

April • May • June 2012



AMERICAL JOURNAL

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

Brother

UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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Commanders Comments By Jay Flanagan



Thank you!

I want to thank all our members for their support, participation and friendship to me and all our fellow Americal Veterans. My life has been enhanced by this association and the many fine officials, members and new friends. Hopefully I have helped some others, although it is my regret that we were in such bad financial condition (the country not me) the past few years. It caused me to spend more time in work, having less opportunities to travel in my efforts of trying to appease overzealous Federal Bureaucrats who felt it was their job to grab power and make what used to be an enjoyable job into something I dreaded doing some days.

2012 Reunion.

The 2012 ADVA National Reunion will be held September 13-15, 2012. The reunion will be held near the Atlanta Airport. Highlight of the reunion will be a trip to Ft. Benning, GA to dedicate the Americal Monument at the National Infantry Museum Walk of Honor. Roger Gilmore and Ron Ellis have done great planning to make this a memorable and important event. Please make all efforts to attend.

New Program for Veterans!

I received a communication from an Aaron Hiler. He introduced me to an Army program called the Army Career and Alumni Program. The Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) delivering a world-class transition program for America's Army that ensures all eligible transitioners have the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to be competitive and successful in the global workforce. ACAP helps transitioners to make informed career decisions through benefits counseling and employment assistance. ACAP is responsible for delivering both transition assistance and employment assistance services. While the ACAP Center traditionally has been the principal service provider for these services, now transitioners have the option to use the ACAP On-Line website to receive services from any location with Internet capability 24/7. As I find out more it will be passed on through our website, Facebook page and the Journal.

Facebook Update

We have over 600 members on our Facebook page and it is a very supportive and interesting group. Lots of pictures and memories can be found there. If you are on the internet, I hope you will join us. When you log onto Facebook enter the word Americal into the search box to find the ADVA page.

WWII 70 Year Anniversary

If you haven't read the first installment of the 70th Anniversary story of the birth of the Americal Division, you should make

time to do so asap. Another story appears in this issue and more are planned for subsequent issues. It is how we came to be a special division and makes one proud to be an Americal. Many old friends, who have since gone on to the Commander in Heaven are mentioned and it brings back fond memories of men I would otherwise never had the privilege to meet, speak with and call a friend.

In Closing!

We have a great Association held together by diligent, dedicated volunteers, officials and fellow veterans. They can always use assistance and we encourage members to consider running for elective positions. If you ever have questions, concerns, complaints and, especially, praise feel free to contact me or any of our officers. It is our pleasure and privilege to be of assistance. Stay safe this summer, good luck to our new officers who take office on July 1st and I hope to see you in Atlanta

Preliminary Election Results

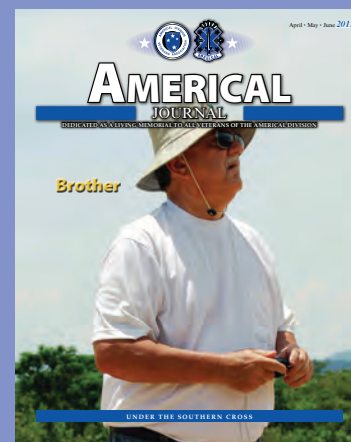
By Larry Watson

The final day to cast ballots for the ADVA election was May 15, 2012. Ballots were accepted through May 18 to allow for lag in the postal system. Any ballots received after May 18 were not counted.

Commander positions were not contested. Commanders taking office on July 1, 2012 are as follows: National Commander – Larry Swank, Senior Vice-Commander – David Crystal, and Junior Vice-Commander – Robert Cudworth.

The preliminary results in descending order of votes received for Executive Council are as follows: Dave Taylor; Jay Flanagan; Ron Ward; Mike Murphy; Jerry Anderson; Rich Scales; Tim Vail; Conrad Steers; Dave Eichhorn; Jim Craig; Reggie Horton; Ralph Stiles; Terry Siemer; and Malcolm East.

The two positions for trustees for the scholarship program were uncontested: Larry Watson; Lee Kaywork. Both by-law changes won approval. The final count is not expected to change the results of the election but will verify total votes. Approximately 925 ballots were returned which represents 30% of eligible voters.



Cover: Jim Craig 2012 RIP All we can say "a hell of a guy" and we'll miss him. *Journal Staff*
See tribute on page 14.

Adjutant's Notes

By Roger Gilmore

The ADVA continues to add new members at a consistent pace.

For the past reporting period, the association added thirty-three new members to the ADVA roster. This compares to an increase in new members of thirty eight for the First Quarter of 2012. Member Dave Eichhorn sponsored one of his buddies for membership and his first year dues.

We saw a very significant increase in new Life members for this reporting period. Twenty annual pay members upgraded to Life status and five Americal veterans joined for the first time as Life members, giving us a total of twenty-five Life members for the reporting period. This is far and away the best response we've seen to the reduced rates for ADVA life membership.

This is the first reporting period in quite a while that we had had no Americal Division veterans from the World War II era join the ADVA.

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

If you are an annual pay member, consider looking at upgrading to Life member status. The new lower rates, which are published by age level on the back cover of this issue, make the ADVA life membership a very good value. To upgrade to Life member status, send your check or money order 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.

As always, I close with a reminder to notify me if you move or change your mailing address for any reason. 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 30 April 2012

World War II	435
Vietnam	2,436
Cold War	10
Associate Members:	168
Total Members	3,049

Corrections

Roland Morrison
A 4/31st Inf
Caldwell, ID

★ *David Eichhorn*

New Members

Richard J. Arnold
TFO – A/1/35th Inf
Indianapolis, IN

★ *Les Hines*

Jerry E. Ballentine
4/21st Inf
Acworth, GA

★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Leroy Bookman, Sr.
D/1/46th Inf
Prosperity, SC

★ *Bob Kapp*

Arthur R. Castro, Sr.
B/1/6th Inf
Culloden, WV

★ *Robert R. Fields, Jr.*

Robert F. Dawkins
16th CAB 335th Trans
Hamlet, NC

★ *Wayne Bryant*

Gene Ethier, Jr.
C/5/46th Inf
Dudley, MA

★ *PNC David W. Taylor*

James M. Forsee
5/46th Inf
Shawnee, KS

★ *Self*

Rhiney H. Hyde
4/31st Inf
Sweetwater, TX

★ *Cameron Baird*

Bob Lambert
C/3/21st Inf
West Point, CA

★ *David Eichhorn*

James Lampe
D/1/6th Inf
Aviston, IL

★ *Self*

James P. Ludwig
26th Engr Bn Co C
Alpena, MI

★ *Self*

Edward Marshall
E/1/6th Inf
Colonial Heights, Va

★ *Self*

Lloyd H. Martin
3/82nd Arty C Btry
Austin, TX

★ *Self*

James McCarten
1/82nd Arty
Albuquerque, NM

★ *Self*

Patrick A. McCracken
16th Avn Grp
Memphis, TX

★ *Self*

William J. McMeechan
132nd Avn Co
Gamaliel, AR

★ *Self*

Carl E. Midkiff
TFO – 101st Abn
Radcliff, KY

★ *William Walker*

Melvin Mitchell
1/14th Arty A Btry
Broken Arrow, OK

★ *Self*

Frank D. Morris
C/5/46th Inf
Forest Park, GA

★ *PNC David W. Taylor*

Timothy G. O'Donnell
C/1/6th Inf
E. Meredith, NY

★ *Elliot Houser*

Thomas J. Rizzo
198th LIB C/1/6th Inf
Highland, NY

★ *Mark L. Deam*

James M. Robson
23rd S&T Bn Co B
Anchorage, AK

★ *Claude Frazier*

Robert L. Tapp
B/3/21st Inf
Mt. Calm, TX

★ *Self*

Robert Vannote
723rd Maint Bn
N. Wildwood, NJ

★ *Self*

Chris Walker
C/1/20th Inf
Hermitage, TN

★ *NC Jay Flanagan*

Thomas W. Williams
D/1/20th Inf
Utica, NY

★ *Self*

Raymond E. Witzke
C/1/6th Inf
Ft. Dodge, IA

★ *Les Hines*

New Paid Life Members

Ernie L. Carrier
C/1/6th Inf
Bernice, LA

★ *Mark L. Deam*

Tony Celeen
C/5/46th Inf
Oshkosh, WI

★ *Wayne Bryant*

John R. Cullember
Div HDQ
Bear, DE
★ *Self*

Steven J. Gaines
1/6th Inf
Milton-Freewater, OR
★ *Self*

Marvin E. Johnson
Div HDQ Arty
Cerritos, CA
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Wilfredo Y Ascencio
B/1/6th Inf
Trent, TX
★ *Don Ballou*

Cameron F. Baird
1/82nd Arty
Stonewall, TX
★ *Ernie Carlson*

Thomas H. Charbonneau
A/1/6th Inf
Cohoes, NY
★ *Larry Swank*

Stan Cottrell
3/21st Inf
Pasco, WA
★ *David Eichhorn*

Eric T. Crosser
723rd Maint Bn Co B
El Cajon, CA
★ *Self*

Robert D. Henderson
23rd Admin Co
Midland, TX
★ *PNC William Maddox*

Robert Hermentitt
A/1/6th Inf
Hollywood, FL
★ *Lee Kaywork*

Elliot G. Houser
1/82nd Arty C Btry
Canajoharie, NY
★ *Bernie Chase*

Dennis Huckeba
B/5/46th Inf
Bel Air, MD
★ *John Hofer*

Robert Janicek
196th LIB
Muskego, WI
★ *PNC Rollie Castronova*

Gary M. Jenkins
C/3/21st Inf
Glenwood, GA
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Charles K. Lee
A/1/20th Inf
Newburgh, IN
★ *PNC Rollie Castronova*

James P. Linn
D/4/3rd Inf
Broadlands, VA
★ *Self*

Arthur B. Olson
HHC/4/3rd Inf
Spokane, WA
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Charles J. Pulaski
E/1/52nd Inf
Albion, NY
★ *Larry Swank*

James R. Rhodes
D/2/1st Inf
Tokyo, JAPAN
★ *Pete Messina*

Hobert Salisbury
1/6th Inf
Wallback, WV
★ *Self*

Mike Sanchez
C/3/21st Inf
Big Spring, TX
★ *Roger Gilmore*

Patrick J. Sweeney
1/1st Armd Cav B Trp
Portage, PA
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Larry J. Turner
23rd Admin Co
Bowling Green, KY
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Re-instated Members

Richard F. Hall
C/1/52nd Inf
Salt Lake City, UT
★ *Dan Young*

Carl J. Jensen
A/2/1st Inf
Kentfield, CA
★ *PNC Rollie Castronova*

Chock Jones
E/4/3rd Inf
Galt, CA
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

New Associate Members

Merrill Franklin
Navy Seabee – Chu Lai
Elberton, GA
★ *James B. Adams, Jr.*

TAPS

World War II Veterans

Max Bookless
Unit Unknown
January 27, 2012
Pittsfield, NJ

William H. Borling ★
182nd Inf Rgmt Co M
Hartwell, GA
June 24, 2011

Gabriel Colangelo ★
101st Med Bn
Lynn, MA
November 8, 2011

Delbert W. Cotton
182 Inf. Regt.
Vidor, TX
March 4, 2012

Harry Dolyniuk
164 Inf. Regt.
Augusta, GA
March 6, 2012

Francis W. Harkins
Unit Unknown
Harwich, MA
March 21, 2012

Salvatore Marchisello ★
Co. H, 182 Inf. Regt.
Blackwood, NJ
April 23, 2012

Harry David Moss
164 Inf. Regt.
Halfway, MO
March 5, 2012

James E. Parnell ★
26th Signal Bn
Franklin, TN
March 14, 2012

William D. Picardi ★
Co. L, 182 Inf. Regt.
Kansas City, MO
April 1, 2012

Joseph Poletsky
Unit Unknown
February 4, 2012
Port Chester, NY

Gabriel Robidart ★
182nd Inf Rgmt
Fallbrook, CA
October 10, 2011

Ted Thomas Rounis
Unit Unknown
Akron, OH
March 4, 2012

Vietnam Veterans

James G. Craig ★
196th LIB B/3/21st Inf
Longmont, CO
April 24, 2012

Russell Heck
Btry. C, 6/11 Arty
New Bern, NC
March 15, 2012

Albert H. Holcomb ★
56th Arty Btry C
Silver City, NM
November 3, 2011

William T. Honjiyo ★
HHC/1/20th Inf
Hanapepe, HI
February 3, 2012

Michael D. Lottman ★
11th LIB 4/3rd Inf
River Falls, WI
Date Unknown

Walter J. Pawlowicz
Scout Dogs
Carol Stream, IL
April 27, 2012

Karl A. Smith
Unit Unknown
East Bridgewater, MA
February 9, 2012

Associates

Edward L. Lesniak ★
Associate
Niles, IL
June 1, 2011

ADVA Member

Special thanks to Mary Ann Ford for her continuing research of names of veterans of the Americal Division who have gone to their eternal rewards. -editor

Americal Monument Update

By Roger Gilmore;
Legacy Committee Chairman



The National Infantry Museum Monument – construction progress

Work on the Americal Division monument at the National Infantry Museum Walk of Honor near Fort Benning, Georgia is progressing on schedule.

Americal Legacy committee members met with the Columbus Monument Company staff on March 26, 2012 to discuss the next phases of construction. At this meeting, the Columbus Monument staff advised us that work is complete for the Medal Of Honor pedestal, the two commemorative benches, and the Americal Division shoulder patch overlay.

The stencils for cutting the wording and artwork into the black granite overlays for the back wall pedestals are nearing completion. Once these are complete, work will commence on cutting the history text and artwork into the stone. Final polishing will complete these components, making them ready for attachment to the gray granite pedestals. The pedestals are being finished at the quarry and will be delivered by truck directly to the monument pad site at the Walk Of Honor. Upon delivery, cranes will hoist these large pedestals into place on the concrete pad. Plans are to have delivery of all pedestals complete and placed by the end of April.

Monument Funding

Your donations in response to the third edition of Americal calendar continue to arrive in Assistant Finance Officer Ron Ellis' mail box. Through April 30, 2012, total individual donations amounts for the 2012 calendar add up to \$21,000.00.

Again, we have seen many members make a significant contribution to the Legacy monument effort. The following list of donors who gave \$100 or more recognizes the commitment of donors to the Americal monument.

\$500 or more

Edward Den Braven

\$100 - \$499

Scott Gordon Birnie

Raymond G. Fox

E. Lee Kaywork

Spencer M. Baba

Ronald D. Barton

Ronald D. Barton

Andrejs Bedelis

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Louis E. Blumengarten

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John M. Gasper, Jr.

Joseph E. Gaston

David K. Germain

J.P. Grice, Jr.

Charles W. Hall

Douglas F. Harkins

John P. Hofer

David Krueger

James P. Linn

Ann T. Magee

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PNC Gary L. Noller

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Duffield Rawlings, III

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Charles L. Schleyer

Dietmar Schneider-Hector

Conrad Steers

Herman E. Stephenson

Charles R. Stirling

Gary C. Stolp

Kenneth F. Teglia

Paul A. Terry

William R. Voss

PNC Ronald L. Ward

William L. Wendover

John C. West

John M. Willis

If you have not sent your Legacy donation in yet, we ask you to contribute generously towards our funding goal for the Americal monument. 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*

WORLD WAR II

STAFF SERGEANT JESSE R. DROWLEY
CO B, 132ND INFANTRY REGIMENT
30 JANUARY 1944
BOUGAINVILLE, SOLOMON ISLANDS

VIETNAM WAR

STAFF SERGEANT NICK DANIEL BACON
CO B, 4/21ST INF, 11TH LIB
26 AUGUST 1968
TAM KY, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

CORPORAL MICHAEL J. CRESCENZ
CO A, 4/31ST INF, 196TH LIB
20 NOVEMBER 1968
HIEP DUC, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

MAJOR KERN W. DUNAGAN
CO A, 1/46TH INF, 198TH LIB
13 MAY 1969
QUANG TIN, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

PLATOON SERGEANT FINNIS D. MCLEERY
CO A, 1/6TH INF, 198TH LIB
14 MAY 1968
QUANG TIN, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

SPECIALIST 4TH CLASS THOMAS J. McMAHON
CO A, 2/1ST INF, 196TH LIB
19 MARCH 1969
QUANG TIN, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

STAFF SERGEANT ROBERT C. MURRAY
CO B, 4/31ST INF, 196TH LIB
7 JUNE 1970
HIEP DUC, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

STAFF SERGEANT ROBERT J. PRUDEN
CO G, 75TH INFANTRY (RANGER)
29 NOVEMBER 1969
QUANG NGAI, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

PRIVATE 1ST CLASS DANIEL JOHN SHEA
HQ CO, 3/21ST INF, 196TH LIB
14 MAY 1969
QUANG TIN, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

SERGEANT LESTER R. STONE, JR.
CO B, 1/20TH INF, 11TH LIB
3 MARCH 1969
LZ LIZ, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

CAPTAIN JAMES ALLEN TAYLOR
TROOP B, 1/1ST CAVALRY REGT.
9 NOVEMBER 1967
QUE SON, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

PRIVATE 1ST CLASS DAVID F. WINDER
HQ CO, 3/1ST INF, 11TH LIB
13 MAY 1970
QUANG NGAI, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

A large blue shield-shaped sign with four white stars is mounted on a wooden stand in a warehouse. The sign is positioned in the center of the frame, and the stars are arranged in a pattern similar to the European Union flag. The background shows a warehouse setting with various equipment and materials.





ADVA 2011 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



I am incredibly grateful for the Americal Division Veterans Association scholarship I received this academic year. As an aspiring engineer pursuing a chemical engineering degree at Iowa State University, I am fully aware of how important my education is. This scholarship has made it possible for me to pursue my dreams and further my career. Thank you for your support.

Scholar: Meredith Gibson

Sponsor: Jack Leaverton

I am so grateful to accept this scholarship. I will be attending my second year at Fairmont State University. I thank you and the Americal Division for offering me this scholarship for a second time.

Scholar: Chantele Olivia S. Berry

Sponsor: Richard Carvell



I want to thank you so much for the scholarship. I am pursuing a career in Physical Therapy/Athletic training and have chosen a school I believe will assist me in achieving that goal- Westminster College in Fulton, MO. I appreciate what you and the members of your association (including my grandfather) have done for this country and know without people like you I would not have this opportunity. Thank you for your service and for the scholarship.

Scholar: Mathew Nienhuis

Sponsor: Thomas R. Hume III

I would like to say thank you to all members of the Americal Division for their service to our country. In addition, I would like to express my deepest gratitude for my scholarship from the ADVA. I will be attending Florida State University and majoring in Biology with a concentration in Genetics. Ultimately, I hope to pursue my dream of becoming a doctor. Thank you again for all you have done, and for helping me in my pursuit of education.

Scholar: Hannah Wilson

Sponsor: Wayne P. Wilson

Americal Scholars and the trustees of the Americal Scholarship thank all donors for their continued support of this worthwhile program.

Donations are now being accepted for the 2012-2013 school year. Send all donations to Mr. Ron Green, Scholarship Chairman, 141 River Bend Dr., Ocoee, TN, 37361; ron_green46@yahoo.com.

Information and application forms may be found at www.americal.org under the PROGRAMS tab, then the SCHOLARSHIPS tab. The application deadline for the next scholarship year is April 1, 2013.

AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP DONATIONS FOR 2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR

\$1000 or MORE

Dennis and Ruth Hunt

\$500-\$999

Edward DenBraven
Michael F. Gould

\$100-\$499

Peter Gallagher
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Dr. Herbert L. Jensen
Ron Geen
Peter Gallagher & Assoc.

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David J. Eckerg
David W. Rose
Wes Haun
Edward O'Dea
James E. Sheil
Dale E. Wilson
Edward W. Voros
Cary B. Bacall
John M. Gasper, Jr.
Lyle Cheadle
Earl P. Cook
James W. Gales
Wendell K. Strode
John A. Sabolenko
Ronald D. Barton
Gary L. Noller
Charles R. Stirling
J. Reginald Horton
Kenneth Gates
Douglas Roell
Robert J. Moffatt
Robert R. Carrigan
Roger Gilmore
Gordon L. Aleshire
Clair F. Bee
Alex Birnie
Frederick A. Kolbrenner
W.E. Dawson
C. Reese Jackson
Gary D. Roschevitz
Courtney E. Martin, Jr.
Maurice W. Henson
Earl M. Brannon
Charles W. Horton
Douglas F. Harkins
Robert J. Wood
Richard Carey
Robert N. Beschle
Ronald J. Krul
Edward C. Raymond
Morris W. Spadaccini
Ronald R. Ellis
Leon Foote
Paul R. Snow
Timothy R. Cook
Richard Smethurst
Keith A. Whitman
Conrad F. Steers
Glenn Urie
Robert S. McEldowney
William E. Mahoney
F. Harold Cooper
Charles T. Bell
Lee Bryan Whitten
Jerret Grisham
Lawrence M. Andrzejewski

Frank R. Yehle II
William M. Oberle
Larry A. Young
Leonard Clapes
Gerald Knowles
William J. Loadholtes
John C. Biliti
John P. Hofer
Lawrence P. Grabowski
Frank R. Markovich

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Robert M. Howell
Marie C. McDonald
William D. Ridgely
Thomas M. Vescio
Gerhart Mehner
Michael A. Ross
Peter M. Yablonski
Harry T. Stokes
Kenneth Krushas
James Sarnese
Ernest R. Huertra
Kenneth D. Rollins
John Charnisky
Denver Oliver
James L. Brown
Lewis Goodman
John Harris
H.J. Logsdon
Makoto Fletcher
John H. Moran
Richard S. Ambroziak
Robert F. Cudworth
Jalmer S. Logan
Thomas J. Welsh
William L. Woodside
Joseph McCourt
Paul L. Reitchel
Walter P. Keely, Jr.
John Fulmer
Mary L. Davis
Kenneth Lunsford
Alois Straessle
Carlo A. Pola
Paul J. Lane
John H. Dewing
Stephen R. Lewis
John G. Woyansky
Lewis Mayfield
Michael J. Piazza
Charles N. Summers
John Jurica
Jessue J. Lewis, Jr.
Douglas W. Burnett
G.I. Schmitt
Eugene McGrory
Paul Walker
Albert R. Pannell, Sr.
Raymond Wahl
William Wendover
Paul Guzie
William Jerry Carlson
Robert P. Magel
Fred L. Battle
Phillip L. Carpenter
George M. Morris, Jr.
Mark L. Deam
Billy R. Self
Burdette Burch
James Stringham
Roy L. Pearson
Clyde R. Collins
Arthur M. Maki
Edward J. Riley
Zane E. Jacobs
Danny G. George

Dennis Ferik
Lloyd T. Carr III
Kenneth VanderMolen
David Mims
R. Gordon Williams
Robert Hock
William H. Tomlinson
Oscar Patterson III
Ernest W. Cathers
Eric Crosser
Donald E. Alsbro
Michael J. Feltes
Taylor Nardone
Luther A. Chaviers
Kim Radford
Jan A. Heath
Robert Anderson
Dennis Powell
Frederick P. Siems
Roger H. Miller
James C. Boetel
Paul Lefkowitz
John E. Frederick
Jesse Mendoza
Dan Robert Vaughn, Jr.
Ronny R. Dunn
Robert Amass
Kenneth R. Harpe
James E. Scott
Tom Hume
Stephen P. Maluk
Lawrence Coldren
Michael J. Young
Eddie A. Odum
William E. Stucker
Daniel Rocznik
Clarence E. Fune
Wayne E. Butler
Tex A. Ralls
L.A. Gorsuch
William W. Shugarts III
Kenneth A. Churchill
Robert Phelps
William T. Ware
Herke C. Joffer
Lyle Van Hove
Terrence Maloney
James W. Zawatski
Leonard Johnson
George H. Eckhardt
David S. Orndorff
Harold E. Hansen
John P. Farley
Matthew Swajkowski
Charles L. Barbo
Steven J. Reisdorff
John T. Tunison
Charles J. Pulaski
Nicholas Ostapchuk
Roger J. Grazioplene
Joseph Giordano
Robert E. Richardson
Walter J. Moeller
Richard D. Heroux, Sr.
William J. Lobeck
Robert Janicek
George C. Yates
Brent C. Chapin
Richard G. Totten
Donald J. Berg
Warren G.H. Reed
Dale A. Meisel
Terry Buelow
Thomas J. Fields
James D. Martin
James T. Richmond
Gary C. Johnson
James A. O'Brien

Wayne P. Wilson
M. Bruce Welch
William Burston
Larry W. McDonald
Lawrence W. Graham
Larry Alan Scull
Michael J. O'Dea
Michael Pfetsch
Louis Rios
Dudley H. Farquhar
Bernard B. Borowski
Matthew J. McCauley
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Julian C. Humphries, Jr.
Michael S. Lee
David M. Bradley
William D. Castille
Kevin D. Kavanaugh
George W. Werve
Merril R. Matson
William E. Miles
Ronald S. Gardy
Walter A. Witt
James R. (Dick) Hall, Jr.
James W. Lewellen
John J. Bezuyen
Jay L. Swenson
Thomas H. Charbonneau
James E. Pitra
Robert Duesterhoeft
John J. Shea
David Stokes Carter
Gesena L. Dean
Jim E. Fulbrook
Stanley S. Arakaki
John L. Roberts
Bruce L. Ordoyne
Mark E. Winslow
Morris Goldfield
Michael Kratochvil
Reynaldo A. Mendoza
Glendale
Auto Repair & Rental
L.V. McNamara
Dominick Maugeri
Donald B. Ayers
James L. Reasner
Thomas Vitale
Richard Hill
Everett H. Barraclough
Vance Van Wieren
Timothy V. Vail
Fred C. Keihn
William E.N. Hawkins
Richard C. Keil
George W. Auxier
John A. Gonzalez
James W. Stein
Bruce W. Buehrig
Vern Pesek
Thomas R. Schneider
Herman E. Stephenson
Earl G. Dunkerly
Carroll E. Staton
Robert E. Weatherly
Clyde E. Murray, Jr.
Thomas L. Mayer
A.J. Romeo, Jr.
James Inzerillo
Dennis E. Matthews
James Vitale
Robert A. Peterson
Edward J. Gekosky
Dennis Sperry
P. Joann Jennings (in
honor of Richard Coffelt)
Alton H. Coleman
Norman Fredriksen

Scott F. Showalter
Louis A. DesRochers
Douglas G. Black
Robert M. Holt
Gary McKnight
Jerry J. Dusatko
Donald Kilgore
Joel A. Surratt
James M. Sheehan
George J. Fitzpatrick
Elsie I. Trout
Mark Mentz
Michael A. Antosh
Lionel Garant
Sheila McGoldrick
Carl E. Richardson
Miller R. King
Daniel J. Eckles
William B. Chisholm
Richard O. Sommer
Hugh Stephen Fitts
Richard K. Smith
Donald E. Boito
Robert Frey
Marvin A. Manning
Conrad C. Geibel
John J. Head
Myron H. Peterson
Jerry L. Mount
Douglas E. Lancaster, Sr.
Russell T. Smith
John V. Mederios III
Alan C. Rossmann
Jim J. Pene
John W. Brown
Eduardo Martinez-Torres
Francis Bradley
Frank C. Dupuy
Larry Taff
Richard G. Waggoner
Charles D. Swanson
Ronald R. Capek
Chester Garnett
Michael Ramey
Wilton F. Gray, Jr.
Karl Wagner
David E. Williams
William R. Bevins
Michael Kosteczko
Renato Della-Rocca
Timothy F. Koehler
William J. Hanusek
John B. Foisy
Russell J. Marceau
Thomas R. Packard
Bradley C. Jackson
Sam F. Mazzola
Norman Tatar
Thomas Chiki
Raymond J. Essenmacher
Oscar Maldonado
James J. Flynn
William C. Andrescavage
Barbara J. Chin
(in memory of Joseph
Chin and Bernard Carroll)
William David Daniels
Americal Division
Veterans Association
Ed Marsh
Malcolm S. Cate, Jr.
Raymond Brady
Jack Rudder
Lars Erik Larson
Joanne E. Styles
Omer Moynes, Jr.
Larry D. Finch



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,

John and Nancy Mackey hosted a reunion of 1/52 Infantry medics (1967-68) and their wives in San Antonio, TX on October 13-16, 2011. The highlight of the reunion was a guided tour of Ft. Sam Houston. This is where we obtained our medical training.

We were impressed with the quality of the medical training taught to all branches of the U.S. military as well as some foreign nations. For some of us, it has been over 40 years since we had seen each other. Much time was spent reminiscing as we visited the excellent restaurants and the River Walk. We will meet again in 2013 in Savannah, GA.

Photo: L to R- Sherman Stanton, Gerry Maxwell, Danny (Buford) Smith, Dennis Weiss, Norbert Stuhler, Ken Hull, Rick Waggoner, John Mackey, Nils Straatviet, Ned Schultz, Bob Prusinski.

Rick Waggoner; boxywegs@iowatelecom.net

Dear editor,

Thanks for another FANTASTIC issue of the Americal Journal! I read with sadness of the passing of Jim Lauderdale back in 2006. He transferred into the Americal Division when another division had stood down in Nam (25th??) and he did not yet have enough time to go home with them. Since you had him listed as "Unit Unknown", I just wanted to let you know for the historical records that Jim was a member of HHC Americal Division. He was an Unattended Ground Sensor Operator with G2-TMF (Target Mission Force) and spent his time stationed in Duc Pho and San Juan Hill.

On another note, I just spent the weekend in Corning NY at the VFW Dept of NY Spring conference with several Americal vets in attendance, including of course our Dept. Commander, Harold "Mick" Leavor. While Mick has only a few more months of his year at the top left, Mark Shoemaker, another Americal vet, will be installed as the Grand of the NY MOC in April.

Art Hanley; ahanley@verizon.net

Dear editor,

I read with great interest the article in the latest edition of the Americal Journal on the Coffelt Database. I went to the web address in the article hoping to avail myself of the information contained there. Unfortunately I could not access any individual or unit data. I tried searching CDB, Unit Downloads, and the Contact Us areas and basically got blank pages back. I was hoping to get a list of guys in my unit who were KIA. As you probably know we mostly called each other by nicknames over there and quite a few KIA's weren't with us long enough to be well known. I was hopeful that I could use this listing to recall the names of some of my departed brothers. Any info you can give me would be greatly appreciated.

Wayne Hupfaur; B/1/20

The CDB website is now under construction. Send specific requests to Dick Arnold at indyrja@yahoo.com. -Editor

Dear editor,

Please share this with anyone who had active duty service between January 1957 to December 31, 2001, and planning for retirement. In a nutshell it boils down to this: You qualify for a higher social security payment because of your military service, for active duty any time from 1957 through 2001 (the program was done away with 1 January 2002). Up to \$1200 per year of earnings credit credited at time of application - which can make a substantial difference in social security monthly payments upon your retirement.

You must bring your DD-214 to the Social Security Office and you must ask for this benefit to receive it! Soc Sec website: <http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm>

This is something to put in your files for when you apply for Social Security down the road. It is NOT just for retirees, BUT anyone who has served on active duty between January 1957 to December 31, 2001. FYI - this benefit is not automatic, you must ask for it! We've all been on active duty between 1957 and 2001 or know someone who has.

Bob Rudolph

Dear editor,

I am LTG (Ret.) Sam Wetzel, Commander of 4/31 from 23 July 1968 to 10 Jan 1969 in Vietnam. I am also the Honorary Colonel of the 31st Infantry Regiment.

At the present time I am writing the story of my life. I need any information covering the period I commanded the 4/31 during the period mentioned above. I particularly have been searching for the daily journal/ logs, S2/S3 reports and list of my troops during the period I was in command. If a copy of the disc or pages in the book are available, I would very much like to get copies.

You may contact me by postal mail, e-mail, or telephone as follows: 1425 Dartmouth Road, ; Columbus, GA 31904; 706-576-4204; wint322@aol.com.

Thank you for your help. Pro Patria,

LTG (Ret.) Sam Wetzel

Dear editor,

The history of the Americal Division in World War II that was featured in the Jan-Feb-Mar edition of the Americal Journal needs to be corrected. The story understated where the division fought in the South Pacific. After Guadalcanal the Americal Division was on Bougainville and Leyte and then went to Cebu. I was there so I wish you would make the correction. I am proud to have served with the Americal Division.

Ed Bauer; eddiej66@aol.com

Dear editor,

I am writing this to say thanks to Ray Pierce. I recently reread his article "My Visit With The Spook" that was published last year in the Americal Journal. And now I don't feel so alone. I had a similar experience in Vietnam in the summer of 1969. But it was a sneaky Pete who contacted me while I was on LZ Tien Phouc.

He had been one of the trainers at the First Special Forces base on Okinawa. I received some special operations training at this base before going to Vietnam. I was in missiles and the group that I trained with seemed to all be technical as well. Unfortunately, I didn't get to finish the training at Okinawa. Missile sites were going down and I was recalled to my unit because my replacement section chief didn't show up.

After about a month in Vietnam the sneaky Pete visited me. He came over from the South Vietnamese army camp next to us on the airstrip or from the self-defense force camp in the village on the other side of the airstrip. I was surprised to run into him. We talked for a while and then he asked me if I wanted to go on some long hikes. I immediately understood what he meant and being a little bored at the time I made the mistake of volunteering- unlike Ray who was smart enough to turn it down.

Either from concussion or suppression of memory, I don't really remember exactly what group I worked with at all times. I probably never will know because my records never came back from Vietnam. I suspect it had something to do with the group that used me. But it doesn't matter now because at least now I know I wasn't the only one approached. So again Ray, thanks for your story.

R. Colt; colt6900@gmail.com

Dear editor,

I regret to advise that William T. (Bill) Honjiyo, former major, "Pineapple 80", died on February 3, 2012 after a bout with cancer. He served as 11th LIB XO and 1/20th Inf. and 11th LIB S-3 officer. His home was in Hanapepe, Hawaii. Like others who served Under the Southern Cross, he fought a good fight and now deserves to rest in peace.

COL (USA, Ret.) John L. Insani
marneop7@comcast.net

1/46th Infantry Reactivates at Ft. Benning By Gary L. Noller

The 1-46th Infantry Battalion reactivated at Ft. Benning, GA in early 2012. It replaces the 2-46th Infantry Battalion as a basic infantry training unit at the U.S. Army Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE). The MCoE formed as a result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) commission. The U. S. Army Infantry School and U.S. Army Armor School consolidated as the MCoE at Ft. Benning.

The 1-46 Inf. Bn. is assigned to the 192nd Infantry Brigade and its mission is Receive, Educate, Train, and Inspire combat-ready Soldiers for an Army at war. The 192nd is responsible for conducting Army Basic Combat Training in direct support of the Global War on Terrorism. The Brigade consists of two Basic Combat Training Battalions (1-46 and 2-47), one Infantry One Station Unit Training (OSUT) Battalion (3-47), and the 30th Adjutant General Battalion (Reception).

In 1967 the 1-46th Inf. Bn. deployed to Vietnam from Ft. Hood, TX as a unit of the 198th Light Infantry Brigade. In July 1969 the 1-46 transferred to the 196th Light Infantry Brigade. Its motto is The Professionals.

198th Active Duty Brigade Seeks Ties with the Past By Dave Taylor

While participating with a number of other Americal vets at Fort Benning's 46th Regiment Torchlight Ceremony and LZ MaryAnn Memorial the week of March 26, 2012, I was put in touch with the Executive Officer and Command Sergeants Major of the 198th Training Brigade located in the Sand Hill area of Benning. The brigade headquarters is highly desirous to connect with the 198th vets who were in the Vietnam War, which was the last time the brigade saw combat.

The brigade headquarters would like to feature displays of memorabilia, photos, maps, etc. to commemorate the sacrifices of service that went before them. We also discussed the possibility of having a 198th Brigade reunion in the future where the brigade would host a ceremony, a dinner, lunch at one of their basic training battalion mess halls, etc.

For the immediate future I am trying to get a program worked out so that it remains in place when active duty personnel at the brigade change duty stations. For example, the end of May the Executive Officer will be rotating to another assignment and the Command Sergeants Major will be retiring. The Brigade Commander and Deputy Commander will, however, remain.

We need to develop a coordinated effort from all of us so we don't have a bunch of vets contacting the brigade individually; they won't be able to handle that. The effort should begin with agreeing with them on what our objectives, programs and methods of support will be. They wish to have a key contact at their end and one from our end.

If any 198th Vietnam vet (who served in one of the brigades battalions or at brigade headquarters) has anything they would like to donate in the future, any ideas of support or become part of a committee to strengthen ties with the active duty brigade, please contact me. I am merely trying to put a program of coordination into place. We will need some dedicated veterans to continue the program once in place and work with the brigade on a continuous basis. I can be reached at (cell) 330-321-3370, (home phone) 330-722-7455 or (e-mail) dave.taylor@zoominternet.net.

2012 UNIT REUNION SCHEDULES

3rd Bn, 1st Inf, 11th LIB, Americal Division, Hawaii / Vietnam, 1966 thru 1969, Tampa, FL, 19-21 October, 2012. Contact: Tim Cook (701) 774-0598 (leave message). Email thirdfirstreunion@yahoo.com

3rd Bn, 16th Field Artillery (Rolling Thunder), 2012 Reunion (All former and current members from Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan), 3-6 October 2012, Oklahoma City and Fort Sill, OK. Contact Dick Rush at (405) 664-0260, rprush@att.net.

Co. A, 5/46 Infantry, Oak Haven Resort, Sevierville, Tennessee, September 16-21, 2012. Contact Oliver Gauss at OGause@ec.rr.com

EASTERN REGIONAL CHAPTER

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

COMMANDER

Terry Siemer

tsiemer2645@hotmail.com

Vice-Commander

Terry Siemer

TSiemer9528@wowway.com

Treasurer

Connie Steers

11thbrigade@optonline.net



The East Region chapter held a reunion at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Warwick, Rhode Island on April 26-29, 2012. Dave Eichhorn put the reunion together and I served as chairman since Dave visited Vietnam at the time of the reunion. We had 31 veterans and 17 spouses in attendance. Three attendees are World War II veterans, 27 are Vietnam veterans, and one associate member attended.

Our memorial service and business meeting took place on Saturday afternoon. Bob Kelly and Tom Canapp said they will check to have our next reunion in Valley Forge, PA, in 2013. Chapter members elected Terry Siemer as the new commander. Tom Canapp will be vice-commander. Other officers remain the same.

I want to thank everyone for their support while I was commander. I also want to thank my wife for her support and the great help she gave me at the reunion. I also would like to offer my condolences to the Jim Craig family for his tragic loss while visiting Vietnam. Dave Eichhorn represented the chapter at Jim's memorial service in Longmont, CO on May 2, 2012.

As everyone knows the Americal Reunion in Atlanta this year and hope to see everyone there. [Photo: Danny Barnes, Americal veteran, performed at the banquet. He is scheduled to do the same at the annual reunion in Atlanta on September 13-16, 2012.] -Joe Adlesberger



SOUTH MIDWEST CHAPTER

AR LA OK TX MS

COMMANDER

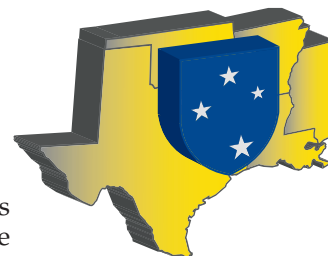
Cameron F. Baird

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The annual all-veterans Tet reunion in Abilene observed its 25th anniversary in February. As usual, it drew several hundred vets and family members from all branches of the service, including nine Americal vets. Special recognition was given to the eight original volunteers who pitched a tent for the first reunion in 1977. Most of them are still active in the Abilene Grunts Association who sponsors the event. The reunion has grown over the years to include dozens of displays, vendors and information booths, along with lots of raffle items and a good BBQ meal. It's held on Super Bowl Saturday at the Taylor County fairgrounds.

The South MidWest Chapter reunion was held May 18-19, 2012 in Ft. Worth, TX. We headquartered at the Baymont Inn, located near the historic Stockyards District. Friday afternoon we toured the nearby Bureau of Engraving and Printing where half of all U.S. currency is printed. Saturday morning we drove to the National Museum of the Vietnam War at Mineral Wells, TX. We conducted a memorial ceremony and had a BBQ lunch.

On Saturday night headed to the Ft. Worth stockyards to experience the aroma of bovine excrement, which, come to think of it, seems to be present in the hospitality room at most reunions. To cap off the fun, we had a nice dinner at Joe T. Garcia's, one of the most popular restaurants in the entire DFW metroplex.

Approximately 50 chapter members and guests attended the reunion. Watch future editions of the Americal Journal for information on our next chapter reunion.

FAR WEST CHAPTER

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

COMMANDER

Rick Ropole

246 Coronado

Corona, CA 92879

951 • 218 • 3071

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SEC/TREAS

Tom Packard

8231 Edenwood Dr.

Spring, TX 77389-4156

720 • 635 • 1900

packard50@q.com



The Far West Chapter Annual Reunion will be held at the La Quinta Inn and Suites located at 1425 E 27th Street, Tacoma Washington. The dates are Sep. 30-Oct 3, 2012. The special group room rate is \$89 plus tax per night. You can reserve a room by calling (253)-383-0146 no later than Sep 10, 2012. Ask for the "ADVA- Far West Chapter" rate.

This will be our first chapter reunion in this area for several years. I hope those of you who live in the area will attend

to reestablish old friendships and make some new ones. Registration forms and additional reunion information has been sent to each chapter member. If you're not able to attend the national reunion in Atlanta this year, this will make a nice alternative.

A small registration fee will help us stock the hospitality room with refreshments and drinks. We are working on a tour of Fort Lewis at this time. The cost will be minimal and will help pay for a passenger van rental or two. The reunion will end with a Tuesday evening banquet and installation of our new chapter officers. The chapter elections will be held during our annual meeting to be held Tuesday morning during the reunion.

As is our custom, we will hold two raffles during the reunion. The first will be a 50/50 raffle. The second will be a gift raffle. We rely on your gifts to hold this raffle, so bring something from your area to donate. I've heard there are some great wines from the Pacific Northwest.

If you are interested in helping grow the chapter by running for an office, please let any of the current officers know. Nominations may also be sent to Gene McGrath, Vice Commander and Nominating Committee Chairman at 1101 E Daytona, Pahrump, NV 89048 or mc2some@sbcglobal.net.

There are several members who have not renewed their memberships for 2012. You can look on your membership card for the expiration date and you will also be receiving a letter telling you of the expiration. To renew, send your check, made out to the Far West Chapter for \$10 per year to Tom Packard, 8231 Edenwood Drive, Spring, Texas 77389-4156. I'll be out tanning by our pool patiently awaiting your dues check.

Please change your records to show this new address for Tom Packard. Again, it is 8231 Edenwood Drive, Spring Texas 77389-4156. If you've known me for any length of time, you've heard me say my dream has been to live in Colorado. I never thought I would leave once I got there but dreams change. Besides we have a pool and an outdoor kitchen at the new house! My email address and cell phone number will remain the same for the time being. Packard1950@comcast.net and 720-635-1900. -Tom Packard

23rd MILITARY POLICE CHAPTER

WWII Korean War/Panama CZ Vietnam Global War on Terrorism

COMMANDER
Wes Haun

VICE COMMANDER
Jim O'Brien

SEC/TREAS
Tom Packard
packard50@q.com



This year the Americal Division Reunion will be held in Atlanta Georgia from September 13-16 at the Westin Atlanta Airport. I am sure that we will have a good number of members attending so this will serve as our formal get together for 2012. We will be having our business meeting and annual gathering at a time to be determined on Saturday,

September 15 at the Westin Hotel.

I went to college in Atlanta after my tour and can tell you there is a lot to see for history buffs, especially those interested in the Civil War. There is also professional baseball and football in September, as well as Georgia Tech college football. We will gather and post schedules prior to the convention in

case any of our group would like to attend together.

You also should have received your copy of The Blotter detailing the early days of deployment in Vietnam as told by Tom Platt, our Australian friend. It is also posted on the Company Yahoo Website if you missed it. And finally, if you need to join the chapter, please remember to send your dues to Tom Packard, or email him at packard1950@comcast.net for information.

In Washington D.C. on Veteran's Day, the 30th Anniversary of the Vietnam Memorial will be observed with the fifth reading of the names beginning on Wednesday, November 7 and ending on Saturday, November 10. I will once again be reading names on either Friday or Saturday and as in the past I expect an informal gathering of some of our members in the D.C. area. There will be no formal gathering of the Americal or the 23rd M.P. Co. but we usually have a number of members representing us at The Wall to honor our thirteen fallen soldiers.

GREAT LAKES REGIONAL CHAPTER

IL IN MI MN WI

COMMANDER
Dale J. Belke



Life has it's ups and downs! A special thank you to Dave ("Doc") and Peg Williams for all of their time and hard work as "Pointmen" on trying to set up a Great Lakes Chapter reunion in the Dixon/Sterling/Rock Falls, IL area. The idea was to set it up around "War

Birds over Whiteside County" Military Equipment Airshow, the impressive Military Veterans Park (www.honourourvets.org), the beautiful Rock River: Vet Arch/dams/islands/canal/railyard/ (www.bwcvb.com), and many other worthwhile things. After reconnaissance of the area, it looked like something that could be done with no extra costs/charges other than individual desires, while including discounts/coupons free. Then the Booby-trap... no motels available that weekend in the entire 30 mile area. Almost.....!

We are continuing to explore reunion ideas and are always open to any that come from Americal soldiers. I really look forward to someday meeting and shaking all of my Americal comrades hands with respect. Some day we will meet again. The Stoddard Fishing Trip, Kokomo, 27th Winterfest, memorial dedications, and other veteran "get togethers" are a few of the things we will do this year. My email was assigned to me, I apologize for its length. It is fe9adf5295f0037@live.com. Let me know what you would like to do, if you have ideas/interests.

Enjoy life. It does have a flavor the protected will never know ! Peace. -Dale Belke

In Memory of Jim Craig

By Donna Craig

James G. (Jim) Craig, 66, died on April 24, 2012 in an accidental fall while touring Vietnam with other Americal Division veterans. He served as an infantryman with Co. B, 3/21st Infantry, 196th LIB in 1970. -editor



Jim was a dedicated father to DeAnna and was always there for her giving her guidance and love along the way. It was hard for him not to impart his wisdom on her after she became an adult. He never missed anything that she was involved in, went to all of her activities, sporting events, plays and helped her understand the importance of history and culture.

As a husband of 36 years – Jim wanted the best for our lives, insisting on taking a vacation every year. It was important to get away from his job and have a family vacation for the three of us. Even though he didn't make a lot of money, he made sure he saved for our future. I learned more from Jim than I did in school. He was very well read and could recite events of all countries. We laughed and fought, but always made up, always forgave.

Jim's love of the outdoors and sports was evident in everything he did- hiking, golf, horseback riding, river rafting, lake walks. He officiated basketball and football for over 20 years, always wanting to be a part of every sport. He couldn't wait to get home and tell me how he had to give a technical to a coach or just HAD to kick him out of a game. Fans would follow him to his car, cussing him all the way if their team lost. Jim just loved that kind of stuff, of course, I was afraid someone was going to beat the H--- out of him.

His love, NO obsession, of the Cubbies and the Bears was like none I've ever seen. Maybe because he was almost born there in October of 45, when his mom would go to all the games and jump up and down in the stands.

He loved his country no matter what, never apologized for anything in the past, or present. He had a hard time when people spouted off untruths without knowing the

history. He was big on reading about all the wars and knowing everything about them. He watched movies over and over of the wars and conflicts that the US was involved in. He would forward articles and suggest books to his liberal friends.

He loved all his Americal brothers so much and couldn't wait to get to the reunions every year- even if it meant telling the same stories you've all heard before. It helped him so much to have you guys to talk to and I could see the difference in him after he started attending in 1988 at the Chicago reunion. He was much more relaxed knowing he had all of you to share something that the rest of the country wanted to forget.

Spencer Baba called me after Jim's death to share a story. On April 23 Jim, Spencer, and Bob Short took a boat ride from Hoi An to Cham Island. Jim was dickering with a shop vendor over some flip flops. Spen and Bob went on down to the beach. All of a sudden here comes Jim on the back of a motor scooter. He got one of the locals to drive him down to the beach to meet them. Spencer said, "What are you doing?" Jim replied, "I got a ride!" Jim had a huge grin on his face. I keep thinking of Jim smiling on the back of the motor scooter as he came down the street to meet his friends.

Photos by Bill Bacon, Mike Twomey, and Alan States



The “Americans” Land on the Plain of Gaiacs, New Caledonia – Again

By Paul Paturel

On a Saturday morning in March 2012, some passionate citizens of New Caledonia met on the Plain of Gaiac, west of the capital city of Noumea, New Caledonia, to commemorate the arrival of Americal Army Division soldiers (then task Force 6814) 70 years before.

A core group of citizens even wore US Army uniforms and rode in US Army jeeps from 1942 to bring to life the feel of the American Army's presence. Angelo Tual was especially proud because he owned one of the American jeeps from 1942 (there are only about 200 left in the world) and he needed three years to carefully recondition it.

March 12th was remembered as the date the Americans first put their feet in New Caledonia. Now, 70 years later, our band gathered in front of the Americal Museum Association to commemorate the anniversary. “It's a duty of memory” said Tual, “Men died for our freedom in the Pacific.”

The Americal's history belongs to all of New Caledonia.” I (Paul Paturel) am the President of the Americal Museum Association. We try to collect all of the items that the Americans left here that marked their presence. For example, Angelo Tual recalls, “I know of a refrigerator they left behind the Americal gave to my grandparents”. The association also dedicates itself to the historic facts about the American presence in New Caledonia and what they did to go on and defeat the Japanese Empire.

Pride

Angelo Tual possesses one of the four WWII American Army jeeps that remain in New Caledonia. He and his helpers feel it is in the best shape due to the dedication of restoring it. Tual remembers, “I needed three years to restore it, that's 4,000 working hours. And no parts were imported into New Caledonia as I wanted to restore it with actual pieces and parts that were in New Caledonia. I used 10 salvaged jeeps to restore this one to its proper condition. Certain parts, from the frame to the ignition key, I found right here in the local area of Gaiacs.

After the American and French flags were raised in the memorial ceremony, the small group of re-enactors dressed in the uniforms of the time. Angelo Tual recalled, “My parents washed the uniforms of the Americans, and they preserved everything that was left to them” Our museum group is scrupulous about historic details, avoiding at all costs any possibility of getting an imitation. For example, we have a canteen from 1918, because much of the equipment the Americans had when they arrived was from World War I. I have been collecting items for more than 36 years.



Vestiges

During our remembrance activities that Saturday in March, it was a special time. When the engine of Angelo Tual's jeep was turned on, a fellow re-enactor, dressed as a WWII airman, got into the jeep as it drove around the area. In our hearts and minds we could imagine us being there, 70 years ago. Wearing the uniforms, seeing this American legend of a splendid jeep, made us all smile with pride. We would like to see the Americal in New Caledonia emphasized more, particularly their presence in the Plain of Gaiacs area. We are glad we placed the Americal Museum in this area. Our chief goal is to ensure the people of New Caledonia do not forget, and to accomplish that, we have to continue to teach that history.

The Big Runway of the South Pacific

In 1941 the decision was made to build an airport in the area of the Plain of Gaiacs. The location was picked because of the long runways that were possible for the approach of the airplanes. The airfield would eventually be capable of holding 40 bombers and 75 fighters. Construction began in December 1941, with two runways being planned. We had 400 workers on site, Javanese, Indo-Chinese, European and Melanesian.

In April 1942, after the Americal Division arrived they took over the construction job and it was mind-boggling with the equipment they had. Bulldozers, excavators and dump trucks took over the hand labor of our workers. Three long runways were opened, two of 300 meters and one of 1,800 meters, the biggest combat airport in the Pacific. A few days later the first aircraft, a B-17 bomber took off from the site, in time to take part in the Battle of the Coral Sea.

This airport also played an essential role for the taking of control of Guadalcanal. Around the airport the base expanded. By September 1943 the base had 200 men as well as a modern control tower, a metro station for passengers to stay and a telecommunications center. A hospital was built close by. The airport finally was closed on August 1, 1944 after more than 3,500 landings by aircraft.



2012 ADVA National Reunion

Atlanta and Ft. Benning, GA

September 13-16, 2012



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 located at 4736 Best Road, Atlanta, GA, 30337. The hotel is within minutes of Atlanta's Hartsfield Airport and close to I-85 and I-285. 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 per day plus taxes and are available September 12 through September 16. Complimentary hotel shuttle service is available to nearby restaurants and attractions. For those attendees who will be RVing for the reunion, there is a Good Sam RV park very near the reunion hotel.

Dining options at the Westin include the Palio full service restaurant and Martini's Atrium lounge. The Palio offers us a daily breakfast buffet that is available for \$10.00. We also have discounts on lunch offerings. A nearby restaurant withing walking distance is Joe's On Sullivan restaurant on Sullivan St.

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.



The Reunion Schedule

The highlight of the reunion schedule is the Friday tour. This is a trip by chartered bus from the Westin Hotel to Columbus, Georgia for the dedication ceremony of the Americal Division monument. The monument is located 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 1/46th 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 1940s era Army buildings.

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. We have a special guest entertainer for the after dinner program. Americal Division veteran, ADVA member and music composer Danny Barnes will sing a medley of songs he has written. Danny's songs are about and for veterans, and he performs annually for many veterans events and fundraisers.

For those not attending the Saturday morning meetings, Atlanta has many downtown historical sites and attractions that can be reached using the Atlanta rail system MARTA.

Hotel and Reunion reservations

DON'T MISS THIS ONE ! 2012 Reunion Co-Chairman Ron Ellis and I encourage you to 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 gro

We also have a dedicated web site for making hotel reservations online. The web site is www.goo.gl/zO8y2. Up to date information about the reunion, including a downloadable registration form, may be found on line at www.americal.org/programs/reunion 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>



A Journey to Destiny – Part I

Task Force 6814, Australia and New Caledonia

Edited by David W. Taylor

In the Beginning

America's direct involvement in World War II was sealed by the attack of the Japanese Empire on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. But the entry into war by the Americal Army Infantry Division, perhaps the most unique division ever to be formed by the U.S. Army, was begun by a more circuitous route.

The German Army blitzkrieg attacks in Europe prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, quickly caused France to capitulate to the Nazis. This caused, among other things, a grave concern for the French possession of New Caledonia, situated some 850 miles northeast of Brisbane, Australia. New Caledonia was a large island rich in deposits of strategic war materials such as chrome, cobalt, nickel, iron-manganese, and antimony and mercury ores.

The French Army was destroyed by the Germans and the French government quickly turned "Pro-Vichy" to coexist with its Germany occupiers. Vichy elements on New Caledonia who supported co-existence with the Germans, quickly attempted to take control of the government there. This dire situation for the New Caledonians was further exacerbated by continued Japanese conquests of Pacific islands to establish its dominance through what it called, "The Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere"

The rush to stabilize the situation threatening New Caledonia was begun by French General Charles DeGaulle, who had established the "Free French" alternative to the Vichy government in Paris, and took up his headquarters of the Free French in London, England. DeGaulle, before the attack on Pearl Harbor, offered New Caledonia as an advance Pacific Naval base for the American forces due to the continued conquests of the Japanese. After the Pearl Harbor attack DeGaulle took steps to insure the pro-Vichy elements in New Caledonia would not succeed in governing on the island, and the government apparatus, after some turmoil, was eventually switched to support the Free French.

With this dire situation developing in the Southwest Pacific, the die was cast to form the Americal Army Division under the most unusual circumstances. With Australian and New Zealand forces tied up in defending

their own homelands as well as the strategic Fiji Islands, only America could provide the immediate protection required for New Caledonia before the expanding Japanese Empire could invade it.

In early January 1942, after reeling from the attack on Pearl Harbor, Washington's War Department made the decision to support DeGaulle's request and send troops to New Caledonia and a few other vital islands in the area. Brigadier General Alexander Patch, Commander of the Infantry Replacement Training Center at Camp Croft, South Carolina (near Spartanburg), was called to Washington and informed he was to take command of whatever forces could be gathered and dispatched to New Caledonia. The decision was formed with the utmost secrecy, to not tip off the Japanese and thereby accelerate their plans to conquer New Caledonia.

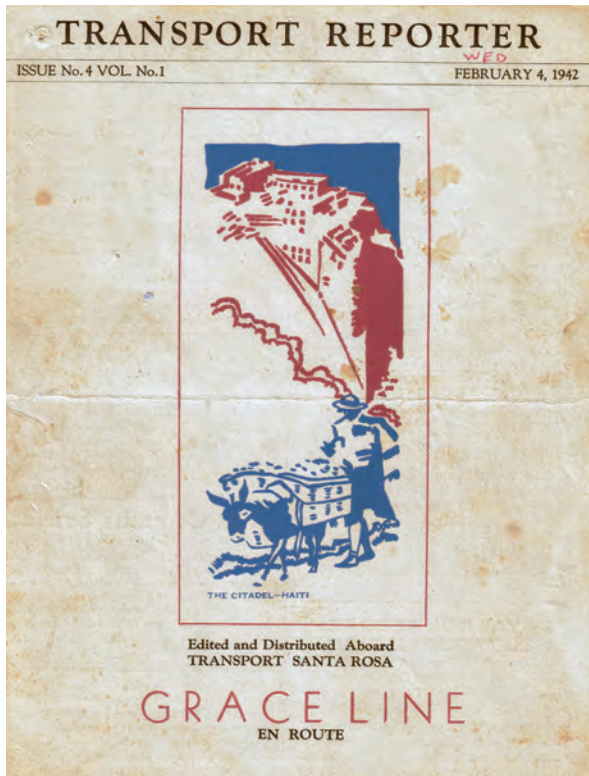
Task Force 6814

In the War Departments rush to "triangularize" all of its Army infantry divisions from four to three infantry regiments (a move made to emulate the German infantry division model), some Army infantry regiments which did not make the organizational "cut" were declared "surplus". As the War Department rapidly put together a task force of whatever units it could find to send to New Caledonia, it picked up two of the "surplus" infantry regiments from the "triangularizing" process, the 182nd Infantry Regiment from the recently federalized 26th Infantry "Yankee" Division of the Massachusetts National Guard and the 132nd Infantry Regiment from the Federalized 33rd Infantry Division of the Illinois National Guard. The third infantry regiment which would eventually join the task force, the 164th of the North Dakota National Guard, would join the force later in New Caledonia. The 164th was activated in February 1941 and sent to the southern states for intensive maneuvers and individual training. After the attack on Pearl Harbor it was moved to the west coast for a series of assignments to protect vital installations in California and Washington state before being ordered to ship to New Caledonia.

Other combat support and combat service support units for the task force, such as artillery, medical, quartermaster, signal, etc. were sent to join the task force which was rapidly assembling and loading its ships in the Brooklyn harbor of New York City. In some cases the support units were considered too large to support an infantry division and in other cases they were too small for what was officially desired. But with the grave concerns over the Pearl Harbor attack and the fate of New Caledonia they were assigned anyway. Other, smaller support units were added simply because they represented equipment and bodies that could be rushed to the war zone in the Pacific. The reorganizing and realignment of what was gathered was to be accomplished later. Thus, Task Force 6814 became known as "an odd conglomeration of spare parts – a wartime military stew of men and equipment"

The cargo to accompany the Task Force was gathered from all parts of the country and sped to the docks of Brooklyn. With speed being of the utmost importance, most cargo was simply thrown into an available open ships' hatch to be sorted out later when the ships reached their final destination.

Seven converted troop ships were quickly assembled at the Brooklyn docks to carry the task force: The SS Argentina, Thomas H. Barry, SS Cristobal, John Ericsson, J.W. McAndrew, SS Santa Elena and the SS Santa Rosa.



Below Right SS Argentina, Flagship of Task Force 6814 (*Seaweed Ships Histories*)

Below Left SS Thomas H. Barry (*Seaweed Ships Histories*)

Santa Rosa Ship Magazine with instructions for Task Force personnel. All of the ships in the Task Force published their own ships magazines (*Howard Burroughs*)



TRIP THRU THE CANAL

Panama will undoubtedly be long remembered as a welcome relief for our sea-weary eyes and stomachs. A Panama of 20th century engineering triumph and American enterprise of tropical fauna and Jurassic jungles. The calm, apprehensive appearance of the terrain, with its verdant silent cliffs and gorges, gossamer in the cool mist of an equatorial dawn, could not but stir the imagination of the onlooker. The more ambitious members of the ships personnel were up at 5:00 A.M. this morning to watch the Santa Rosa take the jumps through the locks of the canal. What had once been a vague impression garnered in our grammar-school days, engendered by our Geography books now stood out in bold relief.

Overhead, floated huge balloons of the Canal Zone Barrage, moored by cables and forming a spider-web of steel to guard against an insidious attack. To the writer they portrayed a grim mural of what many of us had seen from afar in our newsteels and photographs of a war-torn London, a seeming reminder of what lies beyond the shadows of those silent hills.

It is unfortunate that in our Central American "tour" we were unable to obtain a more comprehensive impression of Panama, more important of the cities. We trust that this disappointment will prove an effective insecticide against future rumors and "hot tips from the bridge".

F. Tischler

"E" 244 C. A.

LIBRARY NOTICE

All books, including National Geographic Australia magazines will be returned to the library by 2:00 P.M. tomorrow. Actg. 1st Sgts. of Ship's Companies, and individuals will be held responsible for return of all books they have drawn. The Library WILL BE CLOSED for classification and redistribution of books until 12:00 noon, Sat. After that time, books will be drawn by individuals, instead of Ship Company representative, from 12. noon to 3:00 every day, except Sunday.

At Ease !!!

DRINKING WATER

Water ration until further notice will be two canteens, per officer and man, per day. Enlisted men will fill canteens as they enter mess hall for meals. G. I. cans are on port side, outside mess hall door. Officers water in G. I. can at novelty shop "A" deck.

WASH WATER

Salt water only will be available for showers and washing. Showers are located on forward part of prom-deck starboard side.

HOURS

Enlisted men- any time except hours 3 P. M. to 4:30 P. M. daily.

Officers- 3 P. M. to 4:30 P. M.

Water other than showers will be obtained at any salt tap.

TO IMPROVE CONDITION OF MESS HALL, THE FOLLOWING REGULATIONS WILL GOVERN.

1. Each individual upon receiving his food will move to the table NEAREST THE EXIT DOOR, at which there is a vacancy.
2. No egg shell, orange peel, etc. or any particle of food will be PLACED OR LEFT ON TABLE OR THROWN ON THE FLOOR, food which is not eaten, egg, shell etc, will be placed or left on mess kit until meal is finished, and then deposited in G. I. can at the end of table so that NO FOOD OR REFUSE FALLS ON FLOOR.
3. Any individual who accidentally or purposely soils the table, will ask the K. P. for a cloth and immediately clean that part of the table soiled.
4. Loud talk and yelling is unnecessary
5. Mess card when issued, will be punched as each man enters the mess hall. Lost cards will be reported to the Mess Sgt. in charge. Cards found will be turned in to the mess Sgt. in charge.
6. Other than at mess time men will not enter the mess hall, except those on detail at that place.
7. Mess will be eaten, and men leave the hall within a reasonable time. No Loitering.
8. NO SMOKING DURING MEALS.

Capt. Earl Cosby

Mess Officer

The Argentina was built in 1929 and was operated by the U.S. Maritime Commission prior to the war. The Barry was built in 1930 and purchased by the War Department in June 1941. Originally known as the "Oriente", it was renamed by the War Department in October 1941 as the Thomas Barry, named after an Army Major General. The SS Cristobal was built in 1939 and run by the Panama Railroad Company prior to World War II. The John Ericsson was built in 1928 in Germany and named the "Kungsholm". The United States Lines Company operated it during the war and renamed it in honor of John Ericsson who designed the Civil War Iron Clad, the USS Monitor. The J.W. McAndrew was the newest of all the task forces ships, being built in 1940. Its original name was the Delta Argentino but renamed in honor of another Army Major General. The Santa Elena was built in 1933. It was owned and operated by The Grace Line before and during the war. The Santa Rosa was built in 1932 and also operated by the Grace Line during the war.

Alex Kunevicius of the 22nd Ordnance Company remembered when his unit was being shipped by train in those hectic days from Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania to the Brooklyn Harbor. There were other units as well. He vividly recalled the scene departing the Pennsylvania camp some 70 years later, "It was barely daybreak, but we could see the long train, maybe 15 or 20 cars or more, and we were not the only ones on the move. At least a thousand soldiers lined the waiting platform ready to board the train. Carrying our barracks bags we got on the train. It was crowded, but we got into our seats with the barracks bags under our feet. The train ride from Indiantown Gap to the Brooklyn port and shipyards didn't seem that long"

By mid-afternoon that same day Kunevicius was lined up in single-file with his company to board the Thomas Barry. His experience on the Barry was not unlike the experience soldiers had on all the ships. He recalls, "When our turn came, we walked up the gangplank onto the ship. The ship's crewmen directed us to our quarters. Apparently the ship was pretty much filled with soldiers. We walked down and down several flights of stairs to a large area filled with bunks erected four deep on top of each other. A very small place at each bunk was designated for your bag. There was a blanket on each bunk and to make matters worse, workers were still welding some of the bunks in place. Someone hollered, 'we're down in the hole'. I had crossed the Atlantic four times with my parents before my 18th birthday. I remembered the fancy staterooms, the beautiful dining rooms and lounge areas. What I was looking at in the New York harbor was not going to be a luxury trip to wherever we were going"

Kunevicius continues, "Whoever designed the men's room – the latrine – must not have had the men's modesty in mind. It must have been far, far back in his mind. In an adjoining open room about 20 white toilets, about one foot apart, lined one long side of the wall. On the other side of the room, a long trough that looked like a rain gutter slightly slanted to make the urine flow downhill into the sewer pipe. A fixed water flow was constantly on. Right around the corner from this fabulous restroom was a wall lined with sinks, a place to brush your teeth and shave with hot or cold saltwater. There were no mirrors on the wall.

Luther Bugbee of the 754th Tank Battalion was on board the Ericsson and remembered the signs of the ships former name were still apparent, so many of the soldiers knew it under its previous name, the Kungsholm. His image of the ships' hold was fresh in his mind: "There were six bunks from floor to ceiling on our deck and I imagine that's the

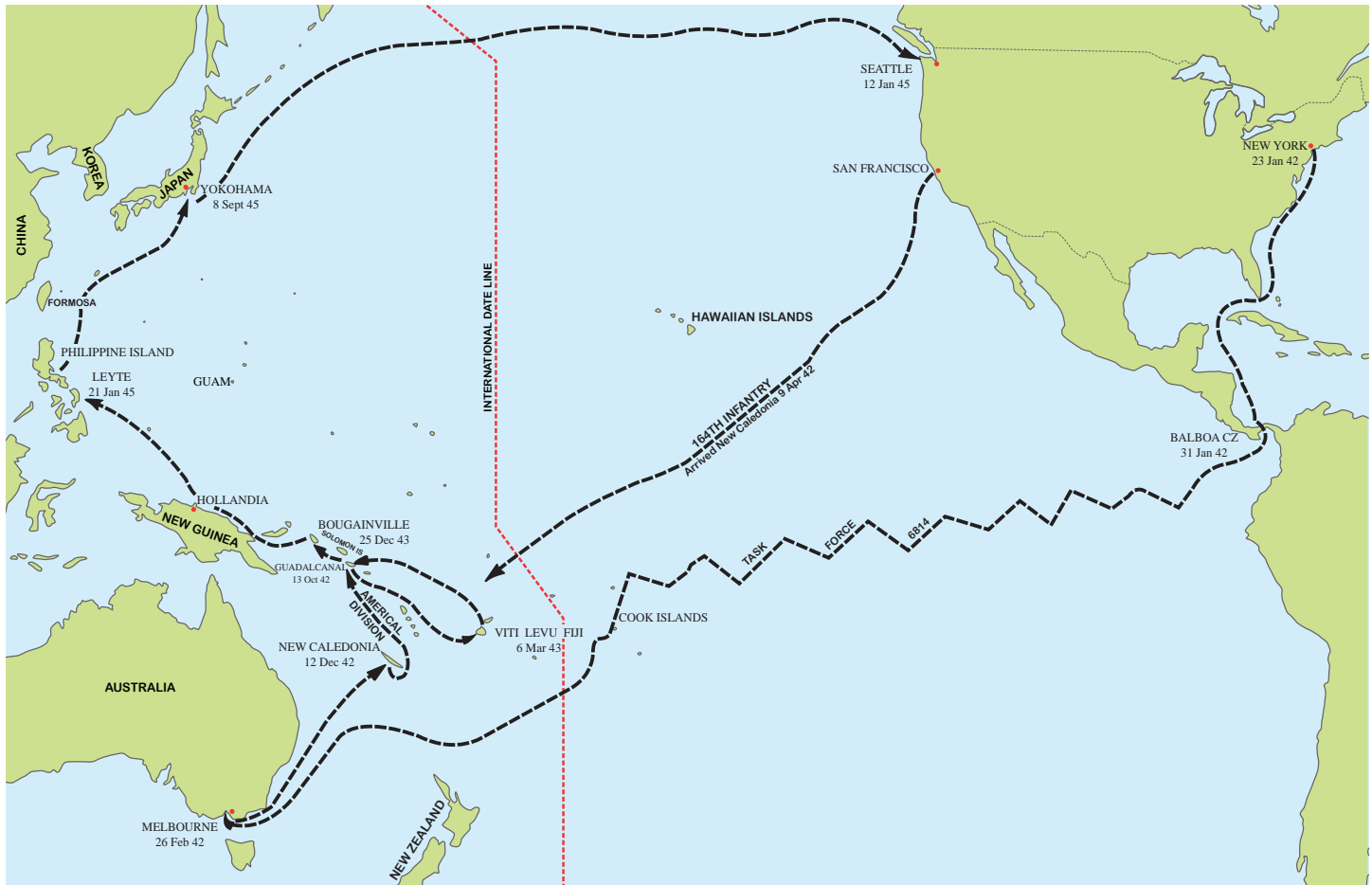
way it was on all decks. Pipes were installed vertically from the floor to the ceiling and they connected horizontally with more pipes. Our bunks were a white duck material that had grommets with holes around the edges. The bunks were laced around the pipes with some nylon cord that went through the holes and wrapped around the pipes. That was it. There were no ladders, so if your bunk was up top, you stepped on the other guys sleeping areas to get to yours"

In the darkness of the morning of January 23, 1942, the first of the seven transports cast off from its New York City port of embarkation. No one but the brass in Washington D.C. and a few staff officers on board the Argentina knew where the task force was headed. With the situation in the Southwest Pacific area in still in doubt, the task force was directed to Australia to buy some time in assessing the situation in New Caledonia and to also give the task force time to reload and reorganize its equipment and troops in a more efficient manner.

When his ship was set to depart, Alex Kunevicius had managed to make his way onto the outside deck, port (left) side of the Thomas Barry at a place by the ships rail. Etched in his mind was the scene: "When I looked down at the pier, the ships gangplanks were already removed from the pier into the ship. Maybe a dozen or so men were walking around, some of them doing something with the ropes holding the ship in place. I could see the ship slowly moving away from the pier. The ship became alive. A very loud blast on the ships horn told all of us we were leaving the United States. Some of the guys had tears in their eyes and some lifted their arms as if waving goodbye to someone they left behind. On the pier there were no people waving their handkerchiefs or flags wishing us a happy voyage. There were no bands playing one of the John Philip Sousa marches to victory. There were no beautiful girls throwing kisses at their departing lovers"

Brigadier General William Rose, commander of the 51st Infantry Brigade, which was also part of the task force, was placed in nominal control of the task force while Lieutenant Colonel Edmund Sebree, Patch's Chief-Of-Staff, who had been briefed on the Task Force mission, aided Rose in commanding the task force. General Patch remained in Washington when the task force sailed, to keep abreast of the developing situation in the Pacific. The French Forces in New Caledonia were becoming increasingly concerned whether or not US forces were to be sent to protect them. They had not been informed by the War Department that help was on the way, in an effort to keep the task force's voyage and mission undiscovered by the Japanese. General Patch was directed to fly to New Caledonia first, on his way to Australia to meet his task force, to assure the French High Commissioner in Noumea, the capital, that the task forces ultimate destination was New Caledonia.

The task force steamed south from New York City along the east coast, escorted by heavy cruisers, old-style destroyers and land-based patrol planes. German U-Boats (submarines) were on the prowl up and down the eastern seaboard for US wartime shipping. This period in early 1942, when the task force left New York, ended up being the period with the highest tonnage loss to German submarines in the Atlantic during the entire war. But, with the exception of one submarine alert (the sub was believed to have been sunk) the task force safely steamed into the Caribbean waters and on to the Panama Canal. By January 31, the task force cleared the canal on the Pacific end.



Route of the Task Force

As the task force set out into the Pacific waters a resemblance of a division-type organization began to take shape on paper, aboard the SS *Argentina*, the “flagship” of the Task Force. Senior staff officers were attempting to have a more formal organization in place once the task force arrived at its destination.

The vulnerability of the task force in the Pacific waters became evident as it steamed away from the west coast of Panama. A broadcast transmitted over radio airwaves from somewhere in Central America, from a station favorable to the enemy axis, was picked up by the task force at sea. The broadcast identified the total number of ships in the task force and the type and size of each ship. Thus the convoy of ships pursued a zigzag course across the Pacific, trying to avoid Japanese submarines until it reached Australia.

Veterans of the 132nd Regiment aboard the SS *Argentina* recalled in their book, *Orchid in the Mud*, “Fresh water was at a premium and soldiers were rationed to one canteen per day and sometimes less. Storms, some merely showers, could be seen a long way off, and since fresh water was at a premium, and none available for showers, it became standard practice during the daytime to steer the convoy into a rain squall. Every man would, as his ship approached the cloudy patch of rainfall, strip naked and soap up quickly when in it. With luck it lasted long enough to get rinsed.”

The voyage became monotonous with card games, craps and various skits occupying much of the soldiers time. Each ship had a small bulletin or newsletter, printed onboard, to keep the soldiers informed with the little information that

could be given out. The “highlight of the day” if one could call it that - was the two meals per day which consumed much of the day’s activities, either eating or waiting in line. Luther Bugbee of the 754th Tank Battalion on board the *Ericsson* reflected, “We had two meals a day and stood in line for 1-1/2 to 2 hours for each meal. It seemed we spent most of our time on ship waiting in lines. I remember one day while in line for chow I got to a bulkhead and noticed someone had carved a tombstone onto it. The next day when I got to that place in the line, someone had carved the words, ‘Here lies the body of the poor guy who died while waiting for food’ The third day someone else etched the additional words, ‘and here lies the poor bastard who died eating it’.”

Because of the zigzag pattern of the ships, necessary to avoid Jap subs, the voyage took longer than estimated, resulting in a shortage of food. Karl Wagner on the *Barry* noted, “The civilian cooks were accustomed to feeding 50-60 crew members. Then they were tasked, after leaving the New York harbor, of feeding 3,500 half-starved jostling soldiers. It was a tough job”

The men aboard the task force ships adapted as well as possible; Alex Kunevicius on the *Barry* recalls, “From the ship’s crew - from the men that traveled the seas constantly - we learned one thing: how to do our laundry in saltwater without a washing machine. At the very end of the ship, the stern, at the very lowest deck, you are closer to the ship’s wake or the track left in the water by the moving ship. Here you strung a thin, long rope through your dirty clothes, tie a knot and throw the bundle overboard into the wake

for about ten minutes, watch it jump up and down in the wake, pull the bundle up and dry the clean clothes in the hot sun". This procedure did have its risks, however. A 132nd Regiment soldier on the *Argentina* remembered, "Some took bundles of their filthy uniform clothing and tied them on a cord trailing alongside the ship. I saw one chap haul in his rope only to find a ragged end where his bundle of clothing had been"

Conditions worsened as they continued their voyage towards Australia. Saltwater showers, what the ship had arranged for the men, amounted to a mere wetting-down of the body since most ordinary soaps would not lather in the hard water. Dysentery broke out on several of the ships in the mid-Pacific, since the bathroom facilities on board were taxed beyond reasonable limits. One vet recalled, "The resulting conditions ranked as the most distressing of the entire trip"

On the evening of February 26, 1942, the task force convoy finally turned into the harbor of Melbourne in southeastern Australia and moved quickly up to the docks. The thousands of soldiers on the seven ships yielded a collective sigh of relief when it was announced all troops would be unloaded. The enemy situation was still perilous so the soldiers were dispersed to avoid concentrations of troops around the dock areas of Melbourne. Steps were taken to disperse the troops over as wide an area as possible. Trains and trucks transported troops to Ballarat, Bendigo, Camp Darby and Camp Royal Park and to other scattered parts of the city of Melbourne.

For some areas such as the towns of Ballarat and Bendigo, no troop-housing facilities were available and the officers and enlisted men assigned there were billeted in private homes.

New Caledonia

On the morning of March 6 the task force loaded onto the ships once again, this time in a more orderly fashion and set a course for Noumea, the capital and port city of New Caledonia. The *Ericsson* developed power trouble and returned to Melbourne for repairs.

The situation in the Pacific Theatre continued to be grim. The Philippines had fallen and Bataan and Corregidor came under siege. Hong Kong fell to the Japanese as well as Singapore. The Japanese conquered other islands in a series of amphibious operations that took them further southwest into the Solomon Islands which threatened the sea lanes from Australia to the United States. From newly conquered bases in New Guinea the enemy began intensive bombing of the Australian ports of Darwin and Port Moresby.

General Patch arrived in Noumea on March 7, the day after his task force departed Melbourne. Likewise Brigadier General Rose, task force commander and Lieutenant Colonel Sebree, Patch's Chief-of-Staff, along with a small administrative group, flew to Noumea to prepare for the arrival of the troops. Patch had brought his operations order from Washington, D.C., and it was succinct: "In cooperation with the military forces of the United Nations, hold New Caledonia against attack"

"Holding New Caledonia" would be a daunting task if Japanese Naval and Army forces attacked it. New Caledonia is a cigar-shaped island 250 miles in length and some 30 miles across. The Central Mountain Chain, a rugged, multi-peaked mountain range, ran the length of the island, making coast-to-coast travel and communications difficult. Much of the narrow coastal plain was swampy

and almost impenetrable. The coral reef which ringed the island did have many navigable breaks leading into quiet inshore waters, offering opportunities for the enemy to land medium-sized forces in many locations.

New Caledonia's principal highway was a narrow road which wound its way along the western coast. Several secondary roads crossed the island from the eastern to western coasts. The roads were very primitive and normal military traffic such as trucks and jeeps was impossible to use.

The task force's arrival in New Caledonia on March 12 gave much needed hope for the defenders of the island. Only two armed groups had offered any defense of the island, the Australian 3rd Independent Company of commandos with 21 officers and 312 enlisted men and the "Free French" garrison of 1,400 officers and men, mostly native soldiers who were poorly equipped. The Australian commandos had no plans to stand and fight if the Japanese invaded the island but rather break up into smaller groups of about twenty men each and escape into the interior to begin a guerilla war.

The task force had its challenges unloading its men and equipment because most of the ships were too large to unload at the Quai and Nickel docks. The boats were unloaded further out with old barges and lighters pressed into service for ship-to-shore movement. Speed was essential to not get caught in a Japanese air attack.

Other key islands in the vicinity were included in the primary defense plans for New Caledonia. Included were the New Hebrides islands 250 miles northeast of New Caledonia where troops were sent to establish an outpost. These included two infantry company's from the 182nd regiment and other support units.

For the defense of New Caledonia it was determined the best strategy was to form a series of strong outposts along the length of the island. The island's only airport, Tontouta, was thirty-two miles from Noumea. A second airport was constructed another one hundred and twenty miles further northwest. A third airport was begun at the northern end of the island but construction was abandoned due to the tactical impracticality of defending it.

By March 19, just one week after landing in Noumea, the 182nd and 132nd Infantry Regiments had been assigned to two tactical areas or "sectors" of control. The 132nd took over the sparsely populated northern sector, covering approximately two-thirds of the island's 7,756 square miles. The 182nd Regiment with its headquarters a short distance north of Noumea, took over the southern sector, including the main airfield, Noumea harbor and the capital. The other major combat force, the 754th Tank battalion, was placed in reserve to respond to any contingency. The primary mission of the artillery battalions was coastal defense. The engineer units set out to improve the primitive road networks and airfields.

Alex Kunevicius of the 22nd Ordnance Company recalled that his Company quickly set up their area in Noumea. The 22nd Ordnance Co. was one of the units that had been activated well before Pearl Harbor and had trained intensely. Their personnel were experts at what they did. Shortly after arriving in Noumea they were given a pass to walk into town and explore what it had to offer. Kunevicius describes his first time in town: "Within a block from the police station we walked into a good-sized square with a gazebo, flowers and benches. There were absolutely no people on the streets. All the houses had their doors and windows closed. The only life and movement we could see in town was U.S. Army



New Caledonia

Nickel Dock where many Task Force members first step foot onto New Caledonia soil (Howard Burroughs)

Headquarters area of 70th Coastal Artillery Anti-Aircraft Battery near the Nickel Dock (Howard Burroughs)



trucks moving here and there. They were moving equipment and troops from the docks. A couple of U.S. sailors asked where they could buy some beer or wine or something to drink. We told them we were looking too. One of the areas looked like the town's marketplace but the store fronts were boarded with shutters. The town was closed down tight. For a time it looked as if the people closed up their homes and left town. All of a sudden the town's mood changed. People began appearing, standing in doorways and looking out of windows. Some made friendly motions as we walked by"

On March 28 General Patch wired the War Department requesting an additional infantry regiment, a mounted cavalry regiment and a signal intelligence company. On April 9th the 164th Infantry Regiment arrived, which considerably lightened the load for defense of the island. Other artillery, engineer and combat service support units arrived and some re-designations took place. The task force was beginning to take the shape of an infantry division with some adaptations.

For example, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander George, the G-3 of the task force proposed a mobile combat reconnaissance squadron be formed, by taking advantage of the availability of quarter-ton trucks, to provide for rapid transport of assault troops. By asking for volunteers, George assembled about six hundred officers and men with two hundred large jeeps, which were referred to as "peeps". Organized along the lines of a cavalry unit, three "troops" of company sized units formed the squadron. George also recruited natives on the island to buttress his ranks and improve his knowledge of the terrain. This unique unit which relied on mobile "peeps" became known as "The Peep Troops".

General Patch set up an advance command post near La Foa, sixty miles above Noumea. The main headquarters in Noumea was located at the Hotel du Pacifique.

The soldiers of the task force made themselves as comfortable as possible depending on their circumstances wherever they were stationed on the island. Mosquitos were plentiful on the island but malaria was nonexistent, most likely due to the large number of Naoli trees, a member of the Eucalyptus family. But each day as the rain came down in torrents for several hours; the mosquitos multiplied in droves and were particularly bothersome in the evening. Eventually the rain soaked woolen Army blankets attracted large green flies, the flies settling in the woolen blankets and laying hundreds of eggs. The larva hatched into thousands of maggots. These pests ruined many woolen blankets.

American ingenuity took over, as it always does, to provide comfort and entertainment on the island. In one camp, 132nd Regiment soldiers used bamboo pipe to carry water for a distance of 1,200 feet. Units that had brought their cork life vests from the ships used the cork for insulated containers. One company of the 132nd became tired of the limited rations of spam or hash. Their camp was bivouacked in a hollow called, "Mosquito Junction" located on a farm by a Mr. Bonaparte. During a night raid by several men, a beef steer was shot, skinned and delivered to the company cook for preparation. The next morning Mr. Bonaparte came to the company mess area to complain about the Vichy French stealing his prize cow. The company made him a steak dinner to offer their condolences.

Joe Ritz was assigned to the 22nd Ordnance Company. Their workshops were in Noumea. He remembered the picturesque nature of the small capital city: "Red tiled roofed houses, small and unpretentious, set on a hillside, one behind the other in rows, almost like a terraced garden.

Each house had an outhouse and the 'honey wagons' came once a day to collect the contents of the buckets. This was used as fertilizer on the local farms. I refused to eat any uncooked vegetables there."

Ritz also remembered the "locals" trying to take advantage of the task force when it first arrived in Noumea. General Patch would not tolerate it. Ritz recalls, "The only imposing structure in the city was the Catholic cathedral, sitting on the crest of a hill overlooking the harbor. On the road up this hill there was a very good bakery and an ice cream parlor with very reasonable prices. During the first week the Americans were there, ice cream soared in price from 5 cents to 35 cents. At that point Patch sent the MP's to the establishment with 'off limits' signs and instructed that no U.S. personnel enter the store. Within one-half hour the price dropped back to 5 cents per cone. Every Sunday each occupant of our tent chipped in 15 cents and someone made the bakery purchase for the day. The 75 cents total gave us enough cookies to last the day with some left over."

In Noumea Howard Burroughs was assigned to the 70th CA (Coastal Artillery) AA (anti-aircraft) battalion. His unit had an AA position above the Nickel Dock on top of a high hill, at the base of which was the Noumea slaughter house. He recalled, "They 'humanly' slaughtered pigs by whacking them over the forehead with a club, which took about 40 whacks, all while the pig voiced its displeasure by releasing the most God-awful squeals imaginable. The meat cutters then went to work disemboweling them, and while we sat around eating our chow in a tin shack that served as a bus stop, the Javanese natives that worked in the mines would go to the slaughter house and drag the pig entrails along the road walking past us to their abodes."

On May 4th a daring naval air strike from the carrier USS Yorktown sunk or damaged fifteen Japanese ships off the coast of Tulagi in the Southern Solomon's. Not long after, a Navy patrol plane spotted a large fleet of warships steaming around the eastern tip of New Guinea. This set into motion the famous naval battle of the Coral Sea. Task Force 6814 on New Caledonia anxiously awaited the results, as it was felt the Japanese naval task force may have been headed for New Caledonia. The news of the U.S. victory brought relief that any immediate threat to New Caledonia had passed.

In the meanwhile the War Department continued to seek the formation of a division from Task Force 6814 on New Caledonia. And, although the task force now had the required three infantry regiments, the combination of other task force units bore no relationship to an infantry division under the War Departments current tables of organization. As a result, it was decided to not assign a number as standard Army divisions had, but rather a name. The War Department had their suggestions with names such as "Necal" and General Patch favored the "Bush" Division. But nothing seemed to stick so Patch held a contest in the task force to come up with a name. The name submitted by PFC David Fonseca of Roxbury, Massachusetts, of the 26th Signal Company was accepted: "Americal" formed from "American Troops on New Caledonia". Under General Orders No. 10, Headquarters United Forces in New Caledonia, published on May 27, the name was made official and signed by the newly promoted Major General Alexander Patch.

The March arrival of Task Force 6814 to New Caledonia, while bringing relief to the islanders that relative security was achieved, did require a delicate balance of negotiations between the more direct American culture and the delicate European-style way of compromise in New Caledonia.

Main Hospital, Noumea, 1942 (Howard Burroughs)



Grand Hotel of the Pacific in Noumea;
General Patches Headquarters (Earl Cook)



Typical thatched house for native citizens of
New Caledonia (Howard Burroughs)



Intersection on Route 1, the main highway
on New Caledonia, with road to Houailon
(National Archives)



Patch worked hard to insure his task force respected local customs. Added to this delicate balancing act was the fact General DeGaulle had sent his own delegation to govern the island to insure it stayed free from Vichy control. Members of this French mission, the "Metropolitans" also considered themselves culturally far above the "colonials" who occupied the island. Political intrigue followed, to see which faction, the Metropolitans or The Colonials, would control the island. General Patch was constantly drawn in to take sides but he and his staff took a stand of strict neutrality. He did remind both factions however, as military commander on the island, that he would not allow any armed conflict or other type of disruption that may threaten the stability of the island.

Both sides of the political landscape in New Caledonia remained at odds with each other, which included kidnapping each others leaders and attempting to start riots for their own cause. With the presence of another Japanese war fleet in the area, Patch advised both sides of the argument that demonstrations would not be tolerated. He had the backing of the French forces on the island. Eventually the DeGaulle appointee to govern the island, Admiral D'Argenlieu, who had once been a French monk, returned to London and DeGaulle sent another delegate to take his place. That settled things down. New Caledonians even today remember the fair-minded way General Patch handled the situation.

On June 4 a strong enemy naval task force struck hard at Midway Island, and the battle of Midway began. For two days the battle continued virtually unabated but the Japanese were soon suffering heavily. When the enemy finally broke contact and retreated to the west, they could count as lost three destroyers and four aircraft carriers. In addition they had damage inflicted on three battleships, five cruisers and four transports. The Navy lost the USS Yorktown and one destroyer. With this important victory the safety of Midway and the Central Pacific had been assured.

With US Forces building up in the Pacific the Americal's task turned to preparing the division for possible offensive operations. Selected men from each regiment were trained by the Australians in commando tactics and those, in turn, trained the men of their own regiments. The infantry units became more adept at night operations and, because of the prospect of fighting Japanese on occupied jungle islands, small-unit tactics were especially stressed. Other type units trained for the offense as well. For example, artillery battalions concentrated on becoming proficient in delivering rapid and accurate artillery fire on targets of opportunity in direct and general support missions.

The most northern airfield in New Caledonia which was destroyed because there was no easy way to defend it - now became important again as a base to launch bombers to strike Japanese positions in the Solomon Islands. Another airfield was constructed as well, in Oua Tom, sixty miles from Noumea, into a field large enough to accommodate heavy bombers. New Caledonia was indeed becoming an important base of operations just as DeGaulle and Washington planners had envisioned.

With the activation of the Mobile Reconnaissance Squadron, the "Peep troops", a unit never anticipated, and various other units to support the unique defense of New Caledonia, a serious shortage of officers developed in the division. In the first such operation of the American Army outside the continental United States, General Patch, with War Department approval, opened an officer candidate

school in Noumea at "Camp Stevens". Enlisted men who met admission requirements were urged to apply and they were first screened by their immediate commanders and then interviewed by a specially appointed board of officers to attend an intensive six-week course at Camp Stevens.

Toward the end of August situation reports reaching New Caledonia indicated the first land offensive operation against the Japanese in the South Pacific had been staged. Troops of the 1st Marine Division, reinforced, had invaded the southern Solomon Islands of Gavutu, Tanambogo and Florida Islands which had been captured and a strong foothold had been established on the island of Guadalcanal where a Japanese airport was now in American hands.

After six months on New Caledonia, the men of the Americal continued to hone their skills as soldiers and adjust to life on the island. Howard Burroughs of the 70th CA AA Battalion remembered those times, "our gun position sat on top of a high hill overlooking Noumea and had four openings for our 50 caliber machineguns. They were interconnected by tunnels and covered by boiler plate and dirt, so you could travel very easily underground to each position. The Governor General had put up a 'Cat House' in Nouma for the soldiers which we could see from our hill. Lines to the Cat House extended around the block every day. But the Javanese girls were left out of the process and saw a good thing so they decided to make 'house calls'. A few came up our little mountain to show us there were better times to be had than down in the town. One of our Lieutenants, Lt. Truscott (the son of General Truscott in the European Theatre) made a visit to the top of our hill because he was suspicious why morale was so high during night surveillance. He had received word that there was much activity in the tunnels. As the Lt. went into one position a girl would come out the other and streak down the hill to home. When the Lt. emerged from the last position he said nothing but ambled down the side of the hill to his tent. I'm sure he suspected something."

Americal Division relations with the locals, both white "Colonials" and the native population was generally very good. Medical units worked with the local population to provide medical services as much and as often as practical. For example, Sgt. George F. Vaupell of the First Battalion of the 132nd Regiment held scheduled sick call hours. Soon the village chiefs would bring their pregnant daughters and/or wives to the aid station for maternity care. Many New Caledonian natives were born with assistance from Americal medical personnel while stationed on the island.

On September 19 the Americal Division underwent a full-scale command reorganization designed to steam line the division. Four days later the first of several groups of replacements, requisitioned to fill the vacancies in the division and other independent units on the island, arrived.

As the days and weeks passed, and as U.S. strength was building up in the South Pacific, New Caledonia became more and more secure. The newly formed division began to wonder about their future. Would they be doomed to fight the "Battle of Caledonia" for the rest of the war? Or would they be used to play an important part in offensive operations that were underway? With the heavy combat the Marines were enduring on Guadalcanal, and the beefing-up of the Americal division, the general feeling was, "Something is in the wind". And the answer to "what was in the wind" was not long in appearing.

Lt. Colonel Alexander George (standing in jeep or "Peep") watching his Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron – "Peep Troops" – pass in review, July 1942 (National Archives)

Jungle Warfare training with the 132nd Infantry Regiment near La Foa. Americal soldier crawls through a stream towards an "Enemy position", 1942 (National Archives)



View of the advance command post of the Americal Division near Paita, New Caledonia, August 30, 1942 (National Archives)

Taking the oath; the first graduating class of Officers Candidate School on New Caledonia before receiving their commission as 2nd Lieutenants. This was the first graduation of its kind outside the continental limits of the U.S., September 18, 1942 (National Archives)

Vietnam Journal

By Andy Olints

CHAPTER 1: BASIC TRAINING



At the age of 24 I flunked the draft physical three times with high blood pressure. For some stupid reason I wanted to go into the U.S. Army. Well, I got my notice for another physical and I finally passed. Someone told me to join the Army for two years instead of being drafted. That way the Army would treat me better (that worked!). I left for basic training on June 3, 1969.

Basic training at Ft. Dix, New Jersey was a shock to me. I wanted to go home. I flunked the first physical training (PT) test. We needed 300 points of a possible 500 points to pass the test. Well, I got 248 points. I was then assigned to fat man's PT every day after supper. The fat man's PT lasted a whole month and I finally got 305 points. The final week in basic I got a 340 score.

One day during a testing session a life-changing question was asked. The whole company was present in a large room. There were three desks in front and as each trainee's name was called he sat down at a desk. The clerk said to me, "Where would you like to be stationed while you're in the Army?" Like an ass, I told him, "Vietnam." He then said, "You got it."

Another unexpected event took place the day of graduation. They posted our military occupational specialty, better known as an MOS. Mine was 11B10 or light weapons infantry. Someone told me I was in the infantry. How in the hell could this happen to me? That day we were on a plane and off to Ft. Lewis, WA.

Infantry training at Ft. Lewis was not as bad as basic training. We had some weekends off and got off base a little. Our first day there the sergeants seemed different. I couldn't figure them out and then realized they didn't wear a combat infantryman's badge, known as a CIB. Someone then told me they were called "Shake and Bakes." He said they didn't know anything, that they were never in combat, and that they were only in the army 13 more weeks than we were. The Shake and Bakes went to Ft. Benning, Georgia for training to become sergeants and they were going to Vietnam. I remember thinking how strange it was to put on sergeant stripes and never have been in combat.

Eight weeks later on the day before graduation we got our orders for our next duty station. Out of 200 people in the company, 180 guys were sent to Vietnam. Of the other 20, four guys joined the Army to go to officer candidate school (OCS) and 16 of us were sent to Ft. Benning to become Shake and Bakes. I couldn't believe it. I was going to be one of those guys who didn't know anything and wore sergeant's stripes.

Two weeks later I'm at Ft. Benning and I'm not happy. There were 250 guys there the first day. The captain told us if anyone wanted out, to get in line and he would talk to us in his office. I wanted out and got in a long line waiting to see the captain. When I got in front of him, he told me

Christmas was only a month away, why not stay for the month and then go home for Christmas. Then I could get out. I thought that sounded great. Well, after Christmas the captain said he lied to everyone and the only way out was to flunk out.

I didn't realize what a great school I was in nor did I take advantage of where I was. I wanted out. We were promoted from private, E1 to specialist, E4. When we got paid, they made us buy five more sets of clothes and boots. We had to send all of our clothes to the cleaners each week for washing and starch. We had a schedule from Sunday to Saturday with every hour in the day planned. Specific times to eat, sleep, go to classes, change clothes, and study, 24 hours a day. Each man had his own desk with books on everything the Army taught in Light Weapons Infantry.

If we were not in the field, each night between 7 o'clock and 8 o'clock, we had to be at our desks studying. We knew what classes we had the next day and had to study for that class. Each day we had a quiz on the day's class. At the end of each major class we had a test and every Friday we had a test. We had to average 80 out of possible 100 on everything. We had to pass all classes on major subjects such as map reading, first aid, communications, booby traps, and weapons. Our scores were posted in the office. Little by little some of the guys would flunk out. One of the sergeants would take them aside and they would walk off together. There were no goodbyes. Usually the guys would not appear at lunch. When we got back to the barracks at night all their things would be gone.

The training was great. Out in the field we were taught by Army Rangers, real tough guys. In the classroom most of the teachers were captains. Quite often we would get into trucks and be taken to what I called the Infantry College at Ft. Benning. There were soldiers there from all over the free world. It was very impressive to see all of this. We had to have fresh clothes on and were always supposed to be looking good. We had the same instructors in NCO (non-commissioned officer) school as they had at OCS. Officers from all over the world took classes at Ft. Benning. But I still didn't want to be there.

In our first class we were told that leaders were not born but leaders were made. They were going to turn us into squad leaders and platoon sergeants. I did not agree with them and I asked myself how a guy with a high school degree and no confidence could lead anyone. As the company got to know each other, I found out by the time of graduation that only four of us didn't have any college. Some of the guys would max all the tests. I just about got by. Our company commander would keep all the test scores, but at the end of the 6th and 12th weeks everyone in each platoon would grade each other. If you didn't think someone would make a good squad leader in Vietnam, you had a chance to grade him very low.

I got a chance to shoot some great weapons and do some map reading day and night. There was really a lot of great training, but I still didn't realize how beneficial it was. Each week we would have long marches. We never really knew how far we marched but were told it ranged from three to ten miles. My PT test score was now 465 out of a possible 500.

In the next to last week we ran what was called the confidence course with the Army Rangers. I didn't know it at the time, but they always picked someone to go through the course twice. Well, I was picked to do it. Every one was done with the course and I was half way through my second time. I could hear the instructor yelling to the company while they were getting ready to march away. He was yelling, "Look at the pussy out there. He's the type of guy that gets people killed. Don't try to save him. Let him die." I was tired and beat by the time I got to my rucksack. The company was about 100 yards away from me, and with no energy left, I had to run as fast as I could to catch them. No one said a word to me about what happened and I realized that each day the Rangers picked someone to harass.

Our last week of NCO school was Ranger week. We were out in the field all week. It was a rough week. We ran patrols and had blanks in our M16 rifles and shot a lot of Viet Cong. During that week all we ate was C-rations. During our last hour with the Rangers the top NCO had a nice talk

We were all given a case of C-rations



with us. He said at least 50% of us would be wounded or killed. We should think about going to Ranger school for more training. This training might be something that could save our lives. My first thought was that I could never make it in the Rangers. My second thought was that no way would 50% of the guys get wounded or killed. Well, I never in this world would have thought that in my platoon in Vietnam, more than 80% of the guys would either come down with malaria, be wounded, or be killed. Quite a few guys were only there a few days before they were wounded. Some guys received two Purple Hearts and there was a lot of malaria.

Finally, the night before graduation, six men in the company were told they did not graduate from NCO school. They left with the rank of specialist 4th class. I was very happy and proud to have sergeant stripes sewn on my sleeves. I saw our class rankings. Out of 250 men who started 13 weeks before, only 106 graduated. My ranking was 104. I had an average test score of 82. For 13 weeks we

were told that we were the worst class in NCO history and that we hadn't learned anything. Never once did anyone say, "You did a good job and you'll be OK."

Finally in 1995, 24 years after Vietnam, "our" book came out, *Sappers in the Wire*. I didn't know very many Shake and Bakes from other platoons or other companies. After reading the book I realized that there were a lot of Shake and Bakes in the battalion. These guys did some great things. I think I counted 17 guys who were either squad leaders or platoon sergeants. Lots of these guys earned Purple Hearts or Bronze Stars, and one guy had two Silver Stars. I knew of two guys who were offered field commissions. Not bad for a bunch of Ft. Benning Shake and Bakes, or as we were sometimes called, instant sergeants. I was very proud of what I had achieved.

CHAPTER 2: ARRIVING IN VIETNAM

After spending nine weeks at Fort Polk, Louisiana, as an assistant drill sergeant and two weeks at home, I was off to Vietnam. My first stop was Fort Ord, California. I did something very stupid. I reported for duty two days late. I was supposed to arrive on a Saturday but decided to report in on a Monday. I had this idea. What could they do to me, send me to Vietnam? While reporting in, I gave my papers to a woman staff sergeant. When she saw the date I was supposed to report, she made a big deal about me being late. I was told to see some captain the next day. Well, the captain was an Army lawyer. I was getting an Article 15 for being late. I got this long speech about the Army and my duty to it. I had to sign at least five papers which the captain also signed. He then took all the papers and put them in a folder and handed it to me. He said when I got to Vietnam I was to hand these papers to my company commander.

My first thought was that I was in deep shit. Then as I left the room and walked down the hall, there was a sign from God. There in front of me was a garbage can. I took a quick look around and walked by the can. I then turned around and no one was in the hall, so I walked over to the garbage can and dumped in all the papers. My thoughts were that I would have to be a dumb ass if I took these papers all the way to Vietnam and gave them to my company commander. The last thing I did at Ft. Ord was to give a pint of blood to the Red Cross.

I don't remember much of the twenty hour flight to Vietnam. We did stop in Hawaii and got off the plane during the refueling. We landed in Vietnam in the morning and everything there was different than anything I had ever seen. We got off the plane and walked by an airplane hanger where there were at least 200 guys who started cheering us. My first thought was, what did we do to deserve that reception? Then I realized they were going home and we were their replacements.

As we were walking, I noticed five guys with full packs and weapons. I think they were either a long range reconnaissance, or LRRP team. They may have been Army Rangers. They looked scary. We got on Army green buses that had wire on the windows. I figured with the wire in the windows the VC could not throw in hand grenades. The bus took us to the replacement station. We were told we

would have three formations a day and we had to be at all of them. They would call out names and then we would find out what unit we were assigned to.

I only had three dollars on me as I had spent all my money at home. I noticed an NCO club so I decided to have a soda. When I walked through the door, the guys inside booed me. Over the bar was a sign, "He who wears his hat in here will buy the bar a round a cheer." I was so happy I had my hat off! I ordered my soda and sat at a table. While looking around I noticed two guys that were very happy and I was sure they were on their way home. Finally, one of them asked if I was new in country. Then he asked me my MOS. I proudly said, infantry, 11 Bravo. There was dead silence. The same guy then said, "What do you think your chances of making it are?" No one spoke. I finished my soda and walked out.

The next day I found out that I was in the Americal Division. I had never heard of the Americal but went over to a very large map of Vietnam and saw that they were located very far up north in a place called Chu Lai. We flew there in a C-130 cargo plane. I had never flown in a plane like that and it was one hell of a scary ride. When we arrived at Chu Lai, I couldn't believe what a big air base was there. The Marines had fighter jets there and the Air Force also had a lot of planes.

We took buses to the replacement station at the Americal Division. I thought it was a beautiful base. We were on the ocean, had a big mess hall, lots of barracks to sleep in, an outdoor movie theater, and buildings for classes. I found out that anyone in the infantry would have seven days of refresher infantry courses. It was back to the basics. For the first time in my life I could have answered all the questions during class. After 11 months of training, I finally realized that maybe I did learn something in NCO school. In the classes with me were Jerry McKay, Don Carr, and Jim Marin. Little did I know that I would be friends with these guys for the rest of my life.

One day while we were having a class on map reading, there was this big explosion down the hill from us. There was a lot of screaming to call for a Medevac. We had had a class on booby traps the day before. As one instructor was showing how to set up a booby trap, the other instructor was out back with some explosives. When the first instructor connected the wires, the explosion would go off out back and scare us. On this day, the second instructor still had his hands on the explosion when it went off.

One day I met a former NCO class member who was assigned to Bravo Company 1/46th. We were friends so I decided to volunteer to go to Bravo Company. Somehow I was assigned to Delta Company 1/46th.

One evening after classes a sergeant from the 75th Ranger Battalion came to speak to us. He offered to cut our tour in Vietnam in half, from 365 days to 180 days. All we had to do

was to volunteer to join a five man LLRP team, which meant five days in the field and five days of rest. My thoughts were, "You've got to be kidding me."

While spending the seven days of training in country, we were also assigned to do guard duty on the ocean every other night. On the ocean every 100 yards or more there was a guard tower about eight feet off the ground. Two guys were assigned to the tower and they were given an M16 and 18 rounds of ammo. There had to be one guy awake all night. The thing no one told us was that when it got dark at night, the Vietnamese fishermen were night-fishing with lights on their boats. There must have been 200 boats out there. I thought that at least one of them was VC and that they would turn off their light and sneak in and kill me.

I was about to meet the men in Delta Company. We took a deuce and a half truck to the company area. We were met by First Sergeant Rodriguez, better known as "Top". This was the first time in 11 months that a staff sergeant or higher talked to me like I was a real person. He seemed very happy to meet all of us and I felt very relieved that he was

so nice. He said that Delta Company was returning to Chu Lai from the field for a three day stand-down. After about 90 days in the field the company got three days off to relax. He also said the company was down to about 40 men. They had spent a lot of time in a place called Que Son Valley. All three platoon leaders and the company commander were wounded. All the replacements were told get back into trucks to head to the beach where the stand-down would be.

Finally, I was to meet my platoon and squad. I was very nervous. Some

trucks rolled in and off jumped the guys, full gear and dirty clothes, and every one needed a shave and a haircut. One guy looked at me, dropped his pack and came running over to me while screaming, "There is my replacement." Jim Allen gave me the biggest bear hug I ever got. He kept saying, "You're my replacement." After I met the other men in the squad, Jim said he was taking a shower and after that I was to stay with him.

After a shower and some food, Jim told me we were going to get a haircut and a shave at the PX. About eight of us took a truck to the PX and I asked who would be cutting our hair. I was told it would be one of the Vietnamese. In training I was told that every Vietnamese was a VC and never to trust them. While in the truck all I could think of was getting a shave by a Vietnamese. I had this picture in my mind that after I got a nice haircut, the VC would put some warm shaving cream on my face, pull out a very long straight razor, stand there sharpening the razor with a leather belt, look me straight in the eye, and cut my throat. While my

A lot of the guys playing cards



blood was flowing, he would run out of the building.

Well, we got to the barber shop and there were three barbers, all Vietnamese. There were also three wooden chairs with wooden arms. A guy by the name of Bob Ridley went first. He carried a very large hunting knife and pulled out his knife and stabbed it into the arm of the chair. He then held his hand on the knife handle and looked at the Vietnamese and said, "If you cut me just a little bit, I will kill you." He kept yelling the same thing until the Vietnamese said, "OK, GI." Bob got a nice haircut and then it came time for the shave and out pops the old fashioned Gillette safety razor. I was so pleased that the Vietnamese used this safety razor that to this day I still have a smile on my face thinking about it.

Stand-down is one hell of a party for three days. There was lots of beer and soda on ice 24 hours a day. Hot meals for breakfast and lunch, and steaks cooked on the grill at night. There was also a Korean band each night with go-go girls and just lots of fun. On the first two of the days everyone would drink beer and by the third day every one was drinking soda. I think more replacements also came on.

One of the guys that befriended me during stand-down was the medic. I didn't realize that not many of the guys talked to him. I later found out that one of the guys in the platoon had been wounded and yelled for a medic, and this medic yelled back, "Could you come to me?" The medic was then blackballed because no one wanted a medic around that they couldn't trust. The medic was assigned to another company.

On our last day of stand-down we met our new company commander, a first lieutenant. The company was gathered together to hear a little pep talk from him. Right away he said that he was here to kill gooks. After a few minutes of hearing him talk about gooks some of the guys started booing him. I couldn't believe it. Soon our first sergeant stepped in and dismissed all of us. It wasn't a very impressive way for a new company commander to start off with his troops.

Finally stand-down was over and we were going to the field. For three days everyone had been in the party mood and this day everyone changed. I could not believe how professional everyone acted. Everyone had a job to do and everyone made sure that we were all ready to go out to the field. Our platoon leader was a staff sergeant that I found out was also a Shake and Bake. He was just one of those great leaders and I was told he was offered a field commission.

Cowboy Bob helped me get my pack ready. I got a rucksack and a rucksack frame. We were all given a case

of C-rations and I was told to take what I wanted and trade away what I didn't want and then throw away the rest. I hated C-rats so I really didn't want anything. I only took the small cans of chicken soup and gave away the beans and weenies, peaches, pound cake, pork, and beef. I made a lot of friends giving away these items. In each C-ration came a little plastic pouch of items you need like toilet paper, coffee, sugar, cream, salt and pepper, and three cigarettes. I opened all these little packets and then put what I wanted in one of the pouches in the rucksack.



Ready to take a Chinook helicopter to Fire Base Mary Ann

Cowboy Bob also gave me 100 heat tabs to cook my meals with. Inside the rucksack I had a rubber bag to keep things dry. I got extra socks, writing paper, an ink pen, poncho liner and two hammocks. I also took some soda to have in the field. I got six canteens of water because the weather was very hot. I then got a steel pot (helmet), poncho and finally my M16. With my M16 I received 15 magazines and we put 18 rounds of ammo in each magazine. I was also told to have extra ammo in my rucksack. I needed at least 350 rounds of ammo. I was also assigned a claymore mine with a battery and 50 feet of wire. Then I got a hunting knife from someone who was going home. Next was a web belt where I wore my new knife, a canteen of water, a first aid kit, two hand grenades and

a little extra M16 ammo. This belt would be part of my body every day in the bush.

The whole company was then ready to take a Chinook helicopter to Fire Base Mary Ann. This was my very first ride in a chopper and my first day in the bush. I was very uptight. There was only one chopper to take us out so one platoon at a time went out. While waiting, everyone split up and sat in the shade. It seemed like there were groups of four, with a lot of the guys playing cards. I sat there alone thinking about what was ahead of me that day. I'm looking around and saying to myself that these are not the same guys who were drinking and laughing. They were very serious.

Then, 25 feet away from me, I made eye contact with Bob Ridley. He was a machine gunner who carried a 26 pound M60 machine gun and also about 400 rounds of M60 ammo. Bob had his hunting knife and a 45 pistol on his web belt. As he got up to walk over to me, I noticed he had his sleeves on this shirt cut off. He was about 5'10" and looked like a very tough guy. When he stood in front of me, he bent over at the waist and whispered in my ear, "This is my last mission and I only have 10 days left in the field. If you fuck up I will kill you." He then stood up, looked down at me and said, "No hard feelings." I really believed him.

CHAPTER 3 FIRE SUPPORT BASE MARY ANN

My first ride in a Chinook helicopter was fun. We left Chu Lai and flew up the coastline for a few minutes. I tried to look out the small round window that the door gunner used. I could see the main road on one side and the South China Sea on the other. Soon we turned left and were flying over rice paddies and buildings. It wasn't long and we were in the mountains heading west. About 30 minutes from take-off I looked out the window and there was Fire Support Base Mary Ann. There on top of this mountain all the trees had been cut down and an army base was built.

We circled once and then made a quick landing. Once we landed the whole platoon got off the helicopter in a quick manner. We were told that because it was so hot we would not be leaving the base for a while. The medic (the one the guys didn't trust) said he would take me for a walk around the base. It was about 200 yards long and 100 yards wide.

We had landed in the middle of the base, which was the chopper pad, so my tour started there. I dropped my pack and M16 out in the sun and that later turned out to be a big mistake. I first noticed that the base was surrounded by barbed wire that was out about 30 feet from the bunkers. Then there was a trench line dug about two feet deep all around the base. Most bunkers (about 21 of them) were built with wood and two layers of sand bags over the wood. On the eastern side of the base, about 200 feet below, was the river. As we walked east to the bunker line, I was told this very important thing. If I got separated from my platoon, I was always to walk east toward to coast. If I walked west I would be heading towards Laos. I was to remember that the sun comes up in the east and goes down in the west.

I was then shown the ammunition storage area. We



We turned left and were flying over rice paddies



You had this beautiful view

walked a little farther and I could see a small chopper pad known as the VIP pad. Very close by was the Tactical Operations bunker. This is where the colonel stayed with all the people he needed to run the battalion. Close by was a large bunker where the infantry company command platoon stayed.

We were now looking south to this very beautiful valley. Looking west as far as one could see was Laos. The Ho Chi Minh trail was out there. We walked a little more and there was a mess hall. Soldiers did not eat inside the mess hall; the cooks just made the food there. To get a meal, you walked inside one door, down the food line, and then out the second door. You ate at your bunker. Very close to the mess hall was the medical hootch. We continued walking and headed to the northern part of the base. Each company in the battalion had a mortar team. There were 4.2" mortars and 81mm mortars. Past the mortars were the artillery guys. There were three 155mm howitzers and three 105mm howitzers with hundreds of rounds of ammo. The farthest northern point of the base was the trash dump.

There were about four outside toilets. The one near the chopper pad impressed me the most. It was built out of plywood and had a roof and a wooden floor. The toilet "walls" were eight feet high. The plywood base was four feet high and from four feet to eight feet was a screen that went around the four walls of the toilet. Inside there were four seats.

If you had to use the bathroom, you had this beautiful view outside. You got to see these beautiful mountains and the whole base. Then, if they wanted to, the whole base could see you going to the bathroom. In the back of the toilet structure, better known as "the shitter," was a flap. Lift up the flap and you could pull out some 55-gallon drums that were cut in half. In the drums were "you know what" and

toilet paper better known as flypaper. Every couple of days someone had to burn the shit.

During my walking tour of the base I was also introduced to 55-gallon drums that were cut in half and buried in the ground. These were used as urinals to just take a pee if you wanted. Just think, as you're walking from one bunker to another and you come upon one of these drums, you can just take a pee out in the open.

I was very impressed with the base. Lots of hard work went into building it. As far as the eye could see was nothing but beautiful mountains. There was also this beautiful river below the base. How could a war be going on in such a beautiful place?

In the coming months, once I took a step inside the barbed wire that surrounded Fire Base Mary Ann, it felt like home. There were three hot meals a day, a shower, a place to sleep, and some very nice friends. But step outside that barbed wire and you were in hell. As much as I felt at home, I always felt that the NVA were watching us all the time. As much as I relaxed on the base, I knew any NVA with a sniper rifle and a scope could kill any one of us at any time.

On that first day I was on the fire base, the last thing the men in the company did was to have a very nice spaghetti meal. Eating spaghetti on a paper plate with a plastic fork and knife was new to me. Shortly after the meal, word got out to get our packs on. We were moving out.

I got very tense. Everyone got lined up in single file at the chopper pad. There was a quick head count and we started walking to the northern part of the base. No one told me where to walk in line so I walked next to last.

I'm guessing the temperature was at least 100 degrees and it was about 100 yards to the most northern part of the base. I had never carried a pack so heavy in my life, and with the temperature at 100 degrees, I wanted to take a break right at the edge of the base. We walked by the dump and started walking downhill, which helped me. If soldiers are walking off the base, it has to be as quick as possible so as to get into the tree line before the enemy got a true position of where they were going. I didn't notice at the time, but all three platoons went in different directions.

At first I was looking into the woods to see if I could see any NVA (North Vietnamese Army), but as soon as we started walking uphill, I couldn't stay up with the platoon. Right then I didn't care if there were any NVA out there. My

main goal was to keep my eye on the guy in front of me and try my hardest not to get lost. Never in my life did I ever do any thing as physical as humping through the jungle. I wanted to stop. I wanted tell someone to slow down. I really wanted to say, "Help."

Usually out in the field you call in your location every hour, so I'm sure we walked for an hour before I finally got to take a break. I was so tired that I just leaned over and fell to the ground. I quickly grabbed my canteen of water to take a drink. But dumb ass me had left his pack and water out in the sun all day and the water was so hot that I couldn't drink it. My mind was racing. How was I going to survive! I looked at the guy walking last in line and I'm sure he was thinking, "The new guy isn't going to make it." Then my thoughts were, "Is this whole year going to be like this? Will I suffer all year and then get killed? Why not die right now?" I kept telling myself that I want to die right now.

Word came back that we were moving and with my pack so heavy, I couldn't stand up. I set my M16 off to the side and then I grabbed a tree, held on to it for support, and somehow got on

my feet. We started walking and I really don't remember anything till we got to the night laager. I was tired. I couldn't stand the thought that all I had to eat were C-rations. I was told I had first guard duty at night. After guard duty I got in my hammock and slept like a baby.

The next two days were very much a learning experience for me. The platoon couldn't walk as fast in the jungle so I managed to stay up with them. I got real excited when we found some hooches while walking patrol. I couldn't figure out if the hooches, which were made of straw, were new or very old. One of them had wooden Chicom (Chinese Communist) hand grenades lying around on a platform. To me it looked like someone had been giving classes on how to throw a one of these grenades.

As we left the first hooch, I got the word to get my Zippo team ready. I asked someone what in the hell was a Zippo team. He told me get out my Zippo lighter and burn down the hooch. I bet I burned down five hooches in two days.

While out in the field I was not eating much. Coffee for breakfast, peanut butter and water for lunch, and a small can of chicken soup for supper. I added two packets of salt and one packet of pepper to the soup, and it still didn't taste good. One year of training in the states was never like this.



I wanted to tell someone to slow down. I really wanted to say "Help"



**Three hot meals a day
and a shower**

CHAPTER 4 NIGHT LAAGERS AND CLAYMORES

The morning of my third full day in the bush my squad leader, Jim Allen, informed me that he had only two weeks left in the field and it was time I started to learn a few things. On this day I would be walking second in line behind the point man. To my surprise, I didn't mind walking up front. Dave Milotte was the point man.

After the first hour we stopped and our radio operator called in our location to Firebase Mary Ann. The squad leader showed me his map, and our location was right in the center of the map. He explained where we were going and that I was to use the compass to go in that direction. Not an easy thing to do.

When we stopped for our second time to call in our location, Dave quietly told me he was going to walk down the trail about 50 feet just to see what was there. He said something didn't feel right. He walked away slowly but returned quickly. When Dave got back, he whispered that there was a NVA trail watcher about 75 feet down the trail.

Dave, Jim, and I got our M16s and went down the trail without telling any of the other people in the platoon. Dave stopped and pointed at some brush. He whispered that the NVA was hiding in the brush. Each of us got on one knee and started firing our M16s on semi-automatic, and in seconds we all fired 18 rounds of ammo.

By the time we changed magazines, some of the other members of the platoon came running up to us. I didn't know it at the time, but when our machine gunner came running up, our new company commander grabbed him and told him that he was to stay next to him to protect him. Not a smart thing to do for a new company commander.

Dave, Jim and I approached the brush that the NVA was in. We found a lot of blood, some food and a pair of slippers. One of the other platoon members found a trail of blood. With caution we started following the blood trail.

There would be a very large drop of blood, then small drops. As I was going along with the guys, I just had this feeling that I was in Vermont deer hunting. We had wounded a deer and we were tracking him down. Well, this was not a deer, it was a real person. And this real person also had a rifle. He could be lying there wounded and with his dying breath kill someone. We tracked him for about 30 minutes but never found him.

When we got back to our packs, there was still a lot of adrenalin running through my body. My first thoughts were, "Did I really pull the trigger on my M16 and try to kill someone?" Yes I did. "Did I think the NVA died?" With all that blood loss I'm sure he did. If Dave had not spotted him, he probably would have shot one of us.

I sat down next to my pack and I noticed there was a lot of blood on the lower part of my left leg from the knee to the top of the boot. I lifted my pant leg up and a guy behind me said, "You have a leech on your leg." Never before in my life did I have a leech on me and I didn't even know what they looked like. How in the hell could you lose so much blood from a leech! I thought somehow I was wounded and I was hoping to be sent back to the states.

We continued the patrol and I was very much alert looking for more NVA. Evening came and the platoon leader picked a spot for the night laager. The platoon then got into a 40-foot diameter circle with about five feet between each person. I picked out two trees about eight feet apart so I could hang my hammock. I dropped my rucksack and started to settle in when my squad leader told me that I was going to put out the claymore mine on the trail.

Putting out claymore mines is one very dangerous thing to do. If you are taught properly and the process is done right, you have a very good chance of not killing yourself. I got my M16 rifle and was given a 9-volt battery, which I put in my pocket. Next I received the claymore mine and 25 feet of electrical wire, which had at its end a wooden clothespin and a blasting cap.

Three of us walked down the trail about 75 feet. Then the two other guys (spotters) walked into the woods about 15 feet, one to my right and the other to my left. Because you have to keep your mind focused on the claymore, you couldn't be watching the trail for any NVA. That was the spotters' job.

Once the three of us were in place I took out the 9-volt battery and held it up to show both of them that I was setting the battery on the ground next to a tree. Then I started to unravel and place about 25 feet of electrical wire, not on the trail but hidden next to the trail. I set the claymore mine aiming down the trail. Next I got one end of the 25-foot electrical wire and stripped about 6 inches of it to the bare wire, and then split the bare end in half. I took one half of the bare wire and wrapped it around the top half of the clothespin and wrapped the other half around the bottom part of the clothespin.

With some very thin wire (the type of wire you would hang a picture with), I tied the electrical wire and the clothespin to the bottom of a tree or branch. I then took a plastic spoon and broke that in half. I took the handle part of the spoon and with my hunting knife made a little hole

in the plastic handle. I inserted a section of the thin wire through the hole in the plastic spoon handle and placed the plastic piece between the top and bottom of the clothespin.

Because I had attached a length of the thin wire to the plastic, I was able to run that thin wire across the trail and tie the far end of the wire to a tree or branch, thus creating a tripwire. Hopefully an NVA would come down the trail and walk through the tripwire. If he did, the plastic would pull away from the top and bottom of the clothespin, make an electrical connection with the battery and the blasting cap, and the claymore mine would explode.

I finished the claymore preparation by placing the blasting cap in the claymore. I then walked back to the tree where the 9-volt battery was placed. I held up the battery to show both spotters that I was going to connect the battery. All three of us had to be behind a tree when the battery was connected because if the claymore accidentally went off, anyone 15 feet in front of it would be killed. Anyone 15 feet behind it would be in a world of hurt. I put out more than 100 claymores and never got a kill.

I got back to the night laager and hung my hammock as close to the ground as possible. Then I got out my poncho. I tied the poncho about 18 inches above my hammock. At each corner of the poncho was a shoestring, which was tied to trees or branches and which made the poncho look like a pup tent. If it rained, I stayed dry.

It was time for supper. I opened up a can of very bad crackers with my P-38 Army can opener. (I still have my P-38 can opener that I used in Vietnam.) I threw away the crackers and used the can for my stove. I added a little air hole in the can and put in a heat tab and I was all set to cook my chicken soup. Someone gave me a packet of Kool-Aid so I added just a little of it to a canteen cup of water to give the water a better taste.

While you were eating (alone), there were a lot of things going on in the platoon. The medic stopped by to see if you had any gook sores. A soldier walking through high grass or by branches could get a small cut. This small cut could easily get infected and cause a sore, which was called a gook sore. Each night the medic would take care of these problems. In the morning the medic would also hand out malaria pills.

The platoon sergeant would stop by to see if you needed any ammo, hand grenades, or any equipment necessary for the platoon. Also, he could get you clothing or shoes. He would check with the squad leader to make sure everything in the squad was OK. If people were wounded, the platoon sergeant, if needed, would do any duty to help the platoon. The platoon sergeant had access to a radio and could call

Mary Ann for any supplies.

In the center of the night laager was the command post where the platoon leader, platoon sergeant, medic, and radio operators stayed. I never got to stay in the command post but I'm assuming that the platoon leader was on the radio calling in our location to Firebase Mary Ann.

He also had to give the location of the two claymore mines that were put out on the trails. Each squad put one out. Then I'm sure the platoon leader was given his orders for the next day. The platoon sergeant then received all this information from the platoon leader. Re-supply and communication with other platoons were also part of the command post.

When it was almost dark, both radios (for communication) were taken to the machine guns where all-night guard duty was required. Each man in the platoon had at least one hour of guard duty every night. Someone would wake you up, you would go to machine gun that was on the trail, and you would sit there with the radio handset in one ear. Every

15 minutes someone from Mary Ann would call to make sure someone was awake in the platoon. Some nights were very dark and you sat there hoping nothing moved. The more you looked, the more you thought something moved. When it rained, you just hated guard duty.

The next morning I had my coffee, packed all my gear, and was ready to go out and get that claymore I had set the night before. The same three guys that set it out had to go pick it up. My two spotters got in location, one to the right and the other to the left. I looked down the trail and the woods looked so different from the night before.

When you looked down the trail, a lot of things popped into your mind. Is there an NVA out there who watched us set up the claymore last night? Is he waiting there and will he shoot me? Did he find the claymore and put it in a different place so that I would walk through his booby trap? You would think of all these things and your mind would be crazy, but you still had to go get the claymore. First I disconnected the wire from the battery and showed my two spotters the battery. Then I had enough guts to walk down the trail and pick up the claymore.

Two days later while picking up another claymore, I disconnected the battery and then walked down the trail right through the trip wire. If the battery had not been disconnected, I would have been dead. My spotters were on their last mission and when they saw this happen, they "politely" told me they would never put out a claymore with me again. I did learn a lasting lesson that morning.

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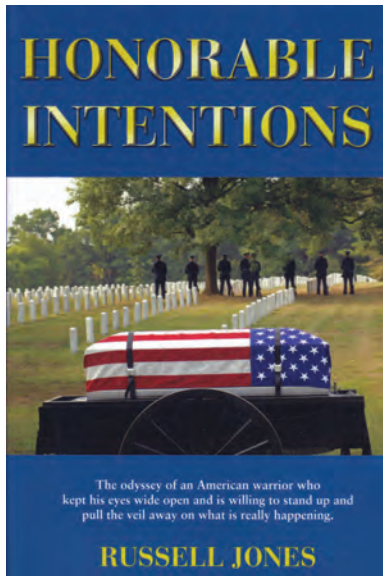


***Never carried a pack so heavy
in my life***

Book Review

Honorable Intentions, by Russell Jones

Reviewed by Gary L. Noller



Russell Jones took his first airplane trip at the age of 12. He rode in "the most graceful and beautiful airliners ever built, the Lockheed Constellation." During the flight he was invited into the cabin of the Connie where the crew explained the equipment and controls and answered his questions. It was then that Russ Jones knew he wanted to be a pilot.

Russ graduated from high school in 1964 and then went to college for

two years. He transferred schools and lost credit hours in the process. He also lost his Selective Service school deferment and was bound to be drafted. He found out that the Army only required two years of college for its helicopter pilot training program. He signed up and in 1967 he arrived at Ft. Wolters, TX to begin pilot training.

A little less than a year later Jones arrived in Vietnam and assumed duties as a warrant officer in the 196th Light Infantry Brigade area of operations. He initially flew Korean War-era OH-23 Raven helicopters. He eventually moved into the UH-1 "Huey" choppers and flew all types of missions to include command and control, observation, resupply, and scout missions.

His duties included a stint as the pilot for then COL Frederick J. Kroesen, 196 LIB commander. Kroesen, a retired general, called Jones a "Premier army aviator with whom I entrusted my life without question."

On March 7, 1969 Jones was wounded while evacuating wounded soldiers of Co. D, 3/21st Infantry. Enemy bullets severely damaged his leg. He received treatment in Japan and then returned to the United States. His Vietnam service lasted nine months in which he earned a Purple Heart, a Bronze Star, and sixteen air medals. After recovering from his wounds he returned to Ft. Wolters as a chief warrant officer and became an instructor. He left the Army in 1970 when his enlistment ended.

Jones had always wanted to be in law enforcement so moved on to begin his career as a patrol officer in San Jose, CA. He worked the streets at night and became ever more aware of the expanding drug trafficking. He worked as a canine officer and a training officer and pursued organized criminals.

He moved into undercover work and served on a Drug Enforcement Agency task force. He spent time as an intelligence operative in the War on Drugs serving in Costa Rica at the time of the Iran-Contra events..

He is an expert in the psychological and physiological effects of drugs and narcotics. He is frequently on television and talk radio and is a guest speaker at colleges, universities and community service organizations across the United States.

Jones' book spans 60 years of his life. It is fast reading yet filled with gripping action and personal insights. Not all of the story is a happy one and Jones does not shy away from telling of his failures as well as his successes. He also offers his opinions about the failures of the Vietnam War and the War on Drugs and things in between. He says, "How many drive-by shootings happen outside liquor stores?"

Russell Jones currently resides in Texas with his wife Sally. They enjoy ocean sailing. He is scheduled to attend the 2012 ADVA reunion in Atlanta, GA.

Additional information about *Honorable Intentions* may be found on the internet at www.honorable-intentions.com. The softcover book sells for \$16.95

Excerpt from *Honorable Intentions*, pages 65-68; © 2012 by Russell Jones

We varied the time of our flights to keep the NVA off guard and took off late morning on August 21. I was clipping along at sixty knots (seventy miles per hour), hopping trees and skimming several feet above the rice fields south of Marble Mountain, the largest of five massive marble rocks that rose spectacularly from the flat farmland just off the coast and south of Da Nang. Hanson knew to be alert, as, on our first mission together, we had surprised three NVA soldiers setting up a 122-millimeter rocket site with assistance from, what appeared to be, local farmers. We killed the soldiers and allowed the civilians to leave the area.

On this day, Hanson sat sideways on my right, back to me, with both feet on the skids. His M-60, attached to the OH-23 by a bungee cord, hung at the ready in his hands. Swooping down over a thin tree line and into the next rice paddy, we surprised four NVA soldiers who started running along a strip of waist-high vegetation.

"Your side! Your side!" I yelled over the intercom as I rolled off the throttle, dropped the collective, and banked hard right, putting Hanson facing straight down from barely ten feet off the ground.

He saw them, but couldn't get a shot off as we flew by. I then jammed left pedal, and we spun completely around. I could see they were heading toward the remains of a battered, roofless, concrete French-style home.

Hanson remained calm. "Come around the south side of that house."

I circled tight to the right and slowed as we came up

on the south side of the ruins. Just as I saw an old, blue, banged-up, fifty-five-gallon barrel lying on its side a short distance from the building, I saw one of the soldiers aim his AK-47 over it at us.

Oh, shit. Nail him Hanson!

I cranked in power, pulled pitch, and banked even tighter, forcing the NVA to rise up to aim.

"The barrel!" I shouted, probably loud enough to be heard without the intercom.

The NVA fired first. Within twenty yards, all was clear, colorful, and in slow motion. I could see the whites of his eyes, the smoke from his rifle, and the empty shells eject.

As the enemy shot, Hanson cut loose with a string of fire. The fury resumed full speed, and dust, rocks, and debris kicked up all around the barrel as we passed. I kicked in hard right pedal to keep the action on Hanson's side. I expected to see a body, but there wasn't one.

Damn it.

"The building!" Hanson cried out.

I straightened out to keep the structure on our right and then banked hard as we flew over it. The little bird responded as if it was an extension of my body. I heard shots again from the AK-47 right before Hanson let go with another burst. One body with an AK-47 now lay in the rubble.

"Is that the guy who was behind the barrel?"

"Yes!" Hanson yelled.

"Where are the others?" I wondered aloud over the intercom as we circled the area.

Hanson sounded out of breath as he stood on the skids and visually scoured the area. "Don't know."

Where the hell are they? I expected gunfire from them at any moment. It wasn't wooded enough for someone to be hiding in the trees, and we could see nothing around the ruins of the old house. The moments of frenzy began to fade as I scoured the area.

A marine patrol happened to be three hundred yards away so I got on the radio and asked them to head our way. Once the marine captain and his men had the area secured, we landed. We had killed the enemy before, but this was different. This soldier went toe to toe in a deadly exchange of gunfire, and I wanted to meet him.

He lay face up in the debris. I was fascinated that none of the wounds to his chest or abdomen bled. I gathered his effects while his eyes, open and looking through me, began to dry and cloud over from the sticky heat of the day. His papers identified him as 1st Lieutenant Phung with the 90th Regiment, 2nd NVA Division. I looked at photographs of his wife and children, and for a moment realized that this was a man with a family. What were your hopes, lieutenant? Were you serving your government honorably?

I had no reason to believe he hadn't. The thoughts were quickly pushed from my mind as a call from Hanson brought me back to the realities of war. Hanson had walked over to look at the barrel. Just inside was the badly mangled body of a soldier. Hanson pulled him aside, then reached in, and dragged out another body that his sixty-caliber bullets had ripped apart. Finally, a wounded third NVA crawled

out, dragging his intestines with him. The scene was brutal. Other paperwork, gear, and ammunition were found, but no further weapons. I called another chopper in to take the prisoner to the hospital in Da Nang, and Hanson and I took off and headed back to the 1st MarDiv Headquarters with Phungs rifle and gear.

During a period of disconnection with the real world, we had routed the enemy. I found it all intensely pleasurable. I was pumped with an intoxicating rush of adrenalin, and I was anxious to refuel and return for an evening mission.

Body count was the infamous measurement of our success in that war, which the high command constantly stressed. Pressure was put on all units to obtain it. Hanson and I were headed back with a body count of three KIAs and one POW, and, as expected, the news was well received. The staff at MarDiv was convinced that Hanson and I had thwarted a sniper attack on the marine patrol, and there was talk of awards, medals, and commendations. That night at the Marine Officers Club, I had plenty of free drinks and slaps on the back as I told the story over and over.

"They were in the barrel?" someone asked, sounding skeptical.

I smiled. "Now, this ain't no shit, but apparently these three little farts crawled into the barrel that the lieutenant gets behind and shoots at us from."

Everyone laughed, commenting on what it must have been like in a barrel with M-60 rounds coming through. The booze flowed while girls on the rickety stage sang.

Colonel Kroesen was treated for his wounds in country and was able to finish his one-year command of the 196th. In 1971, he returned for a second tour as a major general, where he commanded the Americal Division, and later, the First Regional Assistance Command. During the post-Vietnam, Cold War years, he served as commanding general of the 82nd Airborne Division in North Carolina, the VII Corps in Germany, and the Army Forces Command in Georgia. Finally, after an assignment as vice chief of staff of the army, he took his last active duty job as commander-in-chief, US Army, Europe, and commander in central group, NATO. He retired as a four-star general. He was wounded during each of the four wars in which he served: World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War. He sustained the last of the wounds in 1981 in an assassination attempt in Heidelberg, Germany. Using an RPG, a "Kommando" of the Red Army faction hit the car he and his wife, Rowena, were riding in. After leaving the army, he became chairman of the board of Military Professional Resources Inc., and a senior fellow at the Institute of Land Warfare of the Association of the United States Army. He also served as the vice president of the American Security Council Foundation.

[Appendix pp 284-285]

www.americal.org/px/





See AMERICAL PX at www.americal.org

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

World WarII	1942-1945
Panama	1954-1956
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Eligibility includes those who served with Task Force 6814 (WWII) and Task Force Oregon (Vietnam). Branch of service is immaterial.

DEDICATION



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

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