was approved to be pursued by the members there. While I don't remember who made the motion for the second but it was approved to be pursued by the membership also. This will give us a succession plan for the very important National Adjutant position. I recommend approval for both amendments.



Cover: H.M. Montchamps, Governor of New Caledonia and Maj. Gen. Alexander Patch presents a salute at the French Memorial Day ceremony in Noumea, New Caledonia

Adjutant's Notes

By Roger Gilmore

We are now in the second year of the second decade of the 21st Century. Time does fly. I sincerely hope all ADVA members and Americal Division veterans had a happy and healthy 2011 holiday season and are enjoying a prosperous and happy 2012.

For the past reporting period the association added thirty eight new members to the ADVA roster. This is a very good increase in new members during a typically a slow period for adding new members. Life members increased by sixteen, and four of those sixteen are new to the association. Twelve of the new members were signed up and sponsored by member Dutch DeGroot. All but one of these are veterans who served with the 23rd MP Company in Vietnam. Member Mark Deam sponsored one of his buddies for membership and his first year dues.

Only one Americal Division veteran from the World War II era joined our ranks since the last Americal Journal issue. His name is Thomas Halprin, and his membership was sponsored by his son, Patrick.

We welcome back into the association seven former members who sent dues payments for reinstatement.

We are seeing a steady increase in annual pay members upgrading to Life member status since the association lowered the Life member dues for both age levels this past September. The new rates by age level are published on the back cover of this issue. Annual pay members wishing to upgrade to Life member status can send a check for the amount that applies based on your age to PNC Ronald R. Ellis, the ADVA Assistant Finance Officer. Ronald's mailing address is listed on the back cover of this issue.

I encourage all annual pay members to consider upgrading your membership status to Life. The new lower rates make a Life membership upgrade a great value.

If you move or change your mailing address for any reason, please remember to send me your new mailing address. This helps keep the association's mailing costs down and ensures you continue to receive all ADVA correspondence in a timely manner. Sending your address change to me by email costs you and the association nothing. See the staff directory inside the front page for my email address. A telephone call is also an option for notifying me of an address change. My cell phone number is listed in the Command Staff section of the directory.

ADVA MEMBERSHIP

31 January 2012

World War II	445
Vietnam	2,456
Cold War	10
Associate Members:	170
Total Members	3,081

New Members

Dan Anderson

23rd Admin Co
Henderson, NV

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Douglas L. Anderson

1st/1st Cav
Santa Fe, TX

★ Toribio Sonora

Arthur Belaughter

6/56th Arty
Biloxi, MS

★ Self

Mitchell R. Bober

723rd Maint Bn Co C
Lancaster, VA

★ Self

Stan Cottrell

196th LIB 3/21st Inf
Pasco, WA

★ David Eichhorn

John Crowley

23rd MP Co
North Wildwood, NJ

★ PNC Dutch DeGroot

Robert L. Darbee

23rd MP Co
Ludowici, GA

★ PNC Dutch DeGroot

James M. Dehlin

1st/1st Cav
Roscommon, MI

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Thomas E. Dolan, III

11th LIB 1/20th Inf
E New Market, MD

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

James W. Emmer

198th LIB D/5/46th Inf
Waretown, NJ

★ Robert M. Holt

Steven Foster

11th LIB HHC
Black Mountain, NC

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Larry L. Hall

23rd MP Co
Nespelem, WA

★ PNC Dutch DeGroot

Thomas J. Halpin

QM Truck Co
Wilbraham, MA

★ Patrick Halpin

Thomas M. Hayes

196th LIB 2/1st Inf
Manassas, VA

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

William J. Heddleston

1st/1st Cav
Dover, OH

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Cecil C. Hoffman

11th LIB HHC
Clarksville, TN

★ Self

Dick Kinder

198 LIB HHC
Procious, WV

★ Mark Deam

Larry Larmon

23rd MP Co
Pryor, OK

★ PNC Dutch DeGroot

Robert L. Latham

198th LIB A/5/46th Inf
Knoxville, TN

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Delbert McGlone

23rd MP Co
Vanceburg, KY

★ PNC Dutch DeGroot

Jim McGowan

11th LIB 3/1st Inf
Quincy, MA

★ Dave Orndorff

Joseph P. Meineke

51st Inf Rgmt Co E
Prospect Heights, IL

★ PNC Dutch DeGroot

John Papp

196th LIB C/3/21st Inf
Akron, OH

★ Gary Jenkins

Frank Prickett

198th B/1/52nd Inf
Millville, PA

★ Self

Joseph Salopek

198th LIB A/5/46th Inf
Chico, CA

★ Tim Woodville

Joseph J. Sheridan

11th LIB B/1/20th Inf
Philadelphia, PA

★ Self

Bobby R. Stepp

23rd MP Co
Raymond, WA

★ PNC Dutch DeGroot

John Sutton

198th LIB
Skaneateles, NY

★ PNC Dutch DeGroot

Eddie Thornton

23rd MP Co
Carthage, MS

★ PNC Dutch DeGroot

Arthur Wagner

23rd MP Co
Temperance, MI

★ PNC Dutch DeGroot

Eddy Woody
23rd MP Co
Athens, TN
★ *PNC Dutch DeGroot*

John Young
23rd MP Co
Ford City, PA
★ *PNC Dutch DeGroot*

New Life Members

Harry Craig
23rd Med Bn
Cookville, TN
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Frank L. Gangi
1/82nd Arty HHB
Sarasota, FL
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Thomas Newbauer
11th LIB D/4/3rd Inf
Cedar City, UT
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Homer A. Stephens
26th Engrs Co B
Marysville, PA
★ *Self*

Floyd C. Dunton
198th LIB B/5/46th Inf
Chico, CA
★ *Self*

Stanley W. Elliott
HHC/1/52nd Inf
Prineville, OR
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Allen Feser
23rd MP Co
Lindenhurst, NY
★ *Larry Gelnett*

Michael Gresko
3/16th Arty A Btry
Yardville, NJ
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Charlie C. Kennerly, III
198th LIB C/1/6th Inf
Coldspring, TX
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Dennis L. Martzall
26th Cmbt Engrs Co A
Ephrata, PA
★ *Self*

Michael E. Miller
11th LIB
Laurelville, OH
★ *Self*

Michael J. Murphy
196th LIB C/3/21st Inf
Daphne, AL
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Charles M. O'Neal
11th LIB C/3/1st Inf
Darlington, SC
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Ray Phillips
198th LIB
Niles, MI
★ *Michael Matalik*

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

Spyder Wecal
198th LIB A/5/46th Inf
Melbourne, FL
★ *Don Ballou*

Re-instated Members

Tom Ellis
196th B/2/1st Inf
Columbus, OH
★ *PNC R. Castronova*

Leif J. Gardner
198th LIB A/1/6th Inf
Kewaksum, WI
PNC Gary L. Noller

Philip A. George
39th Cmbt Engrs Co B
Carthage, MO
★ *PNC David W. Taylor*

Phil Horsch
198th LIB D/1/52nd Inf
Plano, TX
★ *PNC Ed Marsh*

Henry C. Van Horn
174th Avn Co
S. Daytona, FL
★ *Bob Kapp*

Gerald Widiker
23rd MP Co
Milwaukee, WI
★ *Rich Merlin*

Melvin Winters
132nd ASHC
Midland Park, NJ
★ *Self*

TAPS

World War II Veterans

Stanton A. Coleman*
247th FA
Norwalk, IA
November 29, 2011

Guido J. Dinucci
Unit Unknown
W. Hartford, MA
January 19, 2012

Paul Guzie *
164th Inf Rgmt Co K
Gladstone, OR
October 22, 2011

Edward Loeb *
21st Recon
Albamarle, NC
October 22, 2011

Frank D. Mader *
221st FA
La Crescent, MN
Date Unknown

William E. Porter *
182nd Inf Rgmt Co H
Wilbraham, MA
November 8, 2011

Oliver P. Smelcer
132nd Inf Rgmt
Burney, CA
December 15, 2011

Arthur S. Tersen
57th Engr Bn Co A
E Troy, WI
October 22, 2011

Gordon Vander Molen*
182nd Inf Rgmt Co G
East Pointe, MI
December 25, 2011

Eric J. Wadleigh*
247th FA
Sun Lakes, AZ
September 1, 2011

Veachel L. Williams
Unit Unknown
Madison, TN
January 11, 2012

Perry M. Woener*
Special Service Co
Fredericksburg, TX
December 4, 2011

Vietnam Veterans

Charles E. Gifford*
3/18th Arty C Btry
Carroll, IA
August 6, 2009

George W. Jones*
198th LIB B/5/46th Inf
Cameron, TX
January 3, 2012

James H. Lauderdale*
Unit Unknown
Tucson, AZ
July 14, 2006

Francis E. Martin*
198th LIB B/1/52nd Inf
Beaver Island, MI
Date Unknown

James R. Matthews
196th LIB
Montgomery, AL
January 8, 2012

Floyd C. Nicholas*
23rd MP Co
Liberty, MO
January 6, 2012

Norman L. Robinson*
Division HDQ
Tucson, AZ
December 5, 2011

Jack R. Saffell, Jr.
Unit Unknown
W Des Moines, IA
December 6, 2011

Jim Scott*
523rd Sig Bn
Henderson, TN
October 16, 2011

James P. Wylie
1/14th Arty
Galveston, TX
September 29, 2011

Associates

Carl S. Spinosa*
Associate
Clearwater, FL
August 29, 2011

**ADVA Member*

Monument Construction Commences

By Roger Gilmore;
Legacy Committee Chairman

Our efforts to construct a first-class monument to the veterans of the Americal Division made significant progress in the last three months. We are on schedule to dedicate the memorial during the national reunion in September 2012.



**The National Infantry Museum
Monument The Work Begins**

That long awaited day for the construction start on the Americal monument arrived in December. Workers poured the concrete base along the Walk of Honor at the National Infantry Museum near Ft. Benning.

The Columbus, GA area enjoyed good weather in December. This allowed for an early start for the construction. Columbus Monument Company commissioned their concrete sub-contractor to go on-site and prepare the site for pouring the concrete Americal monument base.

The contractor erected the forms for the outer perimeter of the monument base on December 8 and the concrete pour was completed on December 9. The photo above shows the finished concrete base for the monument. It is complete with entry walkway from the main Walk of Honor.

Construction: On to the Next Phase

The next phase in construction is the procurement of the gray granite stone tablets and black tablet overlays needed for the monument pedestals. In January 2012 Columbus Monument advised us that this phase was in progress. Workers cut the stone and removed them from the quarry. The monument stone is in the prepping area at Columbus Monument for final cutting and polishing. The black overlays will be etched with the Americal Division history text and the and regimental and brigade crests.

The foundry completed the cast bronze plaques for the Americal shoulder patch pedestal and the two memorial benches. The foundry delivered these items to Columbus Monument in January. The benches will be placed on the concrete slab in front of the monument.

Monument Funding

The Legacy Committee mailed the third edition of its key fund raising program, the 2012 Americal calendar, in November 2011. And again, you the ADVA membership, have responded in generous fashion. Through January 31, 2012 we have raised just over \$17,000.00 in individual donations.

If you have not sent your Legacy donation in yet, we ask you to contribute generously towards our funding goal for the Americal monument at the National Infantry Museum. The calendar mailing included a contribution envelope for mailing your check or money order. If you do not have a pre-addressed envelope, contributions may be mailed to:

PNC Ronald Ellis
4493 Hwy 64 W
Henderson, TX 75652

We paid Columbus Monument a down payment of one third of the total monument cost. Our goal for the 2012 calendar issue is to raise close to \$30,000.00 to cover the remaining cost of the monument. We also wish to cover the calendar preparation and mailing expenses and have funds left over for future Legacy projects.

2012 Monument Dedication Ceremony

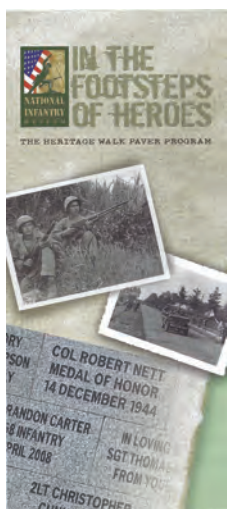
The dedication ceremony for the completed Americal Division monument at the National Infantry Museum in Columbus, Georgia will be held during the annual ADVA Reunion. The reunion site is in Atlanta.

The ceremony is scheduled for Friday, September 14, 2012 and will be the highlight of the day's activities in Columbus. We have planned a full day of activities centered around the dedication and the National Infantry Museum for all reunion attendees.

More details on the reunion and the ceremony plans are featured in the reunion news of this issue of the Americal Journal. We will also have reunion details on the Americal website. Please note that the reunion page and legacy page are now under the PROGRAMS tab on americal.org. Also check the Americal blog for up to the minute information on the reunion and the Legacy Committee progress.



National Infantry Museum Heritage Walk Paver Program



The National Infantry Museum sponsors the Heritage Walk paver program for veterans and families to memorialize individual Army veterans or units. The Heritage Walk is just outside the entrance to the Museum.

The paver stones are 4" by 8" granite. Each is engraved with your choice of wording, then placed in the the Heritage Walk along with hundreds of others already in place.

The accompanying picture is a representation of the brochure available that explains the program in more detail. The brochure includes an order form. If you or your small unit chapter

has an interest in making a paver purchase to memorialize a buddy or your unit in Heritage Walk, please contact me for a brochure.

The Legacy Committee thanks ADVA member and Columbus resident Marty Reyna for supplying photos of the work-in-progress at the Americal Monument.

Legacy Memorial Coin

We currently have an ample supply of the Legacy Memorial coin for your purchase. The price for the coin is \$15.00 and all sales proceeds go to support ADVA Legacy initiatives. This item will be a nice personal memento of the monument or buy some for gifts to your buddies. Order your Memorial coins from Wayne Bryant, Product Sales Director, 4411 Dawn Rd., Greensboro, NC, 27405; wbryant@triad.rr.com; 336-621-8756. Visa and MasterCard are allowed.

Please continue to support the ADVA and Legacy initiatives with a purchase of the Memorial coin.



ADVA Nominating Committee Sets Slate

Bi-annual elections for ADVA officers will be held in Spring 2012. In accordance with by-laws the Nominating Committee selected a slate of candidates.

Nominating Committee

PNC Larry Watson*	Dale Meisel
Mark Deam	Robert Cudworth
Malcom East	Conrad Steers
* Chairman	

Slate of Candidates

National Commander:	Larry Swank
Senior Vice-Commander:	David A. Chrystal, Sr.
Junior Vice-Commander:	Robert Cudworth

Executive Council

Jay Flanagan	Rich Scales
Dave Taylor	Jim Craig
Tim Vail	Ron Ward
Terry Siemer	Ralph Stiles
Jerry (Doc) Anderson	Mike Murphy
Malcom East	Dave Eichhorn
Reggie Horton	Conrad Steers.

Trustees of the Scholarship Fund

E. Lee Kaywork	Larry Watson
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Additional candidates may be nominated by an endorsement of ADVA members.

Proposed By-Law Amendments

Two by-law amendments will be on the ballot. One adds current members of the 182nd Infantry Regiment to the list of veterans eligible for membership in the ADVA. The second will create the position of Assistant National Adjutant.

Proposed Amendment 1: For Article 1, Section 1. Members who have served with or are now serving with the 182nd Infantry Regiment (separate) shall be eligible for active membership upon submission of proper application and payment of appropriate dues as established.

Proposed Amendment 2: For Article II, Section 6. The Assistant National Adjutant shall perform such duties as assigned by the National Adjutant, and perform other duties as required by this office.

Balloting

Ballots will be mailed to each active member in good standing. Ballots will go out after March 15, 2012 and must be returned by the date indicated on the ballots. Tabulation of ballots must be complete by June. Officers begin their two-year terms of service on July 1, 2012.



ADVA 2011 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Thank you very much for presenting me with a scholarship. It has been very helpful in providing me with needed finances so that I can study at Brigham Young University. It is a great honor to be recognized by your outstanding organization in this way.
Photo: Scholar and Robert Bischoff (father).

Scholar: *Samuel Bischoff*

Sponsor: *Robert Bischoff; HHC/1/46/196 LIB*



I want to take this opportunity to say thank you so very much for awarding me with this scholarship. This will be a tremendous help in my endeavor to further my education and help me achieve my goal of becoming a crime scene investigator.

I can assure you the scholarship will be put to great use. Photo: Darryl B. Merriam (grandfather) and scholar.

Scholar: *Marissa L. Goff*

Sponsor: *Darryl B. Merriam; HHC/14 CAB*



I want to express my gratitude to you for awarding me the Americal Division Scholarship again this year. My grandfather, Ken VanderMolen, is a World War II veteran. Your support has been so appreciated as I continue at Calvin College. Thank you again to the Americal Division for everything you have done and continue to do! Photo: Ken VanderMolen (grandfather) and scholar.

Scholar: *Julia VanderMolen*

Sponsor: *Kenneth VanderMolen; G/182 Inf. Regt.*



I would like to thank you for the scholarship I have received. I truly appreciate your support in helping me to reach my goals in furthering my education. In receiving this scholarship I promise to try my hardest in school so that someday I can pay it forward by teaching and enriching the lives of many young children to come.

Scholar: *Ashton Keck*

Sponsor: *Frank R. Yehlell; B/1/6/198 LIB*

I wanted to thank Americal for the very generous scholarship I was awarded. It is a great honor to be selected as one of the recipients, and I am extremely grateful for the financial aid towards my schooling. I am blessed to have the opportunity for higher education and I am blessed that organizations, like Americal, help in the pursuit of such.

Scholar: *McKenzie Baird*

Sponsor: *Cameron Baird; 1/82 Arty*



I'm very grateful for the scholarship that was given to me. It will be very helpful as I pursue my goal to work with children with severe disabilities. I also want to say how grateful I am to my Dad and all the other veterans of the Americal Division for the sacrifices that they made that enable me to go to school in peace.

Scholar: Laura Byrne

Sponsor: Robert L. Bryne, Jr; 1/20/11 LIB



Thank you for your charitable contribution once again. This contribution has lightened the financial burden of my college costs. Because of this, I am able to focus more on my school work. This year I will be continuing to take classes in hopes of eventually getting into graduate school for physical therapy. Photo: Rick Reuter (grandfather) and scholar.

Scholar: Leighna Reuter

Sponsor: Rick Reuter; A/3/21/196 LIB



Thank you so much for my scholarship and taking the time to read my essay. I am thankful for such a wonderful grandfather. His dedication to his grandchildren shows just how loving he is. I learned a lot about him by finding out all the information that I needed in order to apply for this

scholarship. Photo: Scholar and Herbert Odom (grandfather).

Scholar: Caroline Odom

Sponsor: Herbert Odom; B/182 Inf. Regt.



Thank you very much for honoring us with Americal Division Veterans Association scholarships. These awards will help us to attend Harvard University and The Catholic University of America. An organization such as the ADVA is exceedingly generous towards the descendants of the Americal Division and these awards are especially meaningful because of our grandfather, William F. McGoldrick, a man we unfortunately never had the honor to know. His bravery, patriotism and dedication to his country and the Americal has been related to us by our grandmother, Louise, now 92 years young. Our grandfather continues to provide for us thirty four years after his death through this scholarship program.

Scholar: Conor and Deirdre Walsh

Sponsor: JWilliam F. McGoldrick (RIP)



I would like to express my gratitude for the scholarship I received on the associations behalf. During this tough financial times, it is a great relief to be able to receive such a gift and continue my education and military career.

Scholar: Kevin Alsbro

Sponsor: Donald Alsbro; 23 Admin

Applications for 2012 scholarship awards are due April 1, 2012. Mail completed forms and other documents to Ron Green, Scholarship Chairman; 141 River Bend Dr., Ocoee, TN 37361. He may be contacted by e-mail at ron_green46@yahoo.com.

Determination of awards will be made by June 15, 2012. Award checks will be mailed to the scholars' colleges and universities shortly after the first of July.



LETTERS
TO THE
EDITOR

Readers: If you need assistance in making contact with the letter writers listed on these pages please contact one of the editors. They will be happy to assist you.

Dear editor,

I would like to make a correction to a caption in your story I Served With These Men by John Hastings in the July/August/September 2011 Americal Journal. On page 30 there is a picture of my dad; SSG Tim Woodville, Co. E, 5/46th Inf. Jan 1971. It is incorrectly captioned with the name of "Tom Woodville." Tom Woodville is actually my dad's brother who did not serve in the military. Thank you for the fine publication.

Doug Woodville

Doug- thank you for sending the correction. I apologize for the error on my part. I spoke with your father Tim at the 2011 ADVA reunion in Colorado Springs and we enjoyed a brief conversation. It was nice to meet him. -GLN-

Dear editor,

My dad, Charles A. Ryding served in the Americal Division as an artillery soldier. He arrived on Guadalcanal on or about October 13, 1942. He was injured in battle, shell shocked and shot in the leg by Japanese fire.

I am trying to find information on my father's service. As a result of my dad's injuries, he was sent to Harmon hospital in Texas. I've tried to obtain his Purple Heart for our family records. I contacted the records office in St. Louis, Missouri and learned that his records were lost in a fire along with other GI records.

I now reside in Michigan's Upper Peninsula on a property my dad once owned. I am building a place within my home, called Copper Island Studio, where high school students will be encouraged, inspired, and uplifted to earn college degrees in Architecture, the Arts, Literature, Music, and the Sciences, and doing so as a not-for-profit organization.

I would like to open a dialogue with anybody connected with the Americal Division. The objective is to have a peripheral affiliation with our organization to encourage prospective students to enroll in ROTC programs at our local university, Michigan Technological University, in Houghton, Michigan.

Please advise of any interest on your part or others who are somehow affiliated with the First Marine Division, Reinforced, which received a Presidential Unit Citation under the command of Major General Alexander A. Vandergrift, U.S.M.C. The award was issued by the Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox on 4 February, 1943.

It is my understanding actor Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg are working on a film about the Americal Division. I am seeking more G2 about their project.

Robert C. Ryding; rcryding@mtu.edu

Dear editor,

There is a new web site for veterans of 2/1st Infantry veterans. It can be found at www.b-2-1-196thlib.com. I think this web site may widen our base of veterans coming to the chapter site. We are interested in locating all veterans who served with the 2/1st Infantry.

Chuck Holdaway; choldaway@sbcglobal.net

Dear editor,

I've written a book called The Gates of the Shadow. It is based on my 18-month tour in 1970-1972 with the Americal Division and the 196th LIB. The book is available on amazon.com.

I'm researching a second book that is set during the final year of the American phase of the War: February 1972 to March 1973. I would like to get in touch with any veteran who served in the 196th's LRRP Platoon during 1972. Where did they operate, what did they do during the Easter Offensive, was there much combat? These are the sorts of questions I want to ask.

Richard Vidaurri; richvidaurri@gmail.com

Dear editor,

I was with Co. B, 4/21st Inf., 11th LIB. I lost a point man and I don't really know his name. There were two KIAs that day- but I can't figure out who it is. Their names are Sp4 Johnny M. Shelton and Pfc Kenneth C. Klanica. I think I called him Husky but I can't be sure. It happened in the last of Jan. 1970 with a booby trap grenade and I got hurt also but didn't leave the field. My Email is (carl1n2adams3@yahoo.com). We are having a reunion in D.C. April 26-29, 2012.

Carl Adams; carl1n2adams3@yahoo.com

Dear editor,

Please let our members know about the event described below:

The Vietnam Veterans Homecoming Celebration 2012 is scheduled for the Charlotte Motor Speedway on March 31, 2012.

The event is supported by the North Carolina Association of Broadcasters (NCAB), Charlotte Motor Speedway, the USO – North Carolina and Corporate America. The special activities will recreate the fondest memories of the Vietnam Era and recognize these heroes at the largest public event in North Carolina history.

With a projected attendance of 50,000 proud Americans and live simultaneous coverage on every TV and Radio station in North Carolina, the millions of military personnel that served in Vietnam and/or their families will receive one amazing Thank You for their service.

This special program is supported by the Department of Defense and several national veterans organizations. Activities include live entertainment, presentation by military bands and musical groups, displays of historical military vehicles, and demonstrations by today's military.

Other activities include a motorcycle rally, a display of a replica of the Vietnam Wall, and appearances by movie actors Gary Sinise (Lt. Dan in Forrest Gump) and Mel Gibson (We Were Soldiers),

A live broadcast of a wreath laying ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC and the sounding of Taps will honor those who gave their lives in the Vietnam War. Events begin at 9:00 AM and continue until 4:00 PM.

Lee Kaywork

**Dear editor,**

The 1st platoon, Co. A, 4/21st Inf. held a reunion in June 2011 in Columbus, OH. It was attended by 15 of the 26 currently located members along with six wives, one sister, and several other family members.

There were three guys, Jeff Klinger, Ernie Byrd and Pete Leuthold, we haven't seen in 42 years. It was great time with lots of memories and current conversations. We enjoyed huge laughter throughout the weekend- caused mostly by Earl Dunkerly, Jack Pow and Richard Jenkins. What a great time both then and now!

We located these veterans in the last five years or so. A fair number of veterans from the other platoons joined us at the National ADVA conventions in Lombard and Colorado Springs. Thanks guys.

Steve O'Keefe skoeeffe@hughes.net

Dear editor,

I just visited the wonderful website on the Americal Division. I was wondering if the 528th AAA Bn was ever designated as attached to the Americal during WW2. My dad served in that unit and although I know it was part of XIV Corps I was wondering what further units it had been attached to. He did serve at Henderson field in Guadalcanal in that unit too.

John Rivera; johnalbertrivera@gmail.com

LOCATOR REQUESTS

Looking for: Anyone from Co. B, 9th Support Bn., especially Jack Zuback, David Twang, Dave Vamvarkias, and Johnny Hayes. I worked in 9th Spt. supply at Chu Lai and Duc Pho in 1967-68.

Contact: Dennis Longo; drlongosr@aol.com

Looking for: Information on Pfc. William Clewiitt, Minnesota, who served in the 164th Infantry Regiment, Company I, and died 11-23-42 at Guadalcanal. **Contact:** Jill Johnson; jillj@arvig.net

Looking for: Company roster of Co. C, 1/6th Inf, 198th LIB from 1970-1971.

Contact: Raymond E. Witzke; bigslik44@frontier.com

Looking for: Any information about a reunion for my unit, Co. B, 1/46th Inf., 198th LIB, from June 1968-June 1969. I am having a hard time locating any friends from my unit.

Contact: SFC (Ret.) Edward J. Ball; edwardball99b@gmail.com

2012 UNIT REUNION SCHEDULES

Co. B, 4/21st Inf., 11th LIB will have a reunion at the Washington Suites, Alexandria, VA. April 19-22, 2012. Call the hotel at 877-736-2500 or 703-370-9600 between 9:00AM - 5:00PM EST Mon-Fri for reservations. Use reservation code BRAVO or BRAVO GROUP. Banquet check made out to Ed Gross, of \$35 per person should be sent to Ed Gross, 531 Stanbridge Street, Norristown PA 19401. For additional information call Bill Baird at 814-317-7321.

A reunion of veterans of the 14th Field Artillery Regiment will be held on 21-24 June 2012 at Branson, MO. Contact Jerry Goos (580) 765-0348 or Clem Smiley (580) 357-1430 for more information.

Please visit the website at www.14faregiment.org.

The 121st Aviation Association, Inc. is an organization of Army Veterans of the 121st Aviation Company, 121st Assault Helicopter Company, 93rd Transportation Company, 80th Transportation Detachment and all other units attached and supporting units who were in Da Nang and Soc Trang, Republic of Vietnam from 1961 through 1970. We were part of the 1st Aviation Brigade - 13th Aviation Battalion. The association will hold a reunion at Ft. Rucker, AL on June 20-24, 2012. This will be the most important reunion this association has held due to the fact we will be dedicating a monument to honor the 30 men who lost their lives, and all those that served while assigned to this company. Attendance of family members of those honored men is encouraged. If you have any questions, please feel free to call John Schmeid at 352-633-0541, e-mail johndschmeid@yahoo.com, or visit the website at www.121avn.org.

A reunion for veterans of 1/52 Infantry Battalion, 198 Light Infantry Brigade, Americal/23rd Infantry division is scheduled for March 29 - April 1, 2012. Any 198th LIB or Americal vets are always welcome. The reunion will be held in Willis, Texas again at grounds of the American Legion Hall Post 618, 13054 E FM 1907, Willis, TX 77378. The location has a number of acres in the back, with electrical hook ups, trees, and areas for tent camping or RV hookups. For those that prefer a bed and shower, The Best Western at Willis is about 3 miles away. A room rate of \$60 + tax per room, for either two queens or one king bed, smoking and non smoking, is available. Make your reservations directly. Tell them you are with the Vietnam Veterans reunion for the rate. Camping at the site is \$10 per night paid directly to the American Legion. The contact information for the Best Western Willis is 132323 Interstate 45 N, Willis, Texas 77318-8327, Phone 936-856-1906. The reunion fee, which includes all food and drinks, except for alcohol, which is allowed, is to be paid to Dennis Loop, 502 Long Shadows Circle, Spring, Tx. 77388. Contact is to Dennis or Eva at 281-651-7198, Dennis cell 832-443-5684. email is Vvet71@aol.com. First Time Attendance- \$80 for an individual or \$120 for a family, if paid before February 28, 2012, and thereafter it will be \$100 for an individual or \$150 for a family. Prior Attendance- \$100 for an individual or \$150 for a family, if paid by February 28. After February 28 it would be \$130 for an individual or \$175 for a family.

More information is available from Dennis Loop; vvvet71@aol.com

Celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the Americal Division

Looking Back to the Beginning



In May 1942 the Americal Division activated on the island of New Caledonia in the South Pacific. Formation assets included elements of federalized National Guard units from Illinois, South Dakota, and Massachusetts

At the onset of World War II the United States Army changed from the “square” divisions with four infantry regiments to “triangular” divisions with three infantry regiments. The infantry regiments that were split from their original divisions were referred to as “orphan” regiments.

The 132nd Infantry Regiment separated from the 33rd Infantry Division of the Illinois National Guard. The 164th Infantry Regiment separated from the 34th Infantry Division of the North Dakota National Guard. The 182nd Infantry Regiment separated from the 26th “Yankee Division” of the Massachusetts National Guard.

The 132nd, 164th, and 182nd Infantry Regiments boarded troop transports and shipped out just a few short weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor. In addition to the 182nd Inf. Regt, the 26th Infantry Division provided many other formation assets for the soon to be Americal Division. This included Artillery, Cavalry, Medical, Ordnance, Quartermaster, Transportation, Administration, and Engineer.

The Americal Division was the only U.S. Army division to have a name and not a number. The word “Americal” is derived from the words America and Caledonia. The Americal Division was never known as the 23rd Infantry Division in World War II.

The Americal shoulder patches features four stars of the Southern Cross constellation. This constellation is the most prominent in the South Pacific. The division also adopted the motto “Under The Southern Cross”.

Elements of the Americal Division were the first U.S. Army units to take offensive action against the enemy in any theater in World War II. On October 13, 1942 the 164th Infantry Regiment landed on Guadalcanal to join the U.S. Marines in fighting the Japanese.

The Americal Division fought at Bougainville and Cebu and other islands in the Solomons and Philippines. The Americal Division prepared for Operation Olympic- the invasion of Japan scheduled to begin on November 1, 1945.

The Americal Division landed in Japan as part of the occupation forces. Many of the original Americal Division soldiers earned enough points to head home. Newer members transferred to other divisions. The Americal Division was deactivated in November 1945.

In 1954 the 23rd Infantry Division was formed in response to the Cold War. It took the heraldry, lineage, traditions, and insignia of the Americal Division. The 23rd Inf. Div. secured the Panama Canal and operated a jungle training school in Panama. The division deactivated in 1956.

In 1967 the Americal Division (23rd Infantry Division) became the largest U.S. Army division fighting in the Vietnam War. It deactivated in November 1971 but many of its soldiers remained in Vietnam with the 196th Light Infantry Brigade until April 1972.

In recent years the U.S. Army reduced the role of divisions in its structure in favor of independent brigades. Former elements of the Americal Division, including brigades, battalions, and companies, do exist in today’s Army. They carry on the proud history of the Americal Division and its soldiers.

The Americal Journal will devote special attention to the 70th anniversary of the Americal Division in all four 2012 editions. World War II veterans are encouraged to send in their stories for inclusion in future articles. -GLN-

Update from the Vietnam Historian

By Les Hines

We have scanned images of the October 1968 Americal magazine in the ADVA historical data base. But they are not as clear and colorful as they could be. When we scanned them a few years ago I was happy to get better than xerox copy quality. Now with the improvements in technology our images are much better than Xerox.

The October 1968 issue of Americal has a photo of the tail of the Huey on the cover. I hope we have members who can help improve the quality of our information. They can help by either scanning the images and send the electronic images to me or allow me to rescan the images. I can help with the expenses.

I would like to thank Bill Schneider for the materials he recently loaned to me. I have been working through his three tubs of 1/46th Infantry printed records. The first tub is nearly scanned.

What I have scanned so far are mostly S2/S3 reports from 1967-68-69. I also see that Gary Noller was making entries in the S2/S3 logs in January 1971 at LZ Young.

I do not know what I will find in the second two tubs. My guess is that there is more than three feet of paper to go through if you stacked it in a pile on the floor. My son is helping me with the processing of these records.

I am always interested in materials published by Americal Division or Task Force Oregon units. My contact information is: Les Hines, 817 41st St.; Des Moines, IA 50312-2609. Phone 1-515-255-4807; email americalhistory@gmail.com.

A/5/46 Inf. Veterans Reunite

By Ellen Gause

Oliver Gause had a reunion with his best Vietnam buddy in June 2011. With some quick planning Oliver hosted eleven more of his buddies from Vietnam, along with five of their wives, during the week of October 2-8, 2011. They reunited at Langston's Motel at White Lake.

In September 2011 Oliver visited with one of his buddies. They decided to see how many more veterans of their unit they could pull together. They served in Co. A, 5/46th Infantry, 198th Light Infantry Brigade, from November 1968 to November 1969. After several phone calls and e-mails it appeared that a dozen veterans would join together 42 years after they left Vietnam.

Reservations were made at Langston's. The first three vets arrived on Sunday, October 2. Sid Liming drove from Ohio. Clarence and Mindy Hoch came in from Indiana. Bob and Sandi Latham arrived from Tennessee.

The others arrived over the next three days. Bob and Sue Olenzak came from Michigan. Wendell and Barbara Roberts drove from Tennessee. Bud McFarland came from Pennsylvania. Ray Essenmacher arrived from Michigan. Charlie Slocum came from West Virginia. Ray and Karen Utley drove from Fayetteville. Paul Sprouse came from South Carolina. Donald Sheffield flew in from Texas.

Langston's Motel welcomed them warmly. As each soldier registered at the motel office he was given a small US flag to commemorate his army service and to welcome them to White Lake.

During the week-long visit there was much laughing, crying, sharing, healing, and joking as the veterans renewed friendships. They were able to finally sit down to discuss numerous events that took place in Vietnam. They talked about other buddies that were killed or severely wounded.

Questions were answered for many of the guys. Questions that had haunted them for 42 years were now put to rest. Ray Utley was able to finally talk to guys who were next to him when a mine exploded as he lost both legs and several fingers. Up until the reunion, he never really knew what had happened to him.

Several vets brought their personal collections of Vietnam pictures. The guys spent hours looking at the pictures, recognizing other buddies, and asking questions about events and places. They were amazed as they read Sgt. Utley's green memorandum book with the platoon roster written inside. It was the only personal item that made it back to the United States with Sgt. Utley after the explosion that severely wounded him.

Master Chef Jamie Gause delighted the group as he cooked baby back ribs, steak and chicken on the grill during a cook out on Tuesday evening. They were treated to an assortment of foods that I prepared. They enjoyed the cherry pies brought by the Olenzaks from Michigan and pound cake brought by the Lathams from Tennessee.

They guys enjoyed breakfast each morning at the Corner

Café. One of their most special moments occurred on Tuesday morning. As they entered the restaurant, everyone stood to clap and welcome them. For many of them it was their first official, friendly welcome back to the States since they concluded their tour of duty in Vietnam. They all remembered the taunting suffered by Vietnam soldiers as they returned home. They were touched by the gesture, and several even shed tears.

I put together a pictorial board for the guys. I obtained a picture of each one from their service days in Vietnam. As each vet arrived at White Lake I took a new picture of them and placed it on the board beside their service picture from years before. I titled the board, "Look What 42 Years Has Done to Us!" Everyone got a good laugh to see the changes that had taken place over all these many years.

As the week came to a close the guys and their wives left to return to their homes. They made a pact to continue to meet on an annual basis. The 12 veterans assured each other that they would be at future reunions. They hope that others from their platoon will join them.



EASTERN REGIONAL CHAPTER

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

COMMANDER

Joseph Adelsberger
joeordeb_1@msn.com

Vice-Commander

Terry Siemer
TSiemer9528@wowway.com

Treasurer

Connie Steers
11thbrigade@optonline.net



The annual Eastern Region reunion will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick Rhode Island April 26-29, 2012. Dave Eichhorn is the reunion chairman and has several good events planned.

We will have a chapter meeting and memorial service at the tour on Saturday afternoon. Saturday evening will include our annual banquet.

The room rate is 99 dollars and includes a hot breakfast buffet in the hostility room. All the info can be found at <http://home.roadrunner.com/~sindeyalum/advaerc/>.

I also want to remind all motorcycle riders this year will be the 25th anniversary of Rolling Thunder in Washington D.C. This will be held on Memorial Day weekend. Hope to see all riders there.

Welcome home to everyone. -Joe Adelsberger; Commander-

In Memoriam

Rev. Perry M. Woerner

By Gary L. Noller

Rev. Perry M. Woerner of Fredericksburg, Texas began his eternal rest on December 4, 2011 at the age 87 years. Rev. Woerner served in the Americal Division in World War II and served as a National Chaplain for the ADVA for approximately ten years beginning in 1995.

Perry is survived by his wife Johanna "Jo" Fazende Woerner of Fredericksburg; sons and daughters-in-law Hadley and Crystal Woerner of Stephenville, TX and Gaylon and Kim Woerner of Eau Claire, WI. He was preceded in death by one son.

Rev. Woerner performed chaplain duties at several ADVA national reunions including 1999 (St. Louis), 2001 (Cleveland) and 2002 (Washington, DC). At the 2002 reunion he represented Americal Division veterans at a special wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery.

Perry reluctantly decided to end his duties as National Chaplain due to health. He received the ADVA Lifetime Achievement Award for his many years of service to the ADVA and its members.

Rev. Woerner was a well known figure in Fredericksburg, TX. He was born and raised in Fredericksburg and graduated from its high school. After serving in the Special Services of the Americal Division he returned to Fredericksburg and remained there the rest of his life.

While aboard a transport ship headed to the South Pacific Perry made a vow that if he returned from the war he would become an ordained minister and serve others. He kept this vow and ministered in Gillespie County, TX for many years. Perry and Johanna formed PJ Ministries and expanded their calling to serve the Lord.

For many years Perry was also employed in the banking business in Fredericksburg. He was recognized as a trusted adviser in both financial matters and spiritual matters.

Rev. Woerner was laid to rest in a dress blue U.S. Army uniform. Near his casket was a table with family photos, a display of his military medals, and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the ADVA. "Perry told us that he was very proud to be a veteran of the Americal Division," said Johanna. "He instructed us to have his Lifetime Achievement Award displayed at his viewing."

Perry's two sons spoke of their father at the funeral. Hadley Woerner talked of the many conversations he had with Perry in the weeks and months preceding his passing. "Dad said that one of his proudest moments was to be selected to present the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns on behalf of Americal Division veterans," said Hadley.

In 1995 I was ADVA National Commander and had the privilege to appoint Perry Woerner as a National Chaplain. Part of his duties included writing letters of condolences to families of deceased ADVA members.

A couple of years ago I received a call from Perry. He told me that he was making his final arrangements and asked if I would be a pall bearer at his funeral. I told him that I would be honored to serve him in this manner and to represent the ADVA at his funeral. The special connection Perry had with Americal Division veterans needs no explanation.

My condolences and the condolences of members of the ADVA are extended to Jo Woerner and to the Woerner family. Perry's contributions to his fellow Americal veterans is greatly appreciated. May he rest in Peace.

SOUTH MIDWEST CHAPTER

AR LA OK TX MS

COMMANDER

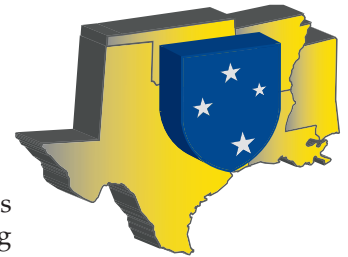
Cameron F. Baird

P.O. Box 211

Stonewall, TX 78671

830 • 644 • 2704

altdorf@ktc.com



The 2012 chapter reunion is coming up! Plans are being finalized for a reunion in Ft.

Worth on May 18-19, 2012. Our last two reunions have been very successful, and this one should be no exception.

We will have a motel near the stockyards; the room rate should come in well under a hundred bucks. We'll have some passenger vans to get around, and may set up a tour of the Bureau of Printing and Engraving on Friday afternoon if there is enough interest. Saturday we'll load up and head to the National Vietnam War Museum in Mineral Springs, where we will hold a memorial ceremony and have a BBQ lunch.

Saturday night we'll go to the stockyards, where we will have a great dinner set up. Full details will be published in the next newsletter and on the ADVA website, but mark your calendar now and don't miss out on a great time.

The Abilene Grunts Association held their 25th all-veterans Tet reunion in February. It always draws a good crowd, and the volunteers who put on the show deserve a big salute for their years of work. It's worth a visit, and always held Super Bowl Saturday.

I look forward to seeing everyone in Atlanta. If you would like to receive the chapter newsletter electronically, please provide your email address to altdorf@ktc.com.

-Cameron Baird; Commander-

Old ADVA Journals? Give it to a buddy or leave at your local VA. VFW Legion Post or other worthwhile

In Memoriam

Richard D. "Dick" Coffelt (1932-2012)

During the Vietnam War the Department of Defense (DOD) utilized computers to keep records of service members killed-in-action (KIA). These records relied on computer punch-cards for data entry. Due to the limitations of data entry the KIA records were brief and utilized shortened codes.

The DOD records only allowed a two letter code to indicate the unit of the KIA. For most U.S. Army units the casualties were recorded at the division level. Americal Division casualties were recorded in one of four categories: Americal Division, 11th LIB, 196th LIB, or 198th LIB.

Richard D. Coffelt changed that. He saw the benefit of casualty lists detailed to the company and battalion level. He made such a list a focus of the latter years of his life.

Richard was born on August 6, 1932 in Kansas City, MO. He graduated from high school in 1950 and served in the U.S. Army from 1953-1955. He obtained a law degree from the University of Kansas in 1959. In 1960 he began his practice of law in Hays, KS and retired from law practice in 1997. He taught business law at Ft. Hays State University from 1999-2002.

His quest to research Vietnam War casualties began thirty years ago with an interest in those from his home area. Once he started his research he quickly expanded it to include all 58,000 plus service members who died in Vietnam.

Coffelt used any and all methods to gather unit information. Jo Ann Jennings, Richard's wife, recalls their trips across the United States to find details. "I traveled with Dick to the Johnson Presidential Library in Austin, Texas, to Washington D.C. and St. Louis, Missouri, and to library after library from Hays, Kansas to Columbus, Ohio," she states. "Every spring break and some piece of my long summer vacation (teacher's schedule) was spent with Richard in search of unit information or details surrounding a soldier's death."

Dick Arnold collaborated with Coffelt in the research of Vietnam casualties. He remembers, "Early in our research we were discussing one soldier. We only had the minimum of information...the soldier's division and the Vietnam province he was killed in. Richard was positive he had the full unit figured-out. I looked at the available evidence and was not so certain. So I asked via e-mail, 'RC, how can you be so sure?' Back came a cryptic, 'Got it off a tombstone in Texas.' And I thought to myself, 'Dick son...you are in the Big Leagues now!'"

Others joined efforts with Coffelt and progress advanced at more quickly. Among those joining the effort were Dave Argabright and Ken Davis. In 2002 their work was substantially complete. They presented their results to the National Archives in Washington, DC. It was appropriately named the Coffelt Database and is considered to be the most complete and most correct database of Vietnam casualties in existence today.

Les Hines, ADVA Vietnam Historian, recognized very early the significance of the Coffelt Database. "The Coffelt data base is one of the greatest things done for Vietnam Veterans," says Hines. "It was not done by the government as it should have been; but through the persistence of one



man, Richard Coffelt. Hundreds of thousands of Vietnam Veterans and families have Richard Coffelt to thank.

"Now there is at least some information available for each U.S. serviceman who lost his life in Vietnam. Prior to the Coffelt Database it was difficult to know if the wounded buddy from one's squad died or had survived. In many cases men did not know the real names of those that had died fighting by their side." The Coffelt Database is categorized by company and battalion and makes it very easy for veterans to learn who in their company was lost in the war.

David W. Taylor, ADVA Past National Commander and author, paid tribute to the work of Richard Coffelt. Taylor says, "The loss of Richard Coffelt is indeed a great loss, one that should receive national media attention. He created the ability for Vietnam vets to accurately seek out the status of their comrades."

"Without the Coffelt Database I could not have possibly verified all the KIA from my battalion for my book OUR WAR. In the book I mention every member of the battalion who died and how he died. The Coffelt Database ensured I did not miss anyone."

Daniel P. Gillotti, Coordinator, 1st Cavalry Division "Project Sky Trooper", used the Coffelt Database to help determine the 5,600 KIAs of the 1st Cavalry. "We truly lost a national treasure," said Gillotti. "The focus, passion, and drive exhibited by Richard Coffelt and his dedicated team has allowed hundreds of thousands of Vietnam vets to come to some closure after 40+ years."

Jo Ann speaks of her husband's passing, "I am so proud of his contribution to his country, history, and the hundreds of individuals who asked for his help over these past 30 years. Richard's last computer log-in was October 29, 2010. He worked until he could work no more, never willing to give up on one more unit identification. How I will miss him."

"Richard could not have cared less about anything being named after him. He wanted two things: 1. The database to be easily found and easily accessed; 2. It be free to anyone seeking information about Vietnam KIAs."

The Coffelt team has just unveiled a new website that allows users to search the casualty records on-line. Jo Ann says, "After quite a discussion, they chose a domain name in honor of Richard. It is <http://www.coffeltdatabase.org/>."

Dick Arnold summarizes his years of work with Coffelt by saying, "My association with Richard Coffelt and the KIA project has truly been one of the highlights of my middle age. Not only was RC a good man, my good friend, but he was a true Patriot. And if that can truly and honestly be said about a man when he is gone....he has had a very worthwhile life indeed." -GLN-

2012 ADVA National Reunion Atlanta and Ft. Benning, GA September 13-16, 2012



Make plans now to participate in the 2012 ADVA National Reunion in Atlanta. This reunion is very special because it includes a dedication of the new Americal Monument at Ft. Benning, GA. Hotel space and special events may sell out fast- do not delay.

Headquarters Hotel

The Americal Division Veterans Association 2012 Annual Reunion will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, and will be hosted by the Americal Legacy Committee. Reunion dates are September 13-16, 2012. The Westin Atlanta Airport is our Reunion Hotel

The hotel site is the Westin Atlanta Airport, which is very close to Atlanta's Hartsfield Airport. The Westin provides free shuttle service to and from the airport and guest parking is free of charge. Our contracted room rates are \$89.00 and are available September 12th thru September 16th. Complimentary hotel shuttle service is available to nearby restaurants and attractions.

Dining options at the Westin include the Palio full service restaurant and Martini's Atrium lounge. The Palio offers us a daily breakfast buffet is available for \$10.00, and discounts on lunch offerings.

Getting Around Atlanta

Visiting the many downtown Atlanta attractions is very easy using the Atlanta rapid transit System known as MARTA. Hotel shuttles will transport guests to the nearby Hartsfield Airport for boarding the rail trains for trips into downtown.

Among the many historic sites to visit in the downtown Atlanta area are the Coca Cola Museum, the CNN Center and the Atlanta Cyclorama and Civil War Museum. For those attendees who drive in for the reunion, nearby Stone Mountain with its unique carving in the face is a short drive and offers scenic views of the Atlanta area.

Trip to Ft. Benning and Dedication of Americal Monument

The highlight of the reunion schedule is the Friday tour. We take a trip by chartered bus from the Westin Hotel to Columbus, Georgia for the dedication ceremony of the finished Americal Division monument in the Walk Of Honor grounds near the National Infantry Museum and Fort Benning. Our memorial service will be conducted at the monument site.

Following the dedication ceremony, buses will transport our group



to the post for a windshield tour and lunch at the 2/46th Infantry Regiment mess hall. Following the tour and lunch, we'll return to the National Infantry Museum for a tour of the museum.

The National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center opened in March 2009 and is a premier site for viewing the history and legacy of the U.S. Army Infantry branch. The Museum's signature exhibit, the Last 100 Yards, contains life size dioramas depicting significant battles in the Infantry's history, from Yorktown to the Iraq theater.

The Benning Gallery contains a number of exhibits depicting Fort Benning training. The Officer Candidate School Hall of Honor lists names of some of our members who have been inducted into this prestigious institution. Just outside the museum, the World War II Company Street leads visitors into seven re-creations of 1940's era Army buildings.

Saturday Schedule

Saturday will be filled with the Executive Council and general membership business meetings. As usual, our banquet and program is set for Saturday night and will include a First Time Attendees reception prior to the banquet. The banquet will feature an Americal themed ice sculpture and offerings of three entrees prepared by the hotel's noted chef. Although not yet confirmed, we may have some special post dinner entertainment.

For those not attending the Saturday morning meetings, as noted above, Atlanta has many downtown historical sites and attractions that can be reached using the Atlanta rail system MARTA. Although not planned at this time, we are considering adding a spouses' function on Saturday morning. More details to follow in the next issue of the Americal Journal.

Hotel and Reunion Reservations

Make your hotel reservations now by calling the Atlanta Westin Airport location at 1-888-627-7211. Be sure to mention Americal Division Veterans Association Group event when calling. The cut off date for the group rate is August 22, 2012.

We also have a dedicated web site for making hotel reservations on line. The web site is <http://goo.gl/zO8y2>. The newly renovated Americal web site, www.americal.org, has the reunion registration form that can be downloaded and printed. Go to PROGRAMS and then to REUNIONS for more information.

For those attendees who will be RVing for the reunion, there is a Good Sam RV park very near reunion hotel.

Additional Details and Contact Information

Roger Gilmore is reunion chairman. He can answer questions you may have about the reunion. Registration and event forms and fees should be sent to Ronald Ellis. Up to date information about the reunion may be found on-line at www.americal.org/programs/reunion.html or on the ADVA blog page.





2012 ADVA NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

September 13 – 16, 2012
Westin Atlanta Airport
4736 Best Road, Atlanta, GA 30337
1-888-627-7211
Reservations <http://goo.gl/zO8y2>



Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Spouse/Guest _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

First Time at an
ADVA Annual
Reunion? (y/n)

Unit(s) _____ WWII _____ VN _____ Handicapped assistance? (y/n) _____

ADVA member registration \$20.00/person X _____ = \$ _____

Non- Member (Americal vet)** \$35.00/person X _____ = \$ _____

Guest/Spouse of members or non-members \$20.00/person X _____ = \$ _____

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

**Friday Tour – Trip to Columbus, GA and Fort Benning for
Americal Monument dedication ceremony at the National
Infantry Museum. Lunch at the 2/46th Regiment mess hall
(Breakfast & Lunch cost is included in tour price).**

**Sep. 14, 2012 0730AM-4PM
\$40.00/person X _____ = \$ _____**

Saturday Banquet: Cocktails Cash Bar until 7PM/ Banquet & Program 7PM-10PM

Sep. 15, 2012

Beef _____ Salmon _____ Vegetarian _____ \$40.00/person X _____ = \$ _____

**First Timers Reception Cocktails 6:00pm-7:00pm
(Complimentary drink for First Timers - Location TBA)**

September 15, 2012

TOTAL \$ _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: 2012 ADVA Reunion

Mail this form and your check to:
2012 ADVA Reunion
PNC Ronald R. Ellis
4493 Highway 64
Henderson, TX 75652

Questions: Call or e-mail Roger Gilmore at 214-497-6543 or gilmoraces@aol.com

Download form <http://americal.org/programs/reunion.html>

The Jungle Fighters

The Story of The Americal Division

They were rushed into combat so quickly they got a name instead of a number, but before the war was over they made it a name to be proud of.

By Bruce Jacobs

A Legacy Begins

The Americal Infantry Division is a division of distinction. It is the only modern Army division with a name instead of a number, and the only Army division to receive the Navy Presidential Citation for gallantry in action. The jungle fighters who wore the blue and white Southern Cross shoulder patch fought the grinding, wearing battles of the Pacific-Guadalcanal's Henderson Field, the jungle trail to Numa-Numa, the tangle of ancient vines and cogon grass in Cebu.

The only Army division formed for combat at an advance base in wartime, the Americal was the first United States Army division to take part in offensive action in any theater of operations in World War II. Rarely, however, did its exploits make the papers back home and then it was usually identified incorrectly as the "American" Division or the "Miracle" Division.

It would be difficult to imagine more dramatic circumstances than those under which the division went into combat. Its advance elements reached bloody Guadalcanal just in time to help the Marines save Henderson Field. Like the Minute Men of old, they raced into battle to fight for what appeared to be a lost cause. Though inexperienced in the arts of war, they helped swing the balance of victory to our side at a time when the Marines, who had carved the beachhead and established the perimeter, were weak from battle losses and malaria.

The Americal soldiers were Minute Men in the real sense. For the most part they were volunteers; National Guard soldiers from the states of Massachusetts, Illinois, and North Dakota. How they came to be assembled under the Americal banner in the far reaches of the Pacific is a story that begins with the departure, from the New York Port of Embarkation, of Army Task Force 6814-headed for parts unknown. The date was January 23, 1942. It was 47 days after Pearl Harbor; the day the Japanese invaded the Solomon Islands. Japanese aggression was at its high tide in the Far East. Wake and Guam, key islands in the Pacific, had fallen. The Japanese had won Malaya and Hong Kong and were bulling their way into Bataan. In the "hot corner" of the Southwest Pacific they streamed down through New Guinea and the islands of Melanesia to menace Australia.

Task Force 6814, commanded by Brigadier General Alexander "Sandy" Patch, was a conglomeration of what the Army calls "miscellaneous units." There was the 51st Infantry Brigade, whose two principal elements were

the 132nd Infantry Regiment and the 182nd Infantry Regiment. There were old-style field and coast-artillery regiments, assorted ordnance, quartermaster, medical, signal, aviation and light-tank units. They had been assembled on a moment's notice and had come from training camps in half a dozen different states.

The infantry regiments of the task force were units that had been cut adrift in the 1941 "streamlining" of the National Guard divisions. The Guard divisions had come into federal service as "square" divisions but were eventually "triangularized." In the process each lost one regiment. The 182nd Infantry, for example, had been "squared-out" of the 26th (Yankee) Division, to the great disgust of the Bay Staters. Its antecedents dated clear back to 1636, and its regimental colors were decorated with streamers from the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, two campaigns of the Civil War and the Meuse-Argonne in World War I. Similarly, the 132nd Infantry had lost its place in the Illinois 33rd Division. The old "Second Illinois," as the 132nd was known prior to World War I, traced its ancestry to 1861 and six campaigns of the Civil War from Tennessee to Atlanta. It carried World War I streamers for Picardy, the Somme offensive, Lorraine and the Meuse-Argonne.

The convoy steamed south from New York, cleared through the Panama Canal and headed into the vast blue waters of the Pacific. It raced southwest to Melbourne, Australia, then north and east, until the soft, shimmering outline of New Caledonia appeared off the port bow one day. The handful of Aussies and French Foreign Legion troops stationed there breathed a sigh of relief as the Task Force moved ashore with its impressive array of trucks, jeeps and weapons. The GIs were stunned to find the city of Noumea a "little Paris" out in the middle of the Pacific. Few, except the stamp collectors, had ever heard of Nouvelle Calédonie.

General Patch garrisoned the sprawling island and readied it against the day of attack. He dispatched outposts to the New Hebrides and put the engineers to work building new airfields to accommodate the U.S. Air Corps, which was beginning to stretch its wings. Soon the Task Force was reinforced by the arrival of more artillery and another infantry regiment—the 164th, a North Dakota National Guard outfit that formerly belonged to the 34th (Red Bud) Division. The old First North Dakota's regimental colors had seen the Far East four decades earlier, during the war with Spain and in the Philippine Insurrection.

Church bells tolled in thankfulness from Australia and New Zealand to New Caledonia when the Japanese were defeated in the Battle of the Coral Sea. Less than a month later, U.S. naval and air forces again triumphed in the Battle of Midway. Suddenly Task Force 6814 was in the backwash of the war. New Caledonia was no longer under pressure, and the task force soldiers feared they would become garrison troopers, doomed to spend the war far from the thunder of the guns.

Their destiny was dictated in a secret letter from the War Department to Sandy Patch, who had acquired the second

Vice Admiral Ghormley (front seat) visits New Caledonia to consult with Americal Commander Major General Alexander Patch (seated behind Ghormley) on New Caledonia

Americal soldiers from the 182nd Regiment and New Zealand troops from the 29th Anti-Aircraft battalion on New Caledonia discuss weapons and tactics

H.M. Montchamps, Governor of New Caledonia and Maj. Gen. Alexander Patch presents a salute at the French Memorial Day ceremony in Noumea, New Caledonia.



star of a major general. Out of the forces then under his command, he was to form a brand-new infantry division. And, in view of the unusual circumstances-the activating of a division outside the United States-it was to be given a name instead of a number. Washington proposed "Necal" Division, since "Necal" was an early code name for New Caledonia. It was decided, however, that the men themselves should have the final say in the selection of a name. General Patch cast his vote for "Bush" Division, but in the final balloting, he was out ranked by a private first class, David Fonseca of Roxbury, Massachusetts.

PFC Fonseca came up with the name that was to become so meaningful in the campaigns that lay ahead-the Americal. After all, reasoned Fonseca, the division was to be formed from American troops stationed on New Caledonia. Fonseca's nomination for the new division's name was forwarded to Washington, and on May 27, 1942, the Americal Division became a going concern. Most of the units of Task Force 6814 were absorbed into the new organization; a few were transferred to the island command and remained behind when the Americal moved out of New Caledonia and plunged into jungle war.

First Blood

On Guadalcanal where the Marines had landed in August, there was real trouble. As commanding general of the Army forces in the South Pacific, Major General Millard F. Harmon urged upon Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley, the South Pacific commander, the immediate dispatch of a regimental combat team to Guadalcanal. Ghormley concurred, and within a few hours, the Americal's 164th Infantry RCT, under the command of Colonel Bryant E. Moore, was placed on the alert. It moved down to the Nickel Docks on October 8 and began loading into the Zeilin and the McCauley for the boat ride to the north. It was an uneventful trip until the convoy dropped anchor near Lunga Point. Then the Japanese rolled out the welcome mat. As their bombers roared overhead, the 164th Infantry went about the business of unloading and setting up shop in the beleaguered perimeter. Colonel Moore reported to the commanding general of the 1st Marine Division, Major General Archie A. Vandegrift, and Vandegrift ordered Moore's regiment of Americal soldiers into Sector Two, the longest infantry sector in the 22,000-yard perimeter. The new arrivals were inexperienced, but at least they were fresh and eager.

Back on New Cal, meanwhile, Admiral William F. Halsey was named South Pacific commander. The 59-year-old "Bull" Halsey put it straight to Vandegrift: "Can you hold Guadalcanal, or do you expect to have to pull out?" he radioed.

"I can hold it," Vandegrift assured him, "if I get more active support than I've been getting." "You'll get it," Halsey replied. Once more orders began streaming into Americal Division headquarters. Now the Bay State 182nd Infantry was alerted to move out.

On Guadalcanal, the 164th was going through its baptism of fire. It had already withstood fierce naval bombardment and had been under air attack. But now Bryant Moore's soldiers got their taste of the infantryman's war. On the night of October 24-25, they took the full brunt of a Japanese ground assault. It came on a black, moonless night following a day of heavy rainfall. It was clearly the enemy's intent to recapture the vital strips of Henderson Field. The heaviest blow fell upon the sector defended by the 1st Battalion of the 7th Marines, and a "fire call" went out for the 3rd Battalion of the 164th Infantry which was then in regimental reserve about a mile from the front. As the Marines fought valiantly to hold back the enemy tide, Lieutenant Colonel Robert K. Hall marched his Americal battalion through the dense jungle, and slipped into position alongside the Marines. With the added firepower of the Army, a series of Japanese attacks was thrown back.

At the height of the battle, Corporal Bill Clark, a Nebraskan, and two privates set out to recover a pair of light machine guns that had been damaged when their crews were wiped out. The men with him were killed, but Clark kept advancing under intense fire. By the time he reached the guns, he was less than 15 feet from the muzzles of the Jap guns. But Clark coolly tied up the two damaged guns with his belt and hauled them back to his own lines. He stripped them down, and by salvaging the usable parts from each, he managed to assemble one machine gun in good working order-all in the dark. Clark's gun spit into action just in time to help hurl back a Jap foray.

At dawn on October 25, the Japs melted away into the jungle, giving the Army and the Marines a chance to realign their battered forces. The lineup, as night fell, found the 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, on the right; the 3rd Battalion, 164th Infantry, in the center; and the 2nd Battalion, 164th Infantry, on the left. Reinforced by fresh troops delivered to Guadalcanal by the "Tokyo Express," the Japanese launched another series of attacks, and continued to hurl themselves at the approaches to Henderson Field on the morning of October 26. After some of the most savage fighting of the campaign, the Japs broke and retreated toward Koli Point and Kokumbona. It was a clear-cut triumph for the Americans and Marine General Vandegrift singled out the 164th for special praise.

Elements of the 182nd Infantry now began to arrive in force. Brigadier General Edmund B. Sebree, the Americal's assistant division commander, was given command of a sector, as the 164th took part in an offensive across the Matanikau River, in November. When an attack of dengue fever kayoed Brigadier General William H. Rupertus, assistant division commander of the Marines, General Sebree took full charge of the march to Koli Point. It was the first time in the Guadalcanal campaign that a senior officer of the Americal bossed a combined force of Army men and Marines. Soon the assault battalions of Colonel Daniel W. Hogan's 182nd Infantry joined the push.

Private David Fonseca, 26th Signal Company, on New Caledonia, who named the division "Americal"

Americal Supplies and Equipment brought on Red Beach, Guadalcanal after the division arrives.

Equipment unloaded on Guadalcanal beach after the division arrives



The Marines provided covering fire as Lieutenant Colonel Bernard B. Twombly took his 2nd Battalion across a footbridge over the Matanikau, toward Hill 66. The battalion pushed forward, but advance elements were pinned down near the Water Hole. Led by Lieutenant Colonel Francis F. MacGowan, the 1st Battalion crossed the Matanikau on the following morning and fought a series of brisk skirmishes as it moved toward the objective at Point Cruz. The 182nd attack was momentarily slowed by the terrible heat, but it resumed when General Sebree sent the 164th forward to help out. The 182nd stormed the Point Cruz defenses, but the 164th ran into a hornet's nest. Mortar fire in the 3rd Battalion area, for example, killed the battalion surgeon, four lieutenants and a first sergeant.

As plans were prepared for the full relief of the 1st Marine Division by the Americal, a small group of Americal soldiers embarked upon an unusual adventure, setting out in a schooner from Lunga Point under the command of First Lieutenant Frederick T. Flo of the 164th Infantry. In the group were 13 soldiers from the North Dakota regiment, two Marine radiomen, a pair of Marine Navajo "talkers" (the Japanese were never able to master the Navajo language, and it provided a "code" that was never broken) and a member of the native police. The schooner swept out to sea and circled to the west around Cape Esperance. The first stop was at the Tangarare settlement in Beaufort Bay, where Lieutenant Flo chatted with the Reverend Henry De Klerk of the Society of Mary. Father De Klerk who had remained at his mission on the southern coast of Guadalcanal when the Japanese invaded the Solomons, assured the 164th Infantry soldiers that there were no enemy soldiers between Beaufort Bay and Tiaro Bay. The next stop was Tiaro Bay. Here the patrol went ashore and began a thorough reconnaissance of the area. Finding no trace of the Japanese, Flo and his men moved on to Marovo, then Kamimbo Bay and Aruligo Point, in the eight days that followed. From the report turned in by Flo when the patrol returned to Lunga Point in the waning days of November, Division intelligence officers correctly reckoned that the main strength of the enemy lay east of Visale on Guadalcanal's northern coast.

In December, most of the remaining elements of the Americal arrived at Guadalcanal. The 132nd RCT, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel LeRoy E. Nelson, was almost immediately hurled against Japanese positions on strongly defended Mount Austen. Another welcome arrival was the Americal's Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron, under the command of the dour Scot, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander M. George. This colorful unit (later to be re-designated as the 21st Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop) had been formed by Colonel George on New Cal as a mobile striking force, and it now numbered more than 500 troopers, equipped with jeeps and armed to the teeth. For all its proud mobility, the squadron was destined to fight on foot in the mud of Guadalcanal.

With the Americal at full strength, General Patch became the commander of all forces on Guadalcanal. The first order of business, he decided, was the capture

of Mount Austen. The Illinois regiment marched into the lines and swung into action. Lieutenant Colonel William C. Wright's 3rd Battalion battered away at the approaches of the heights of Mount Austen, but was stopped in their tracks. When Wright moved out in front, trying to search out a trail that wasn't covered by Jap guns, he was killed by machine-gun fire.

During the battle, the Illinois soldiers of the 132nd came up against the Gifu, the Japs' stoutest defensive. It consisted of a horseshoe-shaped line of about 45 interconnecting pillboxes between Hills 31 and 27. The pillboxes were made of heavy logs, and their roofs were three feet thick. Each pillbox contained one or two machine guns plus two or three riflemen, and they were banked by riflemen and machine gunners dug into the bases of mahogany and banyan trees. The GIs of the Americal were staggered by this seemingly impenetrable jungle fortress, where mortar fire made no impression, and where even howitzer fire was ineffective unless there was a direct hit. The 2nd Battalion of the 132nd made the principal assault against the Gifu. Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel George F. Ferry, it moved southwest from Hill 11 toward the slopes of Hill 27, shortly after daybreak on New Year's Day.

"This is a helluva way to spend New Year's Day," a corporal from Joliet, Illinois, growled. "At least," one of his buddies declared, "we won't have a hangover tomorrow."

By four P.M. the battalion had reached the top of Hill 27, without a single casualty. During the day, however, the regimental commander, who was suffering from malaria and fatigue, was relieved, and Colonel Alexander M. George left his beloved Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron to take over the old "Ever Ready" Regiment. Colonel George at once proved a tonic for the tired soldiers of the 132nd. Arriving at the regimental front in mid-morning, clad only in shorts and a fatigue cap and armed with a brace of .45-caliber pistols and an M1 rifle, he casually commenced an inspection tour.

"Look at that silly damn fool," a GI jeered, "he's asking to get his ass shot off." Some sergeant, who did not know the new regimental commander, bellowed out, "Hey, fella! You better get to hell away from here!"

George, however, was out to prove to his men that Japanese small-arms fire was generally ineffective against moving targets. He calmly completed his cook's tour of the front, while the Japs peppered away at him without coming close.

On the following morning, the regiment again attacked. The 1st Battalion advanced to the west and the 3rd Battalion struck at the northern approaches. But once again it was Ferry's 2nd Battalion that enjoyed the greatest success, overrunning its objective a little after nine in the morning. As the assault troops reached the summit, they spotted a three-inch mountain howitzer out in the open, its crew sprawled carelessly in the shade. The Japs raced toward their gun, but they were swiftly cut down by the fast-shooting Americal soldiers.

Aerial view of Henderson Field on Guadalcanal; defended by the Americal and Marines in bloody attacks by the Japanese.

Aerial view of the mountainous jungle terrain on Guadalcanal taken by an Americal Forward Observer in his Piper Cub aircraft.

Hole from Japanese landmine on Guadalcanal which killed over 9 Americal soldiers and wounded many more when an ammunition truck detonated the mine.



The Guadalcanal campaign drew to a close as elements of the Americal, along with elements of the 2nd Marine Division, pushed toward Koli Point. During the advance, when the Americal soldiers of the 182nd Infantry were under brutal mortar fire, First Sergeant James J. Gatrney of Lowell, Massachusetts raced 200 yards through the impact area to rescue one of his officers. He brought the officer out, on his back, lugged him to an aid station and then sprinted back through the exploding shells to repair broken communications lines.

The important enemy stronghold at Kokumbona fell in late January. As the main U.S. force pushed toward Cape Esperance along the northern coast of the island, General Sebree (Sebree had become Division Commander January 3, 1942, when General Patch was named XIV Corps Commander) dispatched a reinforced battalion to the south coast, to land in the enemy's rear. A battalion of the 132nd, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel. George F. Ferry, was dispatched to make the end run.

Colonel George of the 132nd was in command as Ferry's reinforced battalion moved ashore February 1, covered by U.S. fighter planes. Although Jap bombers roared overhead, none made any passes at the beachhead as Colonel George led his command along the southern coastal trails toward Titi. On February 7, George was wounded and Ferry took command. Major H. Walt Butler, the exec, took command of the battalion as the landing force continued its march to Marovo . . . Kamimbo Bay. . . around Cape Esperance . . . to Tenaro . . . and the long-awaited linkup with the troops who had marched along the northern route. With the juncture of these two forces, the organized resistance of the Japanese on Guadalcanal came to an end. America's first offensive campaign in the Pacific was in the bag, and "Bull" Halsey jubilantly wrote to the first commander of the Americal Division; "When I sent a Patch to act as tailor for Guadalcanal, I did not expect him to remove the enemy's pants and sew it on so quickly. . . thanks and congratulations."

Bougainville

Out of the mud and misery of Guadalcanal-the Americal's first baptism of fire--came the Navy's Presidential Unit Citation, and a few weeks after the conclusion of the campaign, the tired malaria-ridden Americal troopers were relieved. Everyone half-expected, half-anticipated a return to New Caledonia but instead the convoy headed southeast to the fabled island of Fiji. The Division set up camp upon Viti Levu, the principal island of Fiji. It regained its health, trained its replacements and enjoyed the niceties of civilization in the crisp, friendly "liberty city" of Suva. The Fiji interlude came to an end in mid-December, 1942. The rear echelon of the Division was dispatched to Guadalcanal, until such time as it could join the bulk of the Americal in a new forward area.

Once again the Division was sent in to relieve a weary, battered Marine outfit. This time it was the 3rd Marine Division at Empress Augusta Bay and the blood-drenched

perimeter on Bougainville Island in the northern Solomons. It was two months since the initial landings, but it was still touch and go. The Americal arrived just as the "second battle of Bougainville" was shaping up.

Once again it was the veteran 164th Infantry that marched into combat first, under the command of Colonel Crump Garvin, a West Pointer who hailed from Arkansas. Next came the 182nd Infantry, led by Colonel William D. Long, a West Point (1920) classmate of Garvin. Then came the 132nd Infantry commanded by Colonel Joe K. Bush, who had been an Army private in World War I. The Division itself was now under the command of Major General John R. Hodge, a veteran regular who had earned a commission in the first world war. Hodge decided that steel helmets were more of a hindrance than a help in the jungle, so he put the Americal combat infantrymen in green "fatigue" caps. Patrols moved out with orders to shoot at anything wearing a helmet. The neighboring 37th Division, unfortunately, did not know of this dictum until one of its patrols was nearly annihilated by the Americal. The mix-up was settled peacefully, and no casualties were reported.

Mid-January found the Americal battling grimly in Bougainville. This island bastion, which had been overrun by the Japanese in the early days of 1942, was destined to be the Americal's scene of action for more than a year. When Company C of the 132nd, supported by tanks, made a frontal attack to extend the bridgehead at the Torokina on January 30, 1943, the infantry company was stopped cold by fierce mortar and machine-gun fire. The tanks were forced to button up. Back on the main battle line with a reserve platoon in the Company B sector, Staff Sergeant Jessie R. Drowley, a one-time farm boy from Luzerne, Michigan, watched with mounting anger as Company C soldiers toppled to the ground. Suddenly he bolted from cover and dashed through the enemy fire to pull two of the wounded men back to safety, while another member of his squad rescued a third. Drowley then sprinted up to one of the tanks, climbed aboard and hammered on the turret to get the crew's attention. He outlined a plan to them, and the tank commander, nodded. One of the tankers gave him a Thompson sub-machine gun, and Drowley handed over his M1 in exchange. Then the engines began to roar. With Drowley riding "shotgun" with the fast-shooting tommy gun and acting as its eyes, the tank headed toward a pillbox whose fire was holding up the attack. When the tank was within 20 feet of the pillbox, Drowley was hit in the chest, but he hung on stubbornly. Bullets crackled and ricocheted around him as he loaded the tommy gun with tracer bullets to help guide the tankers toward the target. The tank plunged forward. Enemy fire from all sides converged on Drowley as he crouched behind the scant protection of the tank turret. Again a Jap bullet found its mark. This time the Americal sergeant was shot in the left eye and he toppled from the tank. He staggered to his feet just as the tank went into action. Only after two pillboxes were knocked out did Drowley go back to an aid station.

The Americal departs Fiji after rest and refitting, to fight in the jungles of Bougainville

Company C, 132nd Regiment train in jungle assault tactics upon arrival in Bougainville

Americal troops advance past tanks in Jungle attack



As the Americal developed its positions on Bougainville, it was reinforced by the 1st Fiji Battalion; by the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment (first Negro combat infantry troops in the Pacific); by the 25th RCT of the 83rd Division, another Negro outfit; and by the 93rd Recon Troop. It fought the Jap on the beaches, in the jungle and in the hills and ridges of the towering Crown Prince Range. By this time the Americal was an "Old Pro" at the nasty business of war. After Private First Class Sebastian B. Poretto of Brooklyn, New York, a 164th Infantry soldier, killed 14 Japs and wounded two with just 18 rounds of ammunition, he was called upon by his company commander to account for the two "wasted" rounds. "Hell, Captain," replied Poretto, "two of 'em was chicken-they ducked just as I fired."

March brought with it the fury of a Japanese counter-attack. The Americal and its sister division in the XIV Corps, the 37th (Buckeye) Division, were pounded by artillery and heavy-caliber mortar fire. Division and Corps artillery drove the Japs back into their hillside caves. Then the infantry battle started in earnest. The outpost of the 182nd Infantry on Hill 260 was clobbered. Then the main battle line from the hill to Eagle Creek was ablaze. The 2nd Battalion hurried forward to recapture the hill. Company F moved in first to make contact with survivors of the outpost garrison, as Company E tackled the southwest slope. The Company E attack was in many respects the outstanding unit action of the Americal's wartime history. The company smashed its way up a 45-degree slope against enemy rifle and machine-gun fire and withstood a series of brutal assaults that reduced its fighting strength to 35 men. Even with three-quarters of its strength spent, the company gallantly fought on for two days, holding back the furious enemy. When the survivors marched down the hill, their ranks numbered only 24.

During the fight at Bloody Hill it was almost impossible to get the wounded back to the rear. Private Don Blaisdell, of the 57th Engineers, made trip after trip into enemy-held territory on errands of mercy, until he himself was killed. A brave Nisei interpreter, Staff Sergeant Shigeru Yamashita, knowing full well that torture and death awaited him if he was captured, moved boldly into the Japanese lines on Bloody Hill to learn details of Japanese troop organization.

Suddenly the Japanese pulled off Hill 260, and the Americal began to surge forward. In the waning days of March, General Hodge left the Division and Major General Robert McClure became the Americal's fourth commander. The grinding war on Bougainville continued through the spring, the summer and the fall.

It was during this period that Lieutenant Raymond Ross formed his famous "Dime-a-Dozen Club." The lieutenant agreed to pay ten cents to every member who killed 12 Japs, with the condition that each kill had to be witnessed by another man. Ten soldiers of the Americal joined what Ross called the "most exclusive little club in the world." They really hit the jackpot one day, when they ambushed a little enemy village in the hills. A force of Japs were relaxing in their huts when the Dime-a-Dozen boys showed up with

rifles and automatic rifles blazing. They sprayed their fire a foot off the ground and stampeded the enemy soldiers, none of whom escaped. The club members accounted for 26 enemy casualties in that single encounter.

The Dime-a-Dozen Club nearly lost its intrepid leader when Lieutenant Ross and his men surrounded a squad of Japs on one of the trails beyond Torokina. The lieutenant had a bead on the Jap officer who was in the lead, but felt guilty about shooting him in the back. So he whistled. When the officer turned around, Ross shot him. But he only winged him, because he had been ordered to bring in a prisoner. The Jap officer played dead until Ross reached his side. Then he leaped up and started to grapple with the American officer. One of Ross' BAR men moved up swiftly and cut down the Jap.

"Rats!" someone growled in the rear, "there goes a bloody case of beer." The rest of the patrol looked on numbly-the prize for a captive was a case of beer.

The Philippines

Midway through 1944, the regimental cannon companies, which had come out from the States to join the three regiments of the Americal, turned in their puny 75mm howitzers and received the big self-propelled 105mm howitzers. The Army terminology for the new weapon was M7, but the troops called it "The Priest," because the machine-gun ring mount resembled a pulpit. The 164th Infantry acquired an M7 that became famous in the Americal as "Daisy Mae." Many months later, "Daisy Mae" achieved prominence during the "Battle above the Clouds" on the island of Negros in the Philippines.

In November, Brigadier General William H. Arnold, who until that time was Chief of Staff of the XIV Corps, replaced General McClure as commanding general of the Americal. Its fifth and final wartime commander, "Duke" Arnold was, at 43, the youngest division commander in the Pacific. He was a 1924 West Point graduate. Under Arnold, the Americal finally moved out of Bougainville and moved up to the island of Leyte, which had been invaded by our forces in October. While the major portion of the Americal labored in the mud and jungle of Leyte, a reinforced battalion of the 182nd Infantry was ordered to garrison Catbalogan, Samar. The battalion task force was also ordered to assault the Capul area. Other elements of the Americal, meanwhile, made an amphibious invasion of Biri Island.

The Division overran the islands one by one, and then it was suddenly reassembled on Leyte, where it was assigned to General Robert L. Eichelberger's Eighth Army. The remaining elements of the 132nd and 182nd Infantry Regiments, still in action on Leyte, were ordered to return to Division control. Mid-March found the Division on the beaches of Dulag, loading out for combat once again.

The Americal was sent to attack Cebu. Intelligence estimates had grossly underrated the Jap defenses of this island. It turned out that it was the headquarters of the Japanese general who commanded both the central

26th Signal Company Radio Transmitter tent on Bougainville, near Americal division headquarters.

Mount Bagana on Bougainville, an active volcano during the war. Photo was taken by an Americal forward observer aircraft.

Army surgeon operating on Bougainville in primitive bunker.



Philippines and the island of Bohol. Far more than the estimated 13,000 Japanese combat troops were there to greet the Americal, when it surged ashore five miles southwest of Cebu City. The beaches were heavily mined and strewn with obstacles. There was no cover, no concealment. The assault regiment (the 182nd Infantry) had to march in and take it on the chin.

Brave crews of Americal soldiers with mine detectors worked feverishly to clear lanes across the beaches so that the infantry might begin to move inland. Within an hour, the 182nd had pushed through the beachside town of Talisay, one-quarter mile inland, while elements of the 132nd advanced fully 800 yards, 90 minutes after landing. Soon General Arnold transferred his command post from the USS Spencer to the shore. In less than five days, Cebu City, its airfield and invaluable dock facilities were in the hands of the Americal.

The tough fight was characterized by bitter rear-guard actions, such as that encountered by the 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry, in the gloomy butte that became known to the Americal as Watt Hill. With three U.S. tanks firing in support, Company A tackled the steep slopes of the hill. As the Americal soldiers reached the summit, the heavily mined hill erupted like a volcano. The force of the explosion was so terrific that the three tanks were flipped onto their backs like helpless turtles.

The Japs fought back with determination, but "Duke" Arnold squelched them with what General Eichelberger later termed a "sparkling and successful maneuver." He sent the 164th Infantry on a wide 27-mile sweep around the Japanese flank. They traveled for three nights, holing up during the day. By now the Americal veterans were such experienced jungle fighters, that they could beat the Jap at his own game. They made the move without being detected and fell upon the enemy's rear at the same time the other two regiments attacked from the front. That was the beginning of the end for the Japanese forces on Cebu Island.

The Americal was soon ready to move on again. Elements of the 164th Infantry slipped out of Cebu in a convoy of landing craft and moved southward to capture Negros and contain the Japs in the high, rugged Cuernos de Negros. After the Negros campaign and a series of island-hopping jobs, the Division once more reassembled on Cebu.

It was at this time that Corporal Jack Flynn's mother wrote to the War Department and asked that the Army give her son a birthday party. She enclosed \$5 with her request. A kindly staff officer in Washington marked the note with a priority, and it was soon winging its way across the Pacific into the hands of Flynn's commanding officer. So Cannon Company of the 182nd Infantry tossed a birthday party for Corporal Jack Flynn on Cebu, complete with a birthday cake. When the festivities were over, the C.O. handed Jack his mother's check.

On the serious side, the Division turned its attention to Operation Olympic-the forthcoming invasion of Japan. The Americal, in company with the veteran 43rd Infantry Division and 1st Cavalry Division, was scheduled to forge

the XI Corps beachhead at Ariaka Wan in southern Kyushu. Then the Enola Gay atom-bombed Hiroshima. The sudden excitement of peace, after 89 months of war, was almost too much for the Americal veterans, who learned the great news while in their camp on Cebu. Private First Class John Cook, a Chicagoan in the 164th Infantry, who had got through the war without a scratch, was shaving when someone dashed by shouting, "The Japs have surrendered!" Cook was so unnerved that the razor slipped, and he got a deep gash in his neck. "Migawd!" screamed a buddy in dismay, "Cook's gone and cut his ear from throat to throat!"

Occupation Duty - Japan

The Americal Division took its last look at its last battlefield on the morning of September 1, 1945, when it sailed out of Cebu headed for occupation duty in Japan. They docked at Yokohama, and then the elements of the Division fanned out into the Kanagawa, Yamanashi and Nagano Prefectures. On the whole it was a peaceful occupation, but the Americal was kept on its toes. One day a 182nd Infantry patrol busted up a session at the Yamakita Young Men's School, where a group of students were defiantly going through the paces of close-order drill. Elsewhere there was trouble when a Japanese Naval Police officer refused to deal with Americans of lesser rank; he was straightened out in a hurry. Then, in a series of surprise raids ordered by General MacArthur, the Americal closed all Japanese banks and financial institutions on September 28. The weirdest adventure of all, however, befell Captain Richard L. Cohen, of Philadelphia, a member of the 3rd Battalion, 164th Infantry. Cohen's outfit was posted as the security force in the Yamanashi Prefecture, an area north and west of Tokyo. One day his C.O., Lieutenant Colonel Howard N. Smalley, sent for him. He made a mark on the map spread out before him. "Seems our people found 102 bars of silver stashed away in a warehouse in Odawara," he said. "Intelligence says that's peanuts compared to what actually was shipped out of Tokyo last spring. Now, If there is a huge silver hoard hidden somewhere- and Intelligence is pretty certain there is- we've got to get our hands on it before it goes underground for keeps!" Cohen whistled softly. "It should be a job for the cops." "In this case, you're the cops," he was told.

At five o'clock that same evening, Cohen, two lieutenants and a platoon-strength patrol from Company I, hit the road. At ten P.M. they stopped at Kofu, just west of Tokyo, to bivouac for the night. Next morning they rumbled into Kusakabe and pulled up in front of the police station. Cohen saw the chief, Yoschichiko Oshiba, and explained that the purpose of the patrol was to make a survey of all available warehouse space in the district. In this manner he and his men were able to inspect every storage place in the city, without arousing suspicion. All day long, motorized details sped from one location to another, duly noting capacity measurements on official-looking documents- and carefully examining each warehouse for some telltale clue to hidden loot. At nightfall, a crestfallen and dog-tired group returned to the City Hall to set up quarters for the night. The first day's work had netted nothing at all.

Tanks overrun Japanese position during an attack

Hill 260 on Bougainville, being examined by staff officers after the bloody fighting to hold the hill. The tree served as an observation platform for Americal troops.

1LT Boyd Vokes, Artillery Forward Observer and "Cub Pilot", awarded an Air Medal for valor after flying over Jap positions in his small plane to direct artillery barrages on Bougainville.



While chatting with Police Chief Oshiba the following morning, Cohen casually mentioned that he had not seen the well known Kasugai-Mura Warehouse. The chief appeared to be puzzled by his remark. The GI interpreter turned to Cohert. "He says he has never heard of a Kasugai-Mura Warehouse; that you must be mistaken. He says' there is a town called Kasugai close-by, though, and that there are several warehouses there that the farmers use for storing the crops. The chief says he would consider it an honor to provide you with a guide to Kasugai."

"Tell the chief I accept his offer," Cohen replied, and he gave the signal for his patrols to prepare to move out.

None of the warehouses at Kasugai contained any suspicious materials, and as the end of the day approached, it looked as if they had come up against another blank wall. Then Cohen got his first break. Late in the day, one of the search party uncovered ten tons of tin in a freight shed near the railroad station. The railroad express manager was not available, so Cohen sent for the assistant manager, a surly character named Oruyama. Oruyama testily told the U.S. captain that he knew only that the tin had been consigned to a farmer named Kashihiro Haibara, a prominent man in the village. "Get this straight," Cohen told him. "You aren't to touch so much as an ounce of that metal. I'll be back!"

At eight o'clock the next morning, Cohen dispatched Lieutenant Holland with 12 men to continue the probe of Kusakabe and the Higashi-Kura sector.

He, himself, led another detail out to the well-kept farm of Kashihiro Haibara.

The Haibara farm could be more accurately described as an estate. It covered several square miles, and a private road off the main highway led up to the main house. The wealthy farmer greeted his visitors courteously. They sparred politely for a few minutes, then Haibara brought out a bottle of wine. When one of the members of the patrol casually admired an exquisite doll Haibara insisted that the American accept it as gift. He nodded politely when the Americans explained that they wished to look around the grounds and agreed to show the way. Cohen, walking alongside the old man, noted that the estate consisted principally of the main house and two large, barn-like buildings. You could hide an awful lot of silver in there, he thought to himself. But, a thorough search of the buildings uncovered nothing, nor did the mine detectors give clue to any buried metal. By six in the evening Cohen was ready to give up.

Smiling pleasantly Haibara showed his guests back to the main house. As the patrol prepared to leave, Cohen turned to the farmer, with a casual question. "What are your plans for that shipment of tin?"

"Tin?"

"The shipment at the freight shed," Cohen continued, carefully watching the farmer's eyes. "Oh, yes," Haibara exclaimed. He smiled again, displaying uneven teeth. His explanation was simple and it seemed quite straightforward. The tin had been consigned to him by the Mitsubishi Warehouse Company in Tokyo, for safekeeping, during the

U.S. bomb raids of mid-April. He understood that the tin was eventually to be used in the manufacture of kitchen utensils. Cohen nodded thoughtfully and asked the farmer whether he had been placed in charge of any other metals. Haibara shook his head forcefully. On that note Cohen took leave of the old man and returned to his base at Kusakabe.

On the following morning Cohen decided that it was time to get the chief of police into the act. He decided to put his cards on the table. The chief was deferential, but he said he was certain that the Americans had been misinformed. "After all," he protested reasonably. "if shipments of such large value had come into this area, surely I would have been notified."

For the first time since their meeting almost two days before, Cohen thought about Oruyama, the belligerent assistant freight manager, and decided to pay him another visit. While Oruyama scowled in annoyance, Cohen, via the interpreter, continued to throw questions at him. Several of the soldiers, meanwhile, rechecked the goods stacked in the freight warehouse. In an innocent-looking corner, behind a flimsy partition, they uncovered 43 tons of tin. Cohen was summoned immediately.

He returned to the freight office and the captain really laced into the sullen warehouseman. "I told you I wanted to see freight receipts for all metal shipments. Where's the receipt for that tin?"

Oruyama was stony-faced. "It must have come up by truck instead of rail."

"That's a lie," Cohen told him.

Suddenly, the GI Interpreter, who had been going through the receipts Oruyama had furnished, made a discovery. "I don't understand the writing too well Captain," he said, "but I do understand the figures, and here's a funny thing."

In April, 43 tons of medical supplies arrived-all consigned to Oruyama.

"Forty-three tons of medical supplies!" Cohen said incredulously. "Hell! That's more medical supplies than there are in all of Japan. I think we've got these babies now." He gave the order for the men to pile in the trucks as he headed for his command car. "Let's pay that friendly old farmer another visit," he told the driver.

Racing toward the Haibara estate, Cohen rapidly reviewed the events of the day. He was puzzled over the old farmer's cordiality and confidence. It probably meant that the silver had been removed-that he was too late.

When Haibara greeted them this time he seemed ill at ease. "You want to look around again?" he faltered. "I fear that will be quite impossible." He explained that his foreman had left for the day and had accidentally taken all the keys with him. There was cold silence when the interpreter finished relaying his words to the captain.

"Tell him he'd better produce another set of keys," Cohen said menacingly. "We know he's got the silver and we're going to find it if we have to tear this place apart."

The old man listened stonily, then sighed. From an inner fold of his Oriental robes, he produced the keys and handed them over to Cohen.

Beachhead – The Americal Division
lands on Cebu

Americal soldiers hug the Cebu beach
against Jap sniper fire

The Americal's 182nd Regiment ad-
vances on Cebu City.



Once again the search party started scouring the vast estate. Every inch of the barns was investigated-the earthen floors were probed and spaded-to no avail. Now the young infantry officer felt his worst fears had been confirmed. Haibara must have removed the silver. Still if he had, why had he been so jumpy when they arrived?

Cohen's eyes roved over the great estate, and then a wide grin creased his face. Beckoning for the men to follow him, he strode purposefully down the private road toward the dilapidated gatehouse. Old Haibara stumbled along behind him, weakly protesting as they broke down the door. When their eyes became accustomed to the inky blackness of the cramped interior, they saw a number of canvas and straw-covered mounds. Cohen walked over to one of the mounds and tore aside the wrappings. A gleaming stack of silver bars met his eyes. Operation Treasure Hunt was in the bag.

Now Farmer Haibara was in a sweat. He was headed for serious trouble, and he knew it. He admitted to Cohen that he, and other farmers in the neighborhood, had been entrusted with varying amounts of precious and semi-precious metals. He produced a record that enabled the Americans to recover enormous stores of copper, tin, zinc, lead and antimony.

When Captain Dick Cohen completed his inventory for Colonel Smalley, he found himself in possession of exactly 2,660 ingots of silver-over 100 tons. His haul was valued by the experts at \$1,343,000.00.

Soon after the conclusion of Operation Treasure Hunt, the Americal was alerted for movement to the States. In December, the veteran Pacific division was disbanded at Fort Lawton, Washington. It finished its wartime career as the only U.S. Division without a number, only a name. But it was quite a name.

WWII Historians note: In subsequent 2012 issues of the Americal Journal more detail will appear about the Americal in World War II as part of our 70th Anniversary series. The next issue will focus on Task Force 6814 and duty in New Caledonia.

Editor's note: This story is a reprint from a 1947 edition of SAGA magazine, Lloyd Morrell saved the article for reprinting at this time



Americal soldier examining a Japanese heavy artillery piece.

Americal soldiers work with local Japanese police

Occupation soldiers with former Japanese soldiers – Imperial Palace Tokyo

Left
Americal occupation soldiers with Japanese children

Post-War housing in suburb of Tokyo

The ravages of war – truck is powered by steam engine behind cab



Reflections From The Past.... Americal Vets Remember

Task Force 6814

(Aboard the troopship Thomas Barry, steaming down the east coast from New York) Sergeant Van Meter, a regular Army man told us, "This is what I got from the company commander, Captain Coyle. No company formation will take place while we are aboard the ship. Wakeup call will be at 5:30 A.M. Keep your assigned sleeping areas as clean as possible. Two meals will be served each day, breakfast and dinner at the times posted in the mess hall. Don't forget to eat. A bar of saltwater soap will be issued to everyone so you can take a saltwater shower anytime you want. Don't forget to take one. You can go up on deck anytime you want. Wear or carry your life jacket at all times. Try to attend all the ships activities. We are not alone. There are 4,250 men and women aboard this ship. Don't listen to rumors. Nobody knows where this ship is going. Company dismissed"

Alex Kunevicius – 22nd Ordnance Company

Most men appeared content as they played friendly games of cards such as bridge, pinochle or hearts. Little, if any betting was done. However the big games of chance were held below deck. There, craps and poker were played for extremely high stakes. The dice were rolled on a blanket, and the game –betting supervisor took a percentage out. He made certain all bets were covered.

The money from all men in the convoy eventually gravitated into the hands of a few. The high stakes caused the money to change hands repeatedly. A few men made a fortune while others lost a fortune. For example, Sgt. Walter J. Motyl of Company E, 132nd Regiment won \$12,000 dollars. He sent \$9,000 home and had \$3,000 to spend in Australia. Money became scarce. There were no pay days. Later, in Australia, money was almost non-existent.

Orchids In The Mud – 132nd Regiment

New Caledonia

The first sight of New Caledonia was from aboard ship. A heavy morning mist was present and the island had a mysterious appearance on the horizon. It was a rugged mass unfamiliar to most Americans. As the ship neared the island, our course was intercepted by hidden reefs over which the ocean broke into a magnificent spray thrown continuously, high into the air. The shallows formed by the reefs were beautifully colored by various shades of green, aquamarine and blue, bordered by a snow-white spray.

As the colorful shoreline came into view through the mist, one noticed a town of white-wall houses with red roofs nestled on the beaches in the shadow of the rocky mountains and rolling green hills. There were barren-appearing heights with clumps of dark green eucalyptus trees scattered here and there. Higher boulders awkwardly stuck out of the shady beaches. M/Sgt. John Brani rated New Caledonia more beautiful than any other land he had ever seen; the tranquility and beauty was an unusual splendor to behold.

Orchids In The Mud – 132nd Regiment

As our army poured into New Caledonia through the port of Noumea, immediately the army units were transported by truck to the upper part of the island which the French called "The Bush". For the French, going to the upper part of the island was like going to another world. Army camps were constructed along the dirt highway for the entire length of the island, about 300 miles. Two large army trucks passing each other had a hard time. Some of the mountains were high and some of the ravines measured a thousand feet down or even more. New Caledonia, one of the world's greatest producers of nickel, used its processed nickel ore, dark iron in color, to surface the highway. Everything along the highway, trees and bushes from the dust, had an orange glow. Drivers using the highway acquired the same orange glow. Some men called it "The Devils Highway"

Alex Kunevicius – 22nd Ordnance Company

Guadalcanal

Plywood Higgins boats without ramps quickly unloaded the troops. Hamer and I were able to rejoin Company H after a brief search. First Platoon was detailed to unload hundreds of cases of gelignite explosive. We had formed a pile about twenty-five feet square and four feet high when word came of a Condition Yellow. That meant Japanese bombers were on their way, arriving soon. Condition Red quickly followed.

The approaching Japanese bombers, all twenty-four of them, were difficult to spot at first, because of their high altitude. They were flying in V formations, much like geese. Apparently the enemy had focused on the destruction of Henderson Field, the main airfield on Guadalcanal, named after a Marine aviator. Under scant cover we heard bombs exploding in the distance. Krump! krump! krump! A minute later the bombers swung over the beach to drop a few bombs perhaps three or four hundred yards from my location. The 164th Infantry lost its first man that morning.

Charles H. Walker – 164th Regiment

Our landing craft hit the beach and dropped its front exit ramp. As we ran off the landing craft, I think I heard sirens first, and then someone on a loudspeaker shouted "Condition Red. Clear the beaches". I believe the ships gunners opened with anti-aircraft fire first. Almost instantly the Japanese appeared, flying at treetop level with machine guns spraying bullets along the beach.

We all ran toward the palm trees. Conrad Tenant ran first. I was right behind him. He kept shouting, "Hit the dirt" but kept running. I ran with him. When we hit the dirt I was lying next to a 50-gallon barrel of gasoline, and the other guys were there with me. The gunfire stopped for a moment. When I got up to see what happened and looked across the beach, I saw the ships were turning around and heading for open waters.

Alex Kunevicius – 22nd Ordnance Company

Bougainville

A new commanding officer was assigned to Company H, a young West Pointer just out of school. He had evidently gone directly from graduation to the infantry school at Fort Benning to earn his first-lieutenants bars. Lieutenant Dick Hamer, the Company H Commander, with his previous Guadalcanal combat experience, was set back from company commander to executive officer since his promotion to captain had not come through. This was an obvious WPPA (West Point Protective Association) scam. Sad to say, due to his lack of experience, the new guy was killed on his first patrol.

Charles H. Walker – 164th Regiment

While on Bougainville we were subjected to an earthquake every couple of months. The ground would move in a slow, undulating motion, causing pots and pans in the mess kitchen to fall to the ground. This usually lasted from five to as many as twenty seconds.

On one patrol up the Crown Prince Range, the rocks began to tremble. Although we could see no movement, the mountain groaned and grated as massive shifts were made. The sounds were much like those from that old radio show, "Inner Sanctum". Quite eerie!

Charles H. Walker – 164th Regiment

I got to thinking about the odd things that happened to me during my service. Things that are funny now, but they weren't then.

Like the first foxhole I dug on Bougainville. When morning came, my foxhole was half full of water. But I was safe; then the time we were reconnoitering a trail to find a way to build a road to B Company on Bougainville. We were kind of lost and Lt. Diamond asked me to climb a tree and see if I could see anything. I climbed up about 50 feet and I could see which way we should go, when something started to bite me. They were red ants, about three quarters of an inch long, and they were after me. I started down as fast as I could and finally fell out of the tree. Luckily I fell into a big bush. The guys helped me brush the ants off as they laughed.

Darrell Wardien – A Company, 57th Engineers

(West of the Torokina River...) A mass charge was made down the hill by our entire company. So many grenades were thrown that I was worried about our own men being wounded. Two or three Japanese did escape to the west; at least one of them was wounded.

I stopped alongside an enemy soldier I thought dead, going through his pockets with my knife. He suddenly rolled over to face me, a grenade in his hand, his arm extended. Startled, I reacted – killing him. It was unnecessary, for he had nothing solid upon which to pop the primer on his grenade; the ground was all soft mud. Whether he had fallen and knocked himself out, or was sleeping, or even playing possum, is conjecture. He had not been wounded.

Charles H. Walker – 164th Regiment

Cebu

We were ordered to board our assigned amphibious craft. The bow doors of the LST opened and the first Alligator went down the ramp into the water. It was kind of scary to watch – the bow of the craft nosed into the water and it looked like it was headed for the bottom. However, the bow came up, the craft leveled off and it was on its way towards the beach – now it was our turn – we went down the ramp and on our way.

We were in the second wave and we could watch as the first wave hit the beach. The Alligators were ashore. We could not see any sign of Japanese resistance but we could see puffs of black smoke as the Alligators moved ahead, they stopped but we didn't know why – we didn't know that they were being knocked out by land mines.

We were now heading for shore FAST and as we closed on the beach we could see why the first wave had halted – land mines had blown off the tracks of the Alligators. Everything was a mess. Many men jumped out of their vehicles and headed inland. Many didn't make it. Other men huddled around the Alligators, afraid to move.

We were soon in the same predicament. Our craft hit the beach and we unloaded. The craft started to move forward again, hit a mine, losing a track, and stopped. Everybody went on their own looking for cover. There were a few bodies around – the first and second wave did not get off the beach and the third and fourth wave were reaching shore. It was near chaos!

An officer with a swagger stick was pacing the beach and making the men go forward. I was watching this from a mine hole and soon decided to get out and trust to God that I would arrive safely on the high ground.

It was a scary time as another sergeant and I walked off the beach. We had lost contact with our men and our machine guns and mortars were nowhere to be seen. We reached inland where the trees had been blown down and fires were burning. The smoke was making our eyes burn. After getting away from the burning mess we arrived at a clearing where the men who were lucky to get off the beach alive were gathered. I found my whole crew here. Truly this was a miracle. I did not lose a man and they had the three mortars. Lucky they weren't needed on the beach.

Fred Wonson – 182nd Regiment

(Babag Ridge) PFC Orville Hutchison of Company B was surprised one night at Babag Mountain when a Japanese soldier appeared from "nowhere" inside his company's perimeter. The Jap bolted for the outside. Several members of the Third Platoon shot him. The lone Jap came from a cave previously sealed off at one end. The other hidden end was opened. The men from Company B found the cave to contain at least two dozen Japanese; in short order the Japs were killed.

1st Lt. Frank Castano, a medical administrative officer of the Third Battalion, 132nd Regiment, had a similar experience. He was slightly wounded when two Japanese soldiers suddenly popped up out of a hole inside our lines and tossed explosive charges at him. Lt. Castano was evacuated. On Bougainville he was twice awarded the Silver Star. In the Philippines he had received a field commission.

Orchids In The Mud – 132nd Regiment



Leyte

One of our bipod machine guns opened up at about fifteen hundred yards across to the target, pinning down the enemy. The Company G men had been warned that we were firing; they paid no attention to the snapping bullets. At the last moment we ceased firing, they took the hill. Someone called on the radio thanking me.

An hour later we ran into another hot potato. Johnny Divers, an H Company machine-gunner, an experienced man, decided to take the point of one of our platoons. There was a single shot fired to my right, above Fedje and me. We tried to penetrate the bush toward the shot, but at that instant someone at the head of our patrol began firing steadily. We hurried to Malcolm Walsh to find he had killed nearly twenty Japanese soldiers who thought they were surrounded in a box canyon. One enemy had lay back on a huge boulder and committed suicide with a grenade. Walsh was not excited, the coolest man I ever saw. I made sure he got a medal for his exceptional courage. We went in the back way for Divers, and found him dead.

Charles H. Walker – 164th Regiment

(Battle of Buga Buga Ridge 23 February 1945) Meanwhile Sgt. Steven's group had reached the hill at the base of the finger leading to Buga Buga Ridge. Stevens initially deployed the group with Corporal Hines' squad facing to the northwest. Sgt. Smith's squad facing to the west and the group CP in the center, with Sgt. Swinkunas, Nassif the aid man, taking care of the wounded, Thornton and Lt. Hitter with his FO detachment.

As Stevens did not think it possible to dig in he gave instructions for everyone to get into prone positions. At 1600 hours there was considerable firing and all at once the Japanese soldiers were nearly on them. The main Japanese attack came from the northeast, nearly overrunning the CP. Nassif was giving blood plasma to Thornton at the time and Thatcher of H Company shot two Japanese that were nearly on top of Nassif, who only glanced at the enemy soldiers, and continued to give blood plasma. Lt. Hitter was talking on his radio but had time to pick up his carbine and kill an enemy soldier. Duncan killed the enemy officer leading the attack, while Shupe got three with his BAR and Rogers and Sgt. Smith killed two more, effectively stopping the attack.

Lt Hammet – 182nd Infantry

Negros Island

(Dumaguette) Easy Company made a drive along the right flank and I followed closely behind. Suddenly, on a rock escarpment slightly to my left and above, several Japanese popped up to make a bayonet attack as skirmishers. About a dozen were in the line. Their officer, who was in the center of the line, had only a saber, which he waved above his head. One Easy man was trapped on the left edge, for he had climbed up on the rock with difficulty. When the closest Japanese came at him with his bayonet, he was still climbing, unable to fire his gun. To save himself he jumped over the edge of the cliff, dropping at least twenty feet or more but saving his life; he ended up with only a broken leg.

The antic scene was like a Hollywood movie, but Easy wiped out every Japanese soldier but one. The amazing part was no one shot at the officer; he was no threat, he had no gun. He hesitated for long seconds as everyone watched. Looking to the right, then to the left, he was thunderstruck. All his men were gone! He finally turned, running back over the hill. It so surprised us that everyone broke into laughter.

Charles H. Walker – 164th Regiment



Samar

(Capul) We made the assault on the beach at about 8:30 am, after an air strike by two navy Corsairs. I never saw any damage done by the air strike. With uncanny precision we landed exactly where the Japanese had two of their 77mm cannons concealed in a narrow mangrove strip at the edge of the water. The beach was filled with coral rock and was not sandy. When the tide was high, the water nearly reached the mangroves. We weren't over 100 feet from the mangroves when they fired the cannon. The shell hit the water about five feet from the edge of the LCVF (landing craft). It made a waterspout just like the one seen in the movies with beach invasions. The important thing was that they missed and I survived.

Nearby we had a lone PT boat without torpedoes. Instead the deck was covered with .30 and .50-caliber machine guns. When the Jap 77mm round was fired the PT boat started firing all of its machine guns and the Japanese didn't get off another round. Those guys on the open deck of the PT were highly motivated to shoot! The amount of fire was impressive. Needless to say I was not in all that great shape mentally when the ramp of the LCVF dropped and we waded ashore. I have said that if I had been required to shoot that BAR I could have hit everything in the general direction the gun was pointed. It had a rate of fire of about 700 rounds per minute and a burst of a few seconds of a badly shaking gun would cover quite a bit of territory.

Lewis G. Mayfield – 182nd Regiment

Japan Occupation

It happened early in the occupation of Japan. About twenty of us were sent to secure and guard a Tokyo arsenal. There were about twenty Japanese soldiers living in the guard house, by the gate, and a group of officers in the administration building. The officers made us feel welcome – much bowing and smiling – and showed us to a large room where we set up our cots. We soon became friendly with the guards at the gate with the exception of the sergeant who always looked at us with a scowl.

The Japanese soldiers had a large room, with a charcoal fire in the middle for cooking, and sleeping quarters in the rear. We would sit on benches around this fire, five or six of us and five or six of them, comparing items such as cigarette lighters, fountain pens, etc. Their smoking materials were made up of hand rolled cigarettes held together with rice paste and little pipes with a stem about three inches long with a funnel-shaped bowl about 1/2-inch high.

We had a man with us that had the largest pipe I have ever seen. When the Japanese took out their little pipes to have a smoke – two little puffs and it was over – he would make a big show of lighting up this huge pipe. The Japanese mouths would fall open and their eyes grew wide with amazement at all the smoke curling up to the ceiling.

One evening he suddenly offered the pipe to one of the Japanese guards. The guard eagerly took the pipe in both

hands and inhaled deeply. He started to lean back and continued on until he fell flat on his back on the floor. We all burst out laughing and much to our surprise the one that laughed the most was the scowling sergeant – the scowl was gone forever! He got up from his desk, went into the sleeping quarters, and returned with a large bottle of liquor and some small bowls. He put some water in each of the bowls, filled them with liquor and passed them around.

That turned out to be the wildest night I ever had!

Joe Mullen – 182nd Regiment

C Battery, 221st Field Artillery was among the first troops to land from the sea when the Japs surrendered. As our landing craft passed off the bow of the huge battleship Missouri, the sailors aboard her looked down at us and waved. Moving closer to shore we could see the white sheets hanging from the gun barrels of the many coastal guns. This time the Japs were not shooting at us, yet.

Stepping ashore we were greeted by one (1) Jap, dressed in a suit, wearing a hat and carrying a suitcase. Captain Fred Williams formed us up in ranks and marched us down the main street of Yokohama. We were at half strength, wearing steel helmets, full field packs on our back, and carrying loaded rifles. We were small in numbers but we were not afraid. It was hard to believe that the Japs were not shooting at us! Myself, and most of the other men were going into their third year overseas – with much of that time spent in combat.

As we approached the center of town, people came out of their wood and tin shacks, not many buildings were left standing, and lined the curb, staring at us. At this time Captain Williams gave the command, "By the left flank, MARCH! Followed by "In cadence, COUNT!" Well, the Japs jumped back and ran, afraid of us as we marched toward them. It was very plain to see what the Captain was up to – if we could not shoot the Japs we could at least scare the HELL out of them!

It was a surprise to see a trolley car coming through the center of town with no one on it, and stopping next to us. It appeared that the trolley was for us to ride on but the Captain would have no part of that. We continued on marching and scaring the HELL out of the Japs every time Captain Williams gave the command, "In cadence COUNT!" We may have been a small number of troops but we sure made a lot of noise --- kind of like letting off steam, or rage, against the Japs for starting the war and causing a lot of hardships and horror. Many of our troops had been fighting the Japs for a long time. We occupied Kamakura, a resort and shrine town. We were kept very busy with the occupation. Much of it was police work, searching out and arresting Japanese war criminals. The Army was on the ball and supplied us with many interpreters – mostly young men from the Tokyo University.

Leo W. Orfe – 221st Field Artillery



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