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AMERICAL

JOURNAL

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

UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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Commander's Comments

By Larry Swank

Legacy Committee Delivers

I'll take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the ADVA Legacy Committee for their vision, commitment, and passion, which culminated in the dedication of the Americal Division monument on the Walk of Honor on the grounds of the National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning. Thanks also go out to our membership, whose generous donations, purchase of ADVA Legacy products, and contributions supporting the Americal Division Legacy Calendar make this and future ADVA Legacy Committee efforts possible.

ADVA Scholarship Committee Update

We all want to thank Ron Green for his service as the retiring Chairman, ADVA Scholarship Committee. We wish Ron the best as he takes on the challenging role of managing the 2013 ADVA Annual Reunion in Nashville, TN. Please welcome Bill Bruinsma as the new Scholarship Chairman. Bill has been a member of the Scholarship Committee and is looking forward to the upcoming scholarship award cycle for 2013. Although we award scholarships to deserving applicants, we actually make the scholarship payments directly to the schools our scholarship winners attend. So Bill will be managing fundraising, providing oversight of the award determination process, and administering scholarship distribution to dozens of institutions across the USA. Thank you Bill!

ADVA Membership Committee

We are actively seeking a volunteer to become the Chairman, ADVA Membership Committee. Under Article II of the ADVA By-Laws the Membership Chairman is a National Officer position, appointed by the National Commander. The Membership Chairman shall establish an ADVA Membership Committee charged with organization and operation of the membership program for the purpose of attracting new members and the retention of present members. This key staff position has an annual budget for recruiting expenditures, along with the full support of the Command Staff and Executive Council. If you are interested in the Membership Chairman position, or a position on the Membership Committee, please contact me: Larry Swank, 12506 Scarlet Lane, Bowie, MD 20715; text or call 301.892.0855; or, e-mail at lswank@aol.com

Scholarship News

Applications Due By April 1, 2013

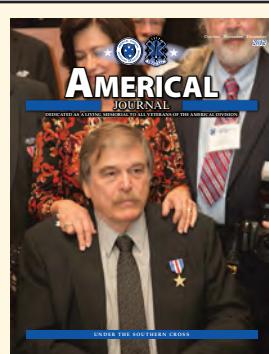
The purpose of the Scholarship Foundation is to provide college and vocational scholarships to the children and grandchildren, including those by adoption, of current and deceased ADVA members, provided the deceased member held good membership standing at the time of death, and to any child or adopted child of an Americal Division soldier who was killed or died while on active duty with the Division.

Completed application forms together with all required enclosures must reach the Chairman at an address he designates no later than 1 April of each year. The application form requires the following of the applicant: name, address, Social Security Number (SSN), marital status, date of birth, place of birth, high school attended, high school graduation date; father's name, occupation, mother's name, occupation, if sponsored by ADVA member, member's name, dates with Americal Division, unit, and highest rank or grade; if parents are deceased, name and address of guardian; name and address of school to be attended; applicants signature.

In addition, the following enclosures must accompany the application form: testament from ADVA member avowing applicants eligibility; letter of admission from school of choice; statement from current school principal attesting to applicant's character; two (2) letters of recommendation from current teachers; a 200-300 word essay on subjects pertaining to National Pride or The Price of Freedom.

Scholarship awards are based on the recommendation of a panel of judges who are independent of the ADVA. Awards are paid after July 1 of each year and must be made out in the name of the educational institution.

The scholarship chairman for 2013 is William (Bill) Bruinsma. His contact information is William Bruinsma; 5425 Parmalee Rd.; Middleville, MI 49333; Phone: 269-795-5237; 616-890-3705; wb3379@gmail.com. An application form may be found at www.americal.org. Select PROGRAMS, then SCHOLARSHIPS, and then APPLICATION. Print the application form, complete the required information, and mail with all attachments to Bill Bruinsma prior to April 1, 2013.



Cover: Former Medic Earl Brannon Surrounded by family and veterans receives the award of the silver star at the Americal Reunion in Atlanta. story page18
Photo **Dutch DeGroot**

Adjutant's Notes

By Roger Gilmore

Due to space requirements needed to list all names in the New Member and Taps reports for this reporting period, I will not post any National Adjutant comments in this American Journal issue.

All new ADVA members listed as being sponsored by PNC Ronald R. Ellis were signed up as part of their Atlanta Reunion registration. On behalf of the ADVA Command Staff, we welcome all new members to the association.

New Members

Richard B. Allen

11th LIB
DeRidder, LA

★ Self

Glen D. Archer

335th Trans Co
Belpre, OH

★ Self

Clyde E. Arnold

D/4/3rd Inf
Iuka, IL
★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Dennis Ashe

D/1/6th Inf
Hixson, TN

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Charles D. Bagley

6/11th Arty
Cleveland, TN

★ Ron Green

Dennis Ball

A/5/46th Inf
Woodstock, GA

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Robert B. Best, Jr.

D/3/1st Inf
Overland Park, KS

★ Self

Lonnie Bishop

5/46th Inf
N Manchester, IN

★ Jessie Gause

Ben Boisseau

A/5/46th Inf
Petersburg, VA

★ Buddy Wolf

Thomas R. Brickman

198th LIB
Janesville, IA

★ Carl Jacob

Marvin Campbell

America
Hartford, CT

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Emory Carico

23rd MP Co
Bristol, TN

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Bill Chupp

C/1/6th Inf
Red Lodge, MT

★ Keith Crouch

Danny Clayton

198th LIB
Crawfordville, FL

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

William Cooper

A/1/6th Inf
Candler, NC

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

August L. Dailer, III

3/82nd Arty
Stanwood, WA

★ Frank Fortuna

Clifford Dunnagan

A/5/46th Inf
Killeen, TX

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Wayne Gray

23rd S&T
Kimball, MI

★ Self

Glenn S. Greenway

3/21st Inf
Elberton, Ga

★ James B. Adams

Charles F. Grimm

3/16th Arty
Montoursville, PA

★ Self

Daryl Guffey

E/1/52nd Inf
Laurel, MT

★ Wayne E. Butler

Ralph Heatherington

A/1/20th Inf
Wheaton, IL

★ John McNown

Phil Hegwood

6/11th Arty Btry A
Urbandale, IA

★ Bill Campbell

Rik Homstad

196th LIB
Arlington Heights, IL

★ Self

Stephen H. Howery

B/2/1st Inf
Merriam, KS

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Dan Huffaker

6th Spt Bn
The Woodlands, TX

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Gary Hunt

B/3/21st Inf
Bloomington, MN

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Greg Jensen

A/1/6th Inf
Boise, ID

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Michael J. Krajnak

1/20th Inf
Washington, MI

★ Kirk Foecking

Warren Kullich

198th LIB
Norwood, MA

★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Stephen Mackin

534th Med Det
Snyder, NY

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Andrew Martinez

196th LIB
Ventura, CA

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Kenneth Moats

D/4/3rd Inf
Fresno, CA

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Ted Mountz

A/5/46th Inf
Mt. Pleasant, IA

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Henry Napier

198th LIB
Snellville, GA

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Michael Oleksiak

TF Oregon
Clinton Township, MI

★ Self

Michael Patton

23rd MP Co
Fernandina Beach, FL

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Robert Paulick

A/5/46th Inf
Durham, NC

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Lonnie Powell

123rd Avn Bn
Knoxville, TN

★ Roger Gilmore

Toby Prodgers

D/1/20th Inf
Marietta, GA

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Jon Purvis

23rd MP Co
Muscatine, IA

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Jim Quirk

A/4/3rd Inf
Crown Point, IN

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Harold E. Redding

TF Oregon – Spt Cmd
Spring Grove, PA

★ Roger Gilmore

Walter S. Reed

176th ASHC
Hixson, TN

★ Les Hines

Peter Rico

4/3rd Inf
E. Chicago, IN

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Albert Rotunno

164th Inf Rgmt Co M
Hermitage, PA

★ Don Eichelberger

Bruce Segur

11th LIB
Howell, MI

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Paul Sprouse

A/5/46th Inf
Columbia, SC

★ Self

Lonnie Stalcup

A/1/6th Inf
Alcolu, SC

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Chuck Tatro

None Given
Plymouth, MN

★ Self

Gene Tatum

11th LIB
Kennesaw, GA

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Michael Telgenhof

A/4/3rd Inf
Punta Gorda, FL

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

James Teller

A/4/3rd Inf
Sioux Falls, SD

★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Michael Thomas

A/1/20th Inf
Woburn, MA

★ Self

ADVA MEMBERSHIP

31 October 2012

World War II	415
Vietnam	2,501
Cold War	9
Associate Members:	172
Total Members	3,097

<p>Thomas Turner D/1/46th Inf Mooresville, NC ★ Paul Hennes</p> <p>Ken Vandervorst 1/6th Inf Pollack, SD ★ Lance Vandervorst</p> <p>Julian Wagner 5/46th Inf Stone Mountain, GA ★ Self</p> <p>William A. Walker 198th LIB Annapolis, MD ★ Self</p> <p>Bruce A. Welther 123rd Avn Bn Pleasant Ridge, MI ★ Self</p> <p>Leroy Windmon 4/3rd Inf Markham, IL ★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis</p> <p>William Wolski A/5/46th Inf Alexandria, VA ★ PNC David W. Taylor</p> <p>Jim Wooster A/1/6th Inf Cumming, GA ★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis</p> <p>Life Members</p> <p>Stanley Boris, Jr. D/1/46th Inf Oxford, MA ★ Self</p> <p>B. B. Bullock, Jr. B/5/46th Inf Camden, SC # PNC David W. Taylor</p> <p>Paul J. Chappell 57th Cmbt Engrs Co B Stewarts Point, Ga ★ Self</p> <p>Rick Giamanco 123rd Avn Bn Dillon, CO ★ Self</p> <p>Ray K. Griffin B/5/46th Inf Hastings, OK ★ PNC David W. Taylor</p>	<p>Charles E. Johnson C/2/1st Inf Rome, GA ★ Self</p> <p>Wesley Patterson C/3/21st Inf Saint Helens, OR ★ David Eichhorn</p> <p>Barry Schermerhorn D/5/46th Inf Columbia Falls, MT ★ Self</p> <p>William J. Bruinsma 6/11th Arty A Btry Middleville, MI ★ Paul Santogeanis</p> <p>Charles S. Dinges 14th Avn Bn Warren, OH ★ Tony Percoskie</p> <p>Thomas E. Dolan, III 1/20th Inf E. New Market, MD ★ PNC Gary L. Noller</p> <p>Richard F. Linn 3/16th Arty A Btry Vero Beach, FL ★ Self</p> <p>Gregg H. Malicki 1/14th Arty C Btry Chicago, IL ★ Self</p> <p>Dale Oilar D/3/21st Inf McArthur, CA ★ David Eichhorn</p> <p>Joe M. Sanches 182nd Inf Rgmt HHC Victorville, CA ★ Self</p> <p>Ralph M. Stiles 23rd MP Co Williamstown, NJ ★ Self</p> <p>Terry Sula E/3/1st Inf Green Valley, AZ ★ Don Ballou</p> <p>Tim Woodville E/5/46th Inf Chico, CA ★ Tom Packard</p>	<p>Re-instated Members</p> <p>Roy A. Abbott HHC/1/46th Inf Chino Valley, CA ★ PNC Gary L. Noller</p> <p>Michael G. Chandler A/1/20th Inf McCormick, SC ★ Louie Rios</p> <p>Gerald R. Grey 123rd Avn Bn Marysville, CA ★ PNC Gary L. Noller</p> <p>Jack Haas 5/46th Inf Woolwich Township, NJ ★ Self</p> <p>John Lewis 1/20th Inf Deer Park, TX ★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis</p> <p>Dominick Maugeri A/1/6th Inf Merrick, NY ★ NC Larry Swank</p> <p>Ernie Misa 1st/1st Cav Rgmt B Trp Daly City, CA ★ Self</p> <p>Associate Members</p> <p>Clif A. Cromer 3rd Bn 1st Marine Rgmt Blue Spring, MO ★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis</p> <p>Merle D. Hart U.S. Air Force Kathleen, GA ★ PNC Dutch DeGroot</p> <p>Betty L. Huber None Hillsboro, IL # Andrew J. Huber</p> <p>Robert Huckeba U.S. Air Force Lawrenceville, GA ★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis</p> <p>Richard Meyer None Surprise, AZ ★ PNC David W. Taylor</p>	<p>TAPS</p> <p>World War II Veterans</p> <p>John E. Bradstreet Unit Unknown Belfast, ME September 16, 2012</p> <p>Allen D. Cappella * 182nd Inf Rgmt Plymouth, MA March 12, 2010</p> <p>Clyde R. Collins * 57th Engrs Co A Harriman, TN October 3, 2012</p> <p>John A. Couvillon * 246th FA Lafayette, LA August 12, 2012</p> <p>Victor Crowder * 182 Inf Rgmt Olympia, WA February 2012</p> <p>Warren Dewalt Unit Unknown Barrington, IL October 1, 2012</p> <p>Edward W. Garrett Unit Unknown Weidman, MI July 13, 2012</p> <p>Frank E. Issac Unit Unknown Pittsburg, PA July 31, 2012</p> <p>Jim H. Kinoshita Unit Unknown Bakersfield, Ca September 17, 2012</p> <p>Stanley W. Seymour Unit Unknown De Pere, WI September 22, 2012</p> <p>Hymen Shapiro Unit Unknown Stratford, CT August 6, 2012</p>	<p>Vietnam Veterans</p> <p>Charles R. Ayers 1/1st Cav HHC Trp Locust Grove, PA June 30, 2012</p> <p>Kenneth E. Bausinger * B/3/1st Inf Blackwood, NJ Date Unknown</p> <p>David L. Bush 17th Cav F Trp Watertown, NY April 6, 2012</p> <p>Brent Chapin * D/4/21st Inf Oshkosh, WI September 6, 2012</p> <p>Woodrow H. Collins * B/2/1st Inf Roper, NC February 3, 2012</p> <p>Robert L. Darbee * 23rd MP Co Ludowici, GA October 2012</p> <p>Robert W. Duguid * 1/6th Inf Jacksonville, FL Date Unknown</p> <p>John R. Gallagher, Jr. Unit Unknown Tucson, AZ July 2, 2012</p> <p>Thomas N. Key Unit Unknown Roanoke, VA August 27, 2012</p> <p>Richard E. Miller 17th Cav F Trp Lansing, MI May 14, 2012</p> <p>A. E. Milloy * CG Americal Div Henderson, NV June 3, 2012</p> <p>Walter M. Sanders * HHC/1/52nd Inf Catonsville, MD July 19, 2012</p> <p>James C. Snider Unit Unknown Bethel, OH June 29, 2012</p>
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*ADVA Member

Mission Complete



The National Infantry Museum Monument – Mission Accomplished

By Roger Gilmore, Chairman
Legacy Committee

What a tremendous day September 14, 2012 was for all who attended the monument dedication ceremony at the National Infantry Museum Walk of Honor in Columbus, Georgia. Nearly 500 Americal Division Veterans Association members, Americal Division veterans and guests attended the ceremony.

I think I can speak for all attending that this monument is truly the class of the field in the Walk of Honor area.

This monument is truly representative of the Americal Division legacy.

Dedication Ceremony

PNC David W. Taylor and PNC Gary L. Noller made preliminary remarks. MG (Retired) Jerry White gave the keynote address. Soldiers from Ft. Benning provided an excellent set-up for this very special event. They also supplied a uniformed band, bugler, and rifle firing team.

The highlight of the ceremony was the of unveiling the seven monument components. World War II veterans Earl Cook and Dennis Ferk unveiled the WWII panel. 23rd Recon Company veteran Leon Doutrich unveiled the Cold War Era panel. For the Vietnam panel, 198th Brigade veterans Tim Woodville and Earl Brannon were the unveilers.

Carole Fonseca, daughter of WWII Americal veteran Dave Fonseca, and Tayler Polikoff, Dave Fonseca's great grandson, unveiled the Fonseca bench. Dave was the Task Force 6814 soldier who named the Americal Division. Vicki and James Granacki, daughter and son of World War II Americal veteran Leon Granacki, were the unveilers for the bench commemorating their father. Leon was the Americal Division soldier who designed the Americal shoulder patch.

PNC David Taylor and NC Larry Swank unveiled the Medal of Honor pedestal. PNC Jay Flanagan and Reggie Horton, a second generation Americal Division veteran, unveiled the Americal Division shoulder patch pedestal at the front of the monument base. The ceremony concluded with a wreath presentation by members of the Legacy Committee.

We had many distinguished guests attending including the Brigade Commanders and Command Sergeant Majors for the 192nd and 198th Brigades stationed at Fort Benning. The ceremony was supported by troops from the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry Regiment, commanded by LTC J. Cale Brown. Our deepest appreciation goes out to LTC Brown and his staff for their excellent work preparing the monument site for the ceremony and supporting the event. We also thank MG (Retired) Jerry A. White for giving the ceremony keynote address.

Monument Funding/2013 Americal Legacy Calendar

Through October 31, 2012 individual donations amounts for the 2012 calendar total \$23,500.00. Thanks to all members and friends who have loyally supported the Legacy monument effort over the past three years.

The 2013 calendar was mailed to all current members in early November. Please continue your support for Americal Legacy initiatives and future monuments with a donation. 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**

Artillery Monument at Fort Sill, Oklahoma

In the third quarter issue of the Americal Journal I reported on meetings David Taylor, David Laukat and I had in Lawton, Oklahoma with Fort Sill's Environmental and Public Works departments. In that meeting we presented our build proposal and preliminary monument design to the Review Board. We are now gathering the data needed for the artillery monument history and art work. We also requested a monument site in Constitution Park for the Americal Division artillery monument and submitted a preliminary proposal to the Fort Sill Memorialization Board. We now await approval for the site request and design plan.

Please continue to support the Legacy fund so we can begin the Americal artillery monument project in the near future.

Monument Dedication Ceremony Video

We had a video production company film the September 14th monument dedication ceremony at the National Infantry Museum. The video has been reproduced on DVD and we have copies available for sale.

The DVD captures this historic event in complete detail. It is a great way to relive the ceremony for those who attended and is a must see for those who could not attend in person. The DVD price is \$15.00, which includes shipping, and all proceeds go to support ADVA Legacy initiatives.

To order a DVD contact Product Sales Director Wayne Bryant, 4411 Dawn Road, Greensboro, NC, 27405. Wayne can be reached by phone at 336-621-8756 or email wbryant@triad.rr.com.

Wayne has remaining stock of the National Infantry Museum monument coins. The coin price is \$15.00. This very unique challenge coin will be a nice personal memento or a great gift for one of your buddies. Don't wait until there are none left – order yours today. 

Photo facing page by Dutch DeGroot: Legacy Committee- Dave Taylor, Wayne Bryant, Gary Noller, Ron Ellis, and Roger Gilmore (Chairman).

Tribute to General Milloy

By Darlene Milloy

I wish to inform you of the passing of my husband, Major General Albert E. Milloy. He was very proud to be associated with the Americal Division and had nothing but praise for the organization.

MGen Albert "Ernie" Milloy passed away June 3, 2012 at his home in Henderson, NV. He was born November 25, 1921. He was a veteran of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

He began his career as a private in the Mississippi National Guard and finished as the US Army Chief of Staff at the Presidio in San Francisco, CA in 1975. During World War II he saw combat action as a paratrooper in the Italian and European campaigns to include the Battle of the Bulge with the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, one of the nation's most decorated units. In Korea, as a commander of the 2nd Bn. 3rd Regt., he led his men through the Chinese spring offensive, the "Punch Bowl" and "Heartbreak Ridge". General Milloy spent two tours in Vietnam. The first in 1965 as senior advisor to the 5th ARVN Division, then to command the 2nd Bde., 1st Inf. Div. In 1969 he returned to Vietnam to command the 1st Inf. Div. He served as commander of the Americal Division in Mar.-Nov. 1970.

Milloy's awards include two Distinguished Service Medals, two Silver Stars, two Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, three Bronze Stars, 20 Air Medals, two Purple Hearts. Upon retirement from the Army he was a general contractor and small business owner in California. He enjoyed horseback riding and was an avid hunter.

Survivors include his loving wife Darlene, three sons, one daughter, and six grandchildren. General Milloy was buried at Arlington National Cemetery on October 25, 2012.

Scholarship Chairman Appointed

By Gary L. Noller

National Commander Larry C. Swank announced the appointment of William (Billy) Bruinsma to the position of Scholarship Chairman. Bruinsma succeeds Ron Green who held the position for the past several years.

Applications for 2013 scholarship awards must be sent to Bruinsma by postal mail to arrive no later than April 1, 2013. Application information may be found at www.americal.org. Go to PROGRAMS, then go to SCHOLARSHIPS. An application form and instructions are located on the scholarship webpage.

Further details may be obtained from Bruinsma by writing to him at 5425 Parmalee Rd.; Middleville, MI 49333; telephone 269-795-5237 or 616-890-3705; e-mail wb3379@gmail.com.

The scholarship program was founded in 1994 and has awarded in excess of \$300,000 to children and grandchildren of ADVA members. Ron Ward served as the first scholarship chairman and was followed by Bob Short and Ron Green.

Product Sales Report

By Wayne Bryant *Product Sales Director*

Sales at our PX continue to be steady. Sales at the reunion in Atlanta were very good- we sold almost all the items that I took. We had a few new items such as the Americal Combat Veteran t-shirts, the ladies Love My Americal Vet t-shirts and denim shirts, and a nice Americal Christmas ornament. We also had, for the first time, some long sleeve oxford shirts which sold quickly.

The 70 years commemorative plaque sold well and I still have a good supply remaining at \$30 ea. The plaque is on a wood base that measures eight inches by ten inches. See the inside back cover for information on how to contact me to place an order.

The Americal trailer hitch cover is relatively new and seems to be becoming a favorite. It was nicely designed by our own Dutch DeGroot.

I expect to continue to offer most of the same items as before and I will try to add a few new items for sale in Nashville. I am always glad to hear of items the membership would like to see for sale in our PX. All of the items cannot possibly be stocked for sale but I will add as many as I can. The PX is run out of my home and my storage space is limited.

I and the association appreciate your continued support of our PX.



Far West Chapter

By Tom Packard

I am assured a good time was had by those who attended the Far West Chapter Reunion this year in Tacoma, WA. The Far West Chapter reunion has and will remain a nice alternative for those in the Western US who can't attend the ADVA national reunions when they are held in the east.

The weather was great the entire weekend with warm temperatures and no rain. Sunday evening we met at Dicks Chowder House for an impromptu dinner of some great seafood. On Monday we toured Seattle's historic Pikes Place Market. This was followed by a short drive to Seattle's Space Needle. The day was topped off with a barbecue at Fred and June Ragland's home. We would like to thank the Ragland's for their hospitality.

The banquet went well and we made a few dollars with our traditional 50/50 raffle. We also signed up a couple of new members for the chapter during the weekend.

Next year, we'll move down the coast and inland to Laughlin, Nevada. Laughlin is located 90 miles south of Las Vegas and has been a favorite place for our chapter's reunions the past few years. It offers most all of the amenities of Las Vegas for a fraction of the cost. Plan now to join us next fall in Nevada. More details will be published as it becomes available.

If you are an ADVA member and have not joined the Far West Chapter, you should have received an invitation to join us in the past few weeks. I sincerely hope you will consider joining. We are an active chapter, having hosted national reunions in the last few years in Reno, Nevada and Colorado Springs, Colorado. We publish a quarterly newsletter and hold a chapter reunion each year. Locations for our most recent chapter reunions have been in Reno, NV; Laughlin, NV; Riverside, CA; San Diego, CA; Las Vegas, NV; Colorado Springs, CO; and Tacoma, WA. If you have questions about the chapter or would like to take on an active role in the chapter's future, let us know.

Assistant National Adjutant Appointed

By Roger Gilmore

An amendment to the by-laws approved in the 2012 balloting established the position of Assistant National Adjutant. Commander Swank has appointed ADVA member Richard Heroux to the new position.

Rich will be handling the following duties, effective immediately:

- **Distribution of member listings to the chapter commanders.**
- **Mail dues payment requests to delinquent annual pay members.**
- **Coordinate procedures for organizing a new ADVA chapter per ADVA by-laws.**

As we progress with this position Rich and I will fine tune the Assistant Adjutant duties. Please welcome Rich as the new Assistant Adjutant and support him in his position.



Cotta Receives Monument Coin

By Roger Gilmore

On my return trip home after the national reunion in Atlanta I paid a visit to Al Cotta at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport, MS. Al sent his regrets that he was not able to attend the reunion due to a health issue.

I was happy to present Al with a coin depicting the Americal Monument that was just dedicated at the National Infantry Museum at Ft. Benning, GA. Al, age 94, helped create the ADVA in November 1945 and served as the association's first adjutant.

A few days after arriving home I received a nice letter from Al. He says, "I am still elated by your surprise visit and attractive medallion. I shall treasure it. I will find an appropriate space on the wall near the Americal certificates I awarded to me by the association. Frankly, the medallion is too important and attractive to tuck away in a drawer. I'll be proud to show it off along with the other Americal memorabilia I have."

Al was a regular at national reunions until recently. He states, "I missed the pleasure of joining my "family" for the last four years!!! Hopefully next year I will be able to join my buddies in Tennessee."

Great Mid-West Chapter

By Dale J. Belke

The Great Lakes Chapter of the ADVA is changing its name to the Great Mid-West Chapter. This new chapter will also include the old Central Midwest Chapter. We will discuss a reunion and a new logo at the next chapter meeting. It will be held during Winterfest in New Glarus, WI on January 19, 2013 at 8:30 AM at the Chalet Landhaus Conference Room. Any ideas from either chapter are welcomed. All members of both chapters are automatically members in the new chapter as long as they are members of the national ADVA. No dues or fees are required at this time.

We look forward to meeting all Americal veterans to give them their due respect for having "been there, did that!" Hopefully, we can put together a reunion this year for all to meet. Those interested in a copy of the Winterfest events/agenda should let me know and I will e-mail a copy. Come for a short march/walkabout with us at 9:30 pm on Friday night, January 18, 2013. You won't regret it. There will be great veteran comradeship with attendees from 20 different states. *Take care my fellow veterans. Peace*



Dear editor,

I wish to inform you of the passing of my husband, Major General Albert E. Milloy. He was very proud to be associated with the Americal Division and had nothing but praise for the organization.

MGen Albert "Ernie" Milloy passed away June 3, 2012 at his home in Henderson, NV. He was born November 25, 1921. He was a veteran of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

He began his career as a private in the Mississippi National Guard and finished as the US Army Chief of Staff at the Presidio in San Francisco, CA in 1975. During World War II he saw combat action as a paratrooper in the Italian and European campaigns to include the Battle of the Bulge with the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, one of the nation's most decorated units. In Korea, as a commander of the 2nd Bn. 3rd Regt., he led his men through the Chinese spring offensive, the "Punch Bowl" and "Heartbreak Ridge". General Milloy spent two tours in Vietnam. The first in 1965 as senior advisor to the 5th ARVN Division, then to command the 2nd Bde., 1st Inf. Div. In 1969 he returned to Vietnam to command the 1st Inf. Div. He served as commander of the Americal Division in Mar.-Nov. 1970.

Milloy's awards include two Distinguished Service Medals, two Silver Stars, two Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, three Bronze Stars, 20 Air Medals, two Purple Hearts. Upon retirement from the Army he was a general contractor and small business owner in California. He enjoyed horseback riding and was an avid hunter.

Survivors include his loving wife Darlene, three sons, one daughter, and six grandchildren. General Milloy was buried at Arlington National Cemetery on October 25, 2012.

Darlene Milloy

Dear editor,

My father CPT William H. Cooper Jr. (USA, Ret.) was one of the early members of the Americal Division when it formed in New Caledonia in 1942. He passed away at the age of 98 on October 17, 2012. He was born on Nov 5, 1913 in Statham GA. He was very proud to have served in the Americal.

Bill Cooper; bill-cooper@comcast.net

Dear editor,

Both of my grandfathers were on New Caledonia when the Americal Division was formed. They fought at Guadalcanal, Bouganville, and Cebu. I lived with my mother's father and inherited his papers and memorabilia. It took me a while looking through old papers and discharge notices to find out that 132nd Infantry was part of the Americal.

I know more about my mother's father. He was Gilbert V. Thomas, PFC Headquarters Company, 3rd Bn., 132nd Infantry (Lineman/Radioman on Guadalcanal, Combat Infantryman on Bougainville, Scout in Philippines) Northern Solomons and Philippines, He earned a Bronze Star with V for saving his lieutenant's life. An image of him doing this was captured by combat photographer for Time-Life magazine.

My father's father was Tipton Crosswhite, PFC in Headquarters Company, 3rd Bn., 132nd Infantry (Combat Infantryman). My dad did not have any of grandfathers papers. Both of my grandfathers served in the same company of the same battalion.

I learned that of the original HQ company organized on New Caledonia only eight survived to see the end of the war. Gilbert Thomas' daughter, my mother, was married to Tipton Crosswhite's son, my father, in 1965. Both grandfathers died in Jackson, Mississippi and are buried there.

I am a Gulf War veteran. Can I join the ADVA as an associate member to honor both of my grandfathers?

William Lindner

Yes, the ADVA can have a very limited associate membership of close family members. -Editor-

Dear editor,

I received Americal Journal on September 15. Daddies birthday was September 13 and he would have been 86. Seeing his name (Joe Webb) listed in Taps, brought tears to my eyes, then the waterworks really flowed when I reached page 15 and saw his photo with his 84th birthday cake. He had been so proud of the cake and the first tribute you printed. His Army buddy, Bob Hock, had the first tribute framed for him.

Daddy always looked forward to receiving the Americal Journal. I know it must give as much pleasure to other veterans as it did to Daddy. His Americal caps, which he dearly loved and wore one of them each time he stepped out of the door, now hang in a bedroom in my home. Thank you for honoring my daddies memory with my tribute.

JoAnn Webb Williams

Dear editor,

I enjoyed Tom Platts story on Schofield Barracks and Vietnam that was in the last issue of the Americal Journal. It paralleled a lot of us to include those in the infantry.

I did get special assignment to the 11th LIB's stockade in Hawaii for one month as a prison guard. He may have caught several of us sneaking back into Schofield without passes.

Fred Morris; 3/1Bn 11th Bde., 67-68

Dear editor,

I am the current commander of the 23d MP Company at Fort Drum, NY. Our battalion is completing a memorial wall for all of the battalion soldiers killed in action during the unit's history. We know that seven MPs from the 23rd Americal MP Co were killed during Vietnam. We are currently unable to find their names. We would love to honor these fallen soldiers and were hoping you might help.

Rebecca Dunbar, CO
23rd M.P. Company

John "Dutch" DeGroot provided the names of 13 members of the 23rd M.P. Company who died in Vietnam. The Americal Journal will attempt to get an update on this memorial project. -Editor-

Dear editor,

I am the son of an original Americal Division member, Stanley Sadkowski Sr., of the 182nd Infantry Regiment from Lowell, Massachusetts. I have many of his photos from Australia, New Caledonia and Guadalcanal. He was awarded a Bronze Star. My father passed away in 1996 but founded the South Pacific Buddies and I met many of his comrades. We honor him because he led a quiet exemplary life.

Stanley Sadkowski; bigstasiu@comcast.net

Dear editor,

I am an Army ROTC cadet at Mississippi State University and preparing for a commission into the active duty Army. My grandfather, James "Jim" O'Herron, served in the Americal Division in Vietnam for a portion of his twenty year stint. I would like to gather more information about his time with the Division.

I know that he was a company commander during Vietnam and was awarded the Silver and Bronze Stars as well as the Purple Heart for actions on 25 August 1968. His citation reads that he was with Co. C, 3/1st Inf., 11th LIB when he was awarded these medals. My grandfather is still alive but unable to provide details about his service. I would like to build an image of the sort of leader he was and hopefully honor his service through my own.

Adam Hawks; hawksadam@yahoo.com

Dear editor,

I've found many of our 52nd Military Intelligence Detachment officers and enlisted personnel. We were assigned to 11th LIB with the Americal Division. I spoke with Les Hines quite awhile back and he wanted information for his historical research. Hopefully I can get back in contact with him.

Lynn R. Smith; KSmith8145@aol.com

Dear editor,

I want to pass news of another fallen F Trooper- an original from October 1965 from Fort Devens, MA. David Leslie Bush, F Troop, 17th Cavalry, 196th Lt. Inf. Bde., passed away on April 6, 2012 in Watertown, N.Y. He was our sergeant in the 2nd platoon. He later accepted a battle field commission to second lieutenant.

Bob Janicek; janicekfrp17thcav@yahoo.com
F Troop, 17th Cav, 196th LIB

Dear editor,

I did not serve with the Americal Division. However, a Trooper who had served with the Americal Division is listed as a member of "Fallen Troopers".

His name was James W. Wright. He served in Co. B, 4/3rd Infantry, 11th Inf Bde. Wright was killed in action on 28Feb69. For whatever reason he has been listed on the C Troop, 1/9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division roster as KIA.

Recently I made contact with his sister, Virginia Hendricks. I was wondering if someone from Co. B, 4/3rd Infantry could contact her. If so, they can contact me I will give them the information needed to contact her. She lives in Texas so maybe a member from there would be nice.

Patrick Bieneman; pcbnamin@verizon.net

Dear editor,

I am deeply saddened to tell you that the Americal Division and the 196th Infantry Brigade lost a great soldier this spring- Woodrow (Woody) Collins. Woody served in Co. B, 2/1st Inf., 81 mm mortar platoon. He was the best guy in the FDC. No one could plot targets as fast and as accurate as Woody.

All of his fellow platoon members and his wonderful family took his loss very hard. Everyone liked Woody and he was excellent at his job.

Woody went before the E-5 board along with Charles Hartman and me just before Bravo Co. stood down and went back to DaNang to go back to the world. Due to the move our promotions never were completed. We have a letter from our captain and we have tried to get the Army to make the promotions official. But they claim our promotion packet was probably dumped or left behind because the stand down happened so fast. I recently got a connection to our sergeant, Larry Tallacus, and he provided a letter saying that we all went before the board. But the record section of the Army will not give us the piece of paper to say we made sergeant.

Woody and I talked through the whole appeal process and we both agree that we earned it and all we want it for was so when we died we could put Sergeant on our head stone.

James Gales; galesgemoll@aol.com

Dear editor,

My father, Walter Sanders, passed away on July 19, 2012. There will be a military service held on Dec. 13, 2012 at 1:00 pm at Arlington National Cemetery. Please pass this along to others who may have known my father.

Lauren Sanders

Walter M. Sanders, LTC (Ret), lived in Baltimore, MD and was in HHC/1/52/198LIB from May 1967 through November 1968. -Editor-

Vietnam Journal

By Andy Olints

CHAPTER 6

LZ PROFESSIONAL

Our helicopter did not return to Firebase Mary Ann but instead landed at the base of LZ Professional. I was happy we landed safely and the first mission was over. As we walked up the hill I noticed that most of the men on the base stopped and stared at us. We all had our 21-day beards, very dirty clothes, and I'm sure, one very big smile on our faces.

There to greet us were three medics sitting at a makeshift table. They were there to get urine samples to see if we had been taking our malaria pills. We dropped our packs and right in front of everyone, we got to pee in a cup.

Then we were assigned to a bunker, four men to each bunker. A minute later a soldier appeared with a cooler filled with cherry Kool-Aid. The soldier was Don Rice, better known as "Snowflake." He had some Dixie cups and offered me some Kool-Aid. I downed the Kool-Aid really quickly and, to my surprise, was offered more. With that offer Don made a friend for life! Later on I would learn that Don had walked point in our platoon (second platoon) and had walked point a lot out in Que Son Valley. Don had been re-assigned to a mortar team located on the base.

For the last 21 days I had worn the same t-shirt and pants, and the same two pairs of socks, and I really needed a shower. Next to a bunker was a shower. It had four posts and a wooden top that held one-half of a 55-gallon drum. Nearby was a 5-gallon container that a soldier would use to get water from a very large drum, better known as a "water buffalo." One of the members of the platoon would pour the 5 gallons of water into the 55-gallon drum. There was a half-inch hole in the drum for the water to flow through. Finally, the first shower in 21 days! A guy had to stand there naked in front of some of the guys and no one cared or even looked.

Now for the first time in my life I was shaving a 21-day beard. For the 20 members in the platoon there were only two shavers. They were Gillette safety razors and we only had two blades. I think I got about ten little cuts on my face. Believe me, it hurt.

After the shower and shave we looked through bags of t-shirts, pants and socks for a change of clothes. All the clothes were clean but wrinkled. You had to look for your size and you also looked to see if the clothes were ripped. There were new boots available if needed. One of the guys on the base was a barber, and guys had to wait in line to get a haircut.

When the mission started I wore a size medium pants that were real tight in the waist. I picked out a medium pair of pants and put them on and I couldn't believe what I was seeing. The pants were very loose on me. Where did that big belly go? For the first time in my life I got into a small pair of pants. Even as a young kid I had to wear what they called Husky clothes. It sounds better than "clothes for a fat little boy."

Before I got my change of clothes I removed my Americal wallet from my dirty pants. I don't know how I got this wallet. It was black plastic with the Americal patch on it. A few years after my tour in Vietnam I donated the wallet and a pay stub to the Americal Museum located in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Third in a series. Andy Olints served as an infantryman with Co. D, 1/46th Infantry in 1970-71. The time frame of this installment occurred in June-July 1970 -Editor



I really needed a shower

The cooks in the mess hall had some steaks ready for us. Usually when the troops came in from the field their first meal was a steak. Real food was so great. After supper we were back to our assigned bunkers. With four men to a bunker it meant about two hours of guard duty per man at night. We would never get to have a real good night's sleep.

The next day we were told that LZ Professional was closing and our company would be dismantling every bunker and building on the base. We were to open up all the sand bags around the bunkers, take the sand out and throw away the bags. All the wooden bunkers and wooden buildings were to be taken apart and the wood would be flown to another base. All the artillery and mortar tubes would also be flown to other bases. The mess hall would stay open only about one more week, and then that, too, would be taken apart.

Then we got word that another company in our battalion was seeing a lot of action so our first platoon was to go out to help them. What shit luck for the first platoon!

The departure of the first platoon left only two platoons on LZ Professional to do all the work of tearing down the base. Since the Army likes to keep the infantry busy, we also had to take out light patrols during the day. That meant a big walk around the base looking for some NVA. And since we still weren't busy enough, we also had to go out on night ambushes. Each squad would take turns going out. The old timers that were going home soon didn't want to go out on patrols anymore so the new guys went.

One of the first few days that we got back to the base from a light patrol I had to go to the men's room, better known as the "shitter." As soon as I got inside I noticed a sign on the wall. The sign read, "\$300 on the head of the Commander of Delta Company." One hour later a helicopter landed and I noticed the company commander with his full pack getting on the helicopter.

A little later another helicopter landed and Col. Carvell got off. Col. Carvell asked for all lieutenants and sergeants to meet him in a bunker. We all sat there in the bunker and Col. Carvell asked everyone in the room what was the problem with our company commander. Almost everyone said they didn't like him, and they all brought up the time Jim Allen, Dave Milotte and I shot at a trail watcher on a previous mission near Firebase Mary Ann. The company commander had instructed the machine gunner to stay put and to protect him. Everyone didn't trust him after that. Col. Carvell told us there would be a new company commander as soon as possible.

Our platoon leader completed his tour in Vietnam and went home. For the next week our platoon didn't have a company

commander or a platoon leader. And for as long as I had been in the platoon, we had not had a platoon sergeant. Still, life goes on.

At one point I had a very bad sore throat and I stayed in the bunker all day and got some needed sleep and rest. I also got to think a little. Our company went out on the last mission and in those 21 days we had two of our men killed. That's two men killed out of about 60, or one man out of 30. I was thinking that for every 21 days in the bush I had a 1 out of 30 chance of getting killed. I thought the odds of me living were pretty good!

There were also six men in our company wounded out of 60 guys so my chances of getting wounded were one out of ten. I thought that these were very good odds that I just might make the whole year without getting wounded. However, to look at it another way, if I was back home and there were 10 names in a hat and one name was picked to win a hundred dollars, I would never win. I did some deep thinking that day.

Each day a part of the mess hall was taken apart and that gave me the opportunity to do a little stealing of some food. One day I got some flour and a can of some tomato sauce. In high school I worked at a pizza place so I knew how to make pizza. I mixed a little water, sugar and salt into the flour and made some dough. Then I cooked the tomato sauce (added salt and pepper) in a small c-ration can. I used heat tabs for cooking. Some of the guys had some cheddar cheese in a can that was sent from home. Using a makeshift pan, I shaped the pizza dough into a 2-inch round pizza, added the tomato sauce on top of the dough and finished with the cheese. I cooked these 2-inch pizzas over a heat tab stove for some of the guys and felt as if I was home eating pizza.

Another day I stole a can of dehydrated shrimp. All I had to do was boil some water and there was all the shrimp I wanted to eat. The squad enjoyed the shrimp.

On one patrol we were sent out to pick up a fake plastic tree located on a trail. This plastic tree was a radar detector for metal. If someone was walking on the trail with a weapon (gun) and they passed the tree, our radar team on the base would see this on the radar screen. The radar team would call in the location of the movement to the artillery. Then the artillery would fire shells to that location. How were we supposed to find this plastic tree? Our squad took the man from the LZ Professional radar team who put it there, and months later he got to pick it up.

There were some lighter moments on LZ Professional. One of the things that got everyone's interest on the base was when the big Skycrane helicopter came in to pick up a big load of wood or move the artillery guns.

Most of the men in the platoon were going home. It seemed like every other day someone went home and there was a replacement that same day. The very old timers in the platoon were Dave Milotte, Dave Thompson, Harold Wecher, and Rick Yeager, but they only had less than six months apiece in country. Next in line for being an old timer were Cowboy Bob Stainton, Gerry McKay, Don Carr, Bill Metzer, Jim Marin and me. We had only a 21-day mission under our belts and that was not a lot of time in the field.

New to the platoon was Tim Seloover. The first thing he said to me was, "I want to be the point man". He was 6 foot 5 inches tall and on his bush hat he had a bright red ribbon. I thought the red ribbon made a great target. The NVA could shoot at him, not at me. Kevin Kavanaugh was a new sergeant in the platoon and on his first day with us he was appointed the other squad leader in the platoon. Kevin had been a drill sergeant back in the states. Danny Collier and Dennis Rouska joined the platoon and I think they told everyone they were stationed in Germany and had volunteered for Vietnam. Mark Olson was another new member of the platoon.

We finally got a new platoon leader, Lt. Ed McKay. He fit right in with the guys and went out on all the patrols, day and night.

Looking at the list of names in the platoon made me stop and say to myself, I can't believe what happened to them. I just have to write that list again and tell what happened to each man.

Dave Milotte would suffer severe shrapnel wounds.

Dave Thompson would lose both legs.

Harold Wecher would make it home safely.

Rick Yeager would make it home safely but within two weeks be in the hospital with malaria.

Cowboy Bob Stainton would be wounded twice and would also have malaria twice.

Gerry McKay would get a hand infection and be sent home.

Don Carr would get shot in the face but survive.

Bill Metzer would have a double hernia.

Jim Marin would jump out of a helicopter and break bones in both feet. But he still stayed in the field.

Andy Olints would suffer light shrapnel wounds.

Tim Seloover would walk point for five months and then work with the mortar team on the base.

Kevin Kavanaugh would suffer light shrapnel wounds on his hand.

Danny Collier also suffered severe shrapnel wounds.

Dennis Rouska would be killed.

Mark Olson would make it home safely. But two years after returning home he was killed while deer hunting.

Lt. McKay would suffer burns over 30 percent of his back.

Don Rice would suffer severe shrapnel wounds and severe gun shot wounds.

We stayed on LZ Professional for the month of July 1970. I didn't know that this month would be very important to all of us. It was like on-the-job training. We ran a lot of day and night patrols looking for the NVA. Thank God there was no contact with the enemy. We all found our places in the platoon.

For my whole year in Vietnam I never had to ask anyone to do any specific job. If we needed a point man, machine gunner, radio operator, grenade launcher, ammo bearer, someone to walk last, someone to set up the claymores, there was always someone who would say, "I'll do it."

LZ Professional was finally torn down. Our company was directed to make a combat assault south of Fire Base Mary Ann. Before the combat assault, some South Vietnamese Army generals flew out to see if they wanted to take over LZ Professional. Once their helicopter landed, they got out and walked around the base. In minutes the generals quickly said they didn't want the base. My first opinion of the South Vietnamese was that they wanted the Americans to fight their war.



walk around the base looking for NVA



It was like on-the-job training

CHAPTER 7 SHORT STORIES

I decided to name this chapter Short Stories because I can't remember the proper sequence of what happened in the months of August, September and October 1970. -Author

Combat Assault

Our company is leaving Firebase Professional and I'm about to go on my first combat assault. Just hearing the words "combat assault," makes me nervous. There are so many things to worry about. Flying in a helicopter and landing in an area the enemy is in are the two big things to worry about.

The company commander has to decide which platoons will land first, second, and third. The platoon leaders then decide which men they want to be in the first chopper. It's not easy for the platoon leader to say that he wants the point team to land first, the machine gunner and his men second, and the medic and radio operator in the third chopper. I guess none of this makes a difference because we all land in about one minute. But for the guys in the chopper, it's a mind game.

No matter what chopper you're told to be in, you still worry that this is the chopper that will be shot down. When you're close to landing, the door gunners start firing their machine guns into the woods. Then you worry if they saw some thing you couldn't see, like the enemy. Once you land, you're just out and out tense. With the sound of the helicopter blades and a little confusion with the landing, you don't know if someone is shooting at you.

Each platoon quickly sets up a secure area and then it's up to the company commander, platoon leaders and platoon sergeants to check their maps and be sure the men are in the right location. I was always lost for a minute. It took me a little time to make sure I knew exactly where I was on the map. I think from the time we landed, got secure, and found out where we were, it took no more than five minutes.

Once the Company was organized, all three platoons would head in three different directions into the jungle. It took me at least an hour to calm down. I have to say that a combat assault is one of the scariest things a person will ever do in his life.

We stayed in the jungle for between seven and ten days, and during this time we walked back to Firebase Mary Ann. From what I remember, there was no contact with the enemy.

Stand-Down

From Firebase Mary Ann we took a Chinook helicopter to Chu Lai and landed right next to the South China Sea. We were having stand-down. It had been around 45 days that the company had spent being in the jungle or on a firebase. This was my second stand-down. During my first stand-down I was new in country, but this time I going to have a real good time.

The first thing that happened was the company commander had us turn in all the weapons, ammo, and hand grenades. Then we had some beer and soda available. Clean clothes and a real nice cold shower were next. We even got to share the soap and razor blades in the shower. I can't remember if we ever had shaving cream. We had lunch in a real mess hall and a short speech from the company commander. We were told we were going to have a good time for three days and on the fourth day we were going back to the bush. There would be breakfast and lunch in the mess hall and grilled steaks at night. There also would be a floor show every night at 8 o'clock.

After lunch I headed to the PX to buy some treats. I wanted to get some M&Ms to carry to the bush. I also wanted to buy a Seiko wristwatch. The watch was \$20. I wish I had bought a lot more and sent them home. I still have the watch 38 years later and it still works. I also bought a cheap Kodak instant camera and about five rolls of prepaid slide film. The film came in an envelope, and once you took the pictures you would send them to a place in New Jersey to be developed. The New Jersey place would then send the slides to my house. When I finally got home from Vietnam, I had about 450 slides. About 120 of them were really good.

Even with all the beer, soda, and food available at the stand-down area, we still headed to the NCO clubs for more drinks. Any drink in the house was 25 cents so it was easy to buy a round of drinks for the table. One day we realized we were almost late for a floor show back at the stand-down area, so we got up from the table at the NCO club, jumped in the first jeep we saw, and tried to drive back to the floor show. We were trying to start the jeep when two guys came running out of the NCO club yelling, "Please don't take our jeep." They told us they would take us anywhere, just "Please don't take the jeep." Thanks to the nice ride back from the NCO club, we got to see the floor show.

Lt. Ed McKay went to the floor show with us. He was a great platoon leader. His only problem was that he liked the company of his men more than the company of officers. He would take off his lieutenant bars and put on sergeant stripes just so he could spend more time with the guys.

The first day of stand-down I had my new clean clothes on and somewhere I bought these little plastic sergeant stripes that you wore on your collar. Then I actually asked someone if I could wear a CIB (combat infantryman badge). They said, "You have been out in the field for over a month. Wear it." What a great feeling! Something you never forget and you cherish the rest of your life.

During stand-down we got to sleep in a barracks. Each man had a metal cot to sleep on. It had a two-inch thick mattress but no blankets or pillows. The mattress was never cleaned and I'm sure at least 100 men had slept there before me. But, compared to the jungle, these accommodations were a real good deal. We could sleep with our legs out straight and we could turn from one side to the other. Also, there were no rats running over our feet like on FSB Mary Ann. We had no underwear so we had to sleep in our pants and T-shirts. It was so nice to have our boots off and our socks dry. And we were not assigned guard duty at night.

Most of the men got packages from home. I got my first package and inside was Lipton Soup, Dinty Moore beef stew, Kool-Aid, canned corn, tomato soup, candy and a newspaper

from home. I had to carry all this in my pack if I wanted to take it to the field.

Some of the men in the company were going home and so we got some replacements. Zeddie Bell and Mark Olson were assigned to the platoon; a few days later Jeff Parks was also assigned to the platoon.

After stand-down was over we flew in a Chinook helicopter back to Firebase Mary Ann.

A Little Fire Fight

I can't remember how the company got on the other side of the river close to FSB Mary Ann, but there we were on top of this big mountain and our platoon was lost. We called in a location every hour to the base, but we were guessing where we were. Then about five hours later we finally found a small river and got our proper location on the map. We should have called in a navigation round to locate where we were, but we were afraid to call it in. That was really dumb of us. Anyway, the area near the river was a great place to have a night laager, lots of water to drink, and lots of trees to protect us on the backside.

The next day Lt. McKay got his orders to patrol the top of the mountain that we had been on the day before. Somehow we convinced Lt. McKay to call in a fake patrol. We wanted to just stay in the same night laager location all day and do nothing. He went along with it. The morning started out great and then Lt. McKay decided to walk ten steps to the river and brush his teeth. The river was about 20 feet wide and at the most 18 inches deep. Lt. McKay walked about two steps into the water and knelt down to brush his teeth. A minute later he looked up and 25 feet away up the river were two NVA soldiers walking right at him.

Believe it or not, Lt. McKay didn't have his M16 with him. I was lying in my hammock reading letters from home. I noticed one of the men in our platoon running to a machine gun that we had placed looking up the river. In seconds all hell broke loose. The machine gunner started firing and soon after, almost all the rest of the platoon started firing their M16s. Harold Weecker grabbed the grenade launcher and fired a few rounds up the river. One of his rounds hit a tree and some shrapnel flew back at him and punctured his chin. A few of us grabbed our M16s and ran across the river into the woods, shooting as we ran. Once again, there were no kills but a little bit of action. Harold Weecker was wounded while shooting his grenade launcher at an NVA, but he told the medic not to put him in for a Purple Heart. Harold didn't want to tell anyone he was wounded by shrapnel from his own weapon.



I could wear a CIB

River Crossing

Very few times in the field does one company link up with another one. On this particular day we were ordered to meet Bravo Company at the Song Trahn River and then both companies would have a river crossing at the same time. Bravo Company got to the river first. They had requested a helicopter to fly out to them and drop off a real long rope. There is always a young GI willing to do any thing so someone volunteered to swim across the river with one end of the rope in his hand. Once the swimmer got to the other side, he would tie the rope to a tree to enable the rest of the men in both companies to hold on to the rope and get across the river with their M16s and packs.

We were looking at about 120 men crossing the river. Machine guns were set up to protect the men during the crossing. By the time our company (Delta) got to the river, a lot of Bravo Company had already crossed the river. We were greeted by the Bravo Company commander, and he said if we had any men in our platoon who didn't swim well or who needed help crossing the river, he had a few guys willing to help. There were about five Bravo guys, buck naked, swimming back and forth across the river. They were having a great time in the water.

I had been swimming all my life so I had no problem getting into the water. The thing was, I had never gone swimming with the weight of clothes, boots, an M16, two hand grenades, and a very heavy pack. I must say I was nervous at first. We somehow strapped our M16s to our pack and that allowed us have both hands free to hold onto the rope. My mind was racing. If I heard shots, I was going to let go of the rope, grab the safety straps on the pack, pull the safety straps, which would release the pack from my back, and then swim under water to safety.

I walked into the river and got about chest high in the water. I held onto the rope with both hands until it was time to just let the current of the water let my body float. Everything went great. I held onto the rope with my left hand and then I used the hand-over-hand method to pull myself across the river. What a great experience this was! No one got hurt and we actually had a great time doing it. I even got to meet a sergeant in Bravo Company who went to Non-commissioned Officer (NCO) School with me. It is a small world.

Bravo Company got to walk to FB Mary Ann that day, but Delta Company stayed in the bush. The next day we walked to Mary Ann, got lunch, and walked off again that night. One of my point men, Dave Thomson, got to get out of the bush that day. He got a job on the mortar team on Mary Ann.

Hill 485

I think anyone in our platoon who walked up Hill 485 will never forget it. It was one hell of a climb, and like on a lot of other mountains, there was nothing there. We had a new point man in the other squad, and while walking point, he walked into a booby trap. He had a punji stick stuck in his knee. If his knee had gotten infected, he would have been in a lot of trouble.

Our medic called to Firebase Mary Ann for a dust off (a medical evacuation helicopter), but the problem was there was no landing area on Hill 485 big enough to land a helicopter. Soon a helicopter flew out and dropped us a chain saw to cut down some trees. In minutes some trees were cut down and our point man was on the helicopter on his way to the hospital.

A day or two later our platoon got an unusual mission. There was another company (unknown) from another battalion operating in our area. Our platoon was to link up with them, and we were to walk point and lead them to an area that could be used for a landing zone for helicopters. The word I got

was that this company had a few guys wounded and since they were not familiar with area, they needed help. I found it very hard to believe that one company commander would ask another company commander for help walking point. But it looks like they did.

Tim Seloover and Jeff Parks were the point team and it was up to them to link up with this other company in a safe manner. It is not as easy as you might think to link up with anyone. First of all, the point team has this "reaction" thing; something moves, shoot it. And, the company that you're linking up with could see movement and start shooting.

Our company continued walking on a trail and I knew we were getting close to where the other company was supposed to be. All of a sudden we could see some GIs waiting for us. I give Tim and Jeff all the credit in the world for staying composed and keeping everyone safe. I was a nervous wreck.

The company that we linked up with was sitting on both sides of the trail and we had to walk along the trail from the back of their company to the front. As we were walking by, most of their men had some kind of friendly comment. Tim and Jeff paused talk to some of the guys along the trail.

I knew our platoon had to keep moving so I started walking first. Not only did we walk by their point man, we had to go a little farther up the trail. After our platoon leader talked to their company commander, orders were given to go to a certain area so helicopters could pick up the other company. A few hours later they were on some choppers and on their way back to their own area.

Months later I was in Cam Ranh Bay going home and some GI (from the unknown company) came up to me and asked if I was in the 1/46 battalion. I said yes, and he then told me he was in the unknown company that we walked point for. He said he remembered my face because I was walking point that day. I told him that I never walked point, but yes, I was the one walking my platoon through their company. What a small world.

Boils

If you're in the infantry and spend time in the field, you'll likely get a boil. Not a fun thing to write about, but a lot of the guys got boils. Any part of the body could develop a boil. Some guys got them on their backs, and when they put their packs on their backs, it hurt like hell. Other guys got boils on their feet and then it was hard to walk. I got boils on my left leg. First just the boil hurts, but in a few days your whole leg hurts. Your leg almost gets numb and it hurts to walk.

After the unknown company left on some helicopters, we were told that in a few hours the choppers would come back and fly us to a different area. While we were waiting for the choppers to come back for us, the medic came over to me and asked to see the boil I had on my leg. He then told me it was time to lance it. He said I should hold onto a large tree while he lanced the boil. I held onto a tree and the medic got out a razor and just ripped that razor into my leg. It hurt so much I had tears in my eyes. It was some thing I will never forget, but I did feel better.

A New Area

We were now in the middle of September, 1970 and it was my 25th birthday. I got to go out on a night ambush on my birthday. What a waste of time! Ten guys went out, set up a couple claymores, and then got into groups of two men each. We got back to back and one guy of each pair had to stay up all night. The mosquitoes were in the millions and it was pitch black. Who in his right mind would fire his M16 in the middle



any men in our platoon who didn't swim

of the night when you can't see anything! Let the claymores do the killing. I just hated that night.

This was the first area that I got to see a small field of corn growing. If you see corn growing, someone must be there to plant the corn and then pick it. I just felt very uneasy. A few yards away from the cornfield there was some corn that had already been picked. The corn was peeled and to me it looked like someone was drying the corn in the sun.

Close by the cornfield, Tim Seloover and Jeff Parks found a little hooch with a number of wooden boxes in it. Inside the boxes were peanuts. I couldn't believe it - peanuts. There were boxes of peanuts! We burned down the peanut hut.

A day later we took a break to call in our location, and I sat down to look at the map. We were on a small hill with trees about 20 feet high, and I was looking downhill at a small river. The river took a turn to the right, and I was so proud of myself that I knew exactly where we were on the map. Everything seemed O.K. when all of a sudden there was a big explosion about 200 yards away down the river. Then there were screams for a medic. The sound of voices easily came down the river and it seemed like one of our platoons was so close to us.

The sounds of calling for a medic, and calling for a Medevac chopper were the words you didn't want to hear. Very shortly a helicopter arrived and we just waited to hear on the radio what had happened. Finally the word came that a machine gunner had been killed by the explosion. I'm sure more men also had been wounded. We heard that the platoon had been walking in the river and found an area to get out of the river, and then the explosion went off.

The very next day our platoon was walking in that same river waist deep and looking for a place to get out of the river. Sure enough, the place we chose was the same place where the machine gunner had been killed. We found an aluminum frame that men used to hold their packs on their backs. It must have been his.

A Woman and a Man

My squad had been walking point in the morning so our other squad took out a little ambush after lunch. They found a small cornfield with a few trails close by. While setting up the ambush, they spotted a very large snake moving through the cornfield.

Minutes later a middle-aged woman and a younger man came walking down the trail. No weapons were seen so the squad decided to capture these two people. As soon as the man spotted one of our guys, an AK47 appeared in his hands and he

starting shooting. Because he was walking with the AK47 right next to his body, no one saw it. Soon everyone in the squad was firing his M16. No confirmed kills.

Later on that day we were walking down a small hill where there were a lot of trails. Soon the point man spotted a hooch and gave a hand signal to be alert. Our squad was told to stay where we were and watch the trail to our left. The other squad walked right down the trail and into the hooch. They found the woman dead, lying in a hammock. There was no sign of the man.

In the hooch was a picture of Ho Chi Minh. There were also North Vietnamese flags and books. The first few guys through the door of the hooch got some souvenirs to take home. Our squad got a call on the radio telling us what they had found. I was told to take my squad about 150 feet down the trail that we had been watching.

In just a few feet we spotted another hooch, and in my mind I wanted to get some souvenirs. Tim Seloover and Jeff Parks were walking point and in just a short time the both of them were walking through the door of the second hooch. All we found was a very small fire going in the middle of the hooch, as if someone had been cooking.

Then I got this uneasy feeling that someone was watching us. We checked out the area. Outside the second hooch I found a little bomb shelter that wasn't very deep. I looked into the shelter and could see a little bag. The bomb shelter was only four or five feet long and I was scared to death just going in to find out what was in that bag. It was some kind of food, which looked like dog food to me.

After we checked out the area around the second hooch, our squad then went to the other hooch to see the woman dead in the hammock. When we finally got to see her, and then the North Vietnamese flag and the picture of Ho Chi Minh, I didn't feel sorry for her. Someone said she could have been with the NVA who set up the explosion that killed the machine gunner.

The Door

While I was looking at the woman who was dead in the hammock, the company commander told me to go back to the hooch that had the fire in it and set up a claymore mine. I got two guys from the squad to go with me. As we walked the trail back to the hooch, we were talking and not really alert.

We walked up to the front door, the three of us almost touching each other. As one of us reached out to push the door open, we heard some Vietnamese talking inside the hooch. My



one hell of an experience

heart almost stopped. I dropped the claymore mine that I had in my hand and in less than a second the three of us were firing our M16s into the hooch. We walked backwards about ten feet into the tree line as we were still firing our M16s. We dropped to the ground to fire our weapons.

I was waiting to be shot. I couldn't believe that they had not heard us walking into their hooch. In seconds some of our platoon came running towards us to give us help. Rick Yeager had an M60 machine gun and as he stood next to us, he fired his machine gun. He stood there like John Wayne yelling, "Chu Hoi" to the Vietnamese in the hooch. "Chu Hoi" means "give up" in Vietnamese. The thing was, he fired about 30 rounds into the hooch, yelled "Chu Hoi," waited two seconds, and fired more rounds. I did have to think that Rick wasn't going to give anyone any time to surrender.

I didn't notice at first, but during the initial firefight, the company commander had come running up and was lying right next to me. He looked at me and said, "Come on." He jumped up and started to run to the door of the hooch and I was right behind him. He didn't open the door; he went right through it. In a second the both of us were inside the hooch and we quickly looked around.

The company commander looked at this wooden top of what was a bunker. He looked at me, grabbed a hand grenade that was attached to his belt, pulled the pin on the hand grenade while still holding onto the grenade handle, and opened the wooden top and threw the hand grenade into the bunker. Both of us dropped to the floor at the same time.

With the sound of the grenade going off and the concussion of the grenade, I didn't know if I was hurt. That was one hell of a feeling. The company commander got up first and jumped into the bunker. I got up and in a second he was handing me a dead North Vietnamese. Believe me this was one hell of an experience. Here I was part of a group that killed someone and a second later I had him in my hands. I guess that's what war is about. If this enemy had heard us first, he would have killed the three of us.

Fifteen minutes later I set up a booby trap, hoping to kill the other person that had been in the hooch talking. Our platoon then moved to the closest mountaintop for a night laager. Right at dark the booby trap went off and I was all smiles thinking that I got a kill. Two seconds later I could hear the sound of an AK47 going off. Then I wasn't all smiles. Did the other man in the hooch live and now was it his turn to set a booby trap for me?

I didn't sleep all that night because I was the one who was going to have to walk point the next morning while we checked out the hooch. The next morning we walked down the mountain and when I approached the hooch, I felt that I was going to be killed. This guy could be anywhere. Did he set up a booby trap? Is he in the woods with his AK47 aiming at me? Could there be more than one person waiting for me?

I don't know how I did it, but I walked right into the hooch and nothing happened. You could see the damage that the claymore had made in the hooch but I didn't care very much. I just wanted to walk into the woods and blend in with the trees.

In the next few days, while in our night laager, I would listen to my little radio when it got dark to get away from the stress of the war. I would hold the radio to my ear so as not to make noise. I had hoped to hear nothing but music, but one of the news reports was that Janis Joplin died. A few days later Jimmie Hendrix died.

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Tenaha, Texas

Americal Vet Receives Silver Star 42 Years After Act of Valor

The nation's third-highest award for valor, the Silver Star, was awarded to Tenaha, Texas Vietnam veteran Earl Brannon, at the Americal's annual reunion in Atlanta, Georgia on September 15, 2012. Brannon served as a combat medic in the Americal assigned to Alpha Company, 5th/46th Infantry Battalion, when on March 2, 1970 he entered into a minefield to treat a fellow soldier who had detonated a well-concealed enemy booby trap and was severely injured.

Brannon's citation records his act of valor: "Reacting immediately to the urgency of the situation, Private Brannon un-hesitantly moved through the heavily mined area to his wounded comrade's position. Fully aware of the possibility of additional enemy activity, he skillfully began administering emergency first aid to the wounded soldier. While treating his comrade, Private Brannon was severely wounded when a second well-concealed explosive device was triggered. With complete disregard for his personal safety, he denied himself medical attention until his fallen comrade was treated". The Army citation also notes that not only were Brannon's actions instrumental in saving the life of his comrade but his actions in the minefield gave inspiration to his entire unit.

Brannon was a medic for the second platoon of Alpha Company. His platoon leader, First Lieutenant William Wolski, put in the paperwork recommending Brannon for the Silver Star after the incident. Wolski still remembers the incident today. "When the first man hit the mine we heard the horrible sound of a muffled explosion, the sure indication that a mine had been detonated. Brannon moved forward, already taking out bandages from his medic's vest as he approached the wounded soldier. Time was critical. Men were telling him 'be careful, be careful'. Everyone else froze. He reached the wounded soldier and, in the process of treating his serious wounds, he detonated a larger mine which took its toll. He lost both his legs. When another soldier who had had some medical training in civilian life went to Brannon's position, Brannon refused aid, telling him to take care of his comrade, even though Brannon's injuries were much more severe"

Last year, during a conversation with Brannon, Wolski his platoon leader, now a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel, mentioned the Silver Star award but Brannon said he didn't know anything about it, or that he was even nominated for the award and that he never received it. Wolski was shocked that Brannon had not received the award (the division had published the award four months after the act of valor, in July 1970). Then Wolski became angered that the government had not forwarded the award to Brannon. But, as Wolski reflects,



"Earl spent 3-1/2 years in hospitals for treatment of his wounds, so I can see where the paperwork may have been lost. But we take care of our own in the Army, and I started the process to get his medal so we could present it to him as a surprise, at our division's annual reunion, which this year was in Atlanta, Georgia. That award ceremony brought some closure for Earl who has led a heroic life after Vietnam, and it also brought closure for many of us who were with him on that fateful day and who were also present at the award ceremony"

To make the ceremony even more special, Brannon's son and daughter-in-law flew in from Louisiana and Brannon's daughter with her friend flew in from Texas to surprise their dad just before the annual Saturday night banquet was to begin, during which Brannon was awarded his medal.

ADVA Executive Council Chairman (and retired Colonel) Dave Taylor read the citation while Wolski, Brannon's former platoon leader, presented the award. Taylor reflects, "This was a real effort to get everything ready without Earl knowing he would get the award that night. Earl's wife Vicki was in on the surprise as was Earl's daughter Kimberly, who lives on his property in a separate house. After the medal was approved by the Pentagon, they insisted it had to be sent directly to the recipient so we gave them Kimberly's address so Earl would not be aware." Taylor adds, "I had located Earl several years ago in conjunction with writing my book about the battalion in Vietnam, which was published last year. Two years ago at the ADVA reunion in Louisiana, Earl was able to meet with many of his comrades for the first time since Vietnam. I have been humbled after talking to his wife Vicki about Earl's post-war attitude in life. On one occasion Brannon was up on his roof, with jeans wrapped around his stumps where his legs used to be, working on his roof. A local man drove by, very despondent over the loss of his son, and he was driving to the local levee to take his own life. When he saw Earl working on the roof with no legs he thought, 'if that man can do that, then I have no right to take my life'. There are many other stories like that that followed Earl after Vietnam. I am grateful we have the ADVA and the annual reunions to recognize our comrades and bring them together. It is a catharsis for us all"



Reunion Wrap-up

By Roger Gilmore

The Americal Division Veterans Association 2012 Annual Reunion at the Westin Atlanta Airport Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia was a huge success. Recorded attendance for the three day event was 504. This includes ADVA members, Americal Division veterans, spouses and guests.

Excellent weather blessed both the reunion and its main event, the dedication ceremony for the Americal Division monument at Fort Benning, Georgia. Details on the dedication ceremony are in the Americal Legacy article of this issue.

The Westin Atlanta Airport hotel was a fabulous host. It provided many amenities that made our event memorable.

Thursday, September 13th was arrival day for many attendees. The hotel lobby and bar area filled with attendees renewing friendships and recounting memories of time served in the Americal Division. An image of the ADVA logo projected on the ceiling above the reservation desk area greeted attendees as they entered the hotel.

Saturday morning was a very busy day filled with the Executive Council and general membership business meetings. Our evening schedule commenced with the First Time Attendees reception prior to the banquet. We had 86 first timers registered for the reunion, and many attended this reception. The evening banquet featured an Americal themed ice sculpture and meal selections of three excellent entrees prepared by the hotel's noted chef.

The highlight of the banquet was a gathering of 198th Brigade veterans to witness a presentation of the Silver Star to Americal Division veteran and ADVA member Earl Brannon. Earl received the medal 42 years after the action in which his valor earned him the award. The follow-up with the Department of the Army to get Earl the award was led by LTC (Ret) William Wolski, Earl's platoon leader at the time of the action. Earl's son and daughter made a surprise appearance at the banquet to witness the presentation. The award ceremony was a very moving event for all attending.

Another special guest at the banquet was young Cody Jackson and his family, guests of Spencer Baba. Cody is a patriotic eight year old who supports our servicemen abroad by conducting fundraising for care packages through his own web site and welcomes home returning soldiers at the Atlanta airport.

The ADVA Lifetime Achievement Award was presented posthumously to James Craig. Donna and DeAnna Craig, spouse and daughter, respectively, accepted the award on behalf of the Craig family. Jim served as Judge Advocate in the mid-1990s and members elected to the Executive Council in the 2012 balloting. Unfortunately, Jim died in an accident in April of this year.

ADVA member and music composer Danny Barnes provided the after-dinner entertainment at the banquet. He sang a medley of patriotic songs to an enthusiastic group of listeners.

Reunion Co-Chairman PNC Ronald Ellis and I owe thanks to many who helped make this reunion a success. We owe a big "Thank You" to Wayne and Gena Bryant and the Coca-Cola Corporation for the themed drink bottles for our goodies bags. Gena's cousin Julia Schival and Lori Presley, both Coca-Cola employees, worked out the details to get us the bottles and have them delivered to the hotel. We also thank Ms. Michelle Harding of the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau who assisted us with our initial hotel reviews and provided the bags and Atlanta themed give-aways.

NATIONAL REUNION



NATIONAL REUNION



NATIONAL REUNION



NATIONAL REUNION



Photography & layout Dutch DeGroot

Americal Division Journal

By Don Kilgore

In May 1970, I arrived in Vietnam as a civilian employee of the American Express Military Banking Division. I volunteered for the assignment because I wanted to make some sense out the conflict going on between the student demonstrators and the leaders of our country over the Vietnam War. It took me about two weeks to determine that the "truth" was weighted more in favor of the students, but I had a one year contract with American Express to work out.

My duty station was the 23rd Infantry (Americal) Division Amex bank branch at Chu Lai. The branch manager, Dick McKegney, and I had been roommates in graduate school and he needed me to help him shore up a badly run office that he had inherited. We worked like crazy to bring the operation up to speed and Dick rotated in August leaving me as the branch manager.

One day Maj. Rish (USAF) came to my desk for banking assistance and we began a conversation that substantially altered my Vietnam tour. Maj. Rish asked me to accompany him into the field on his airstrip inspection visits as his personal photographer. For some inquisitive reason I always wanted to get as close to the war as I could. My father was a highly decorated career Air Force officer who had fought in both WWII and Korea. I had also talked to GI's coming into the bank about where they had been in the bush and this raised my curiosity. On weekends I would drive with bank staff members up and down Highway #1 as a tourist might do on vacation, taking photo ops and stopping along the way for an occasional beer. Once, while driving alone on a remote section of the Americal base, I heard the sirens go off and shortly afterwards a rocket landed directly in front of my Jeep Wagoneer, but some 100 yards ahead of me. During this daylight attack a rocket hit a dispensary killing several soldiers.

Maj. Rish's offer was one that I had been hoping for. He got me a fatigue uniform and a pair of jungle boots. I added patches with my name and American Express I.D. Our first inspection trip was to the artillery base at Tra Bong. On the way, our Huey pilot reported that the ceiling was low and asked Maj. Rish's permission to follow the Tra Bong River. Following rank protocol Maj. Rish sat in the middle seat with me on one side and his aide-de-camp, T/Sgt. Jim Raines, on the other.

We flew up the river at tree top level, doors open and the door gunners blasting away when they spotted a possible ambush position. We were met at the Tra Bong airstrip by the Commander Capt. Washington Sanchez. I took a number of photos one of which, reportedly, was printed in the "Stars and Stripes" newspaper.

In the following weeks we visited the Special Forces bases at Gia Vuc, Ha Thanh and Ba To. They were all in very remote Montagnard areas in Quang Ngai Province.

Most of my spare time in Chu Lai was spent at the 91st Evac

Hospital with Capt. Dick Lyons, an anesthesiologist, and his three hootch buddies, all doctors. The hospital had a recreation center and I can recall playing ping pong with the Division psychiatrist. Many might feel that I should have been one of his patients. Despite the stress of their jobs the medical personnel tried to carry on a "normal" life in their off duty hours. Dr. Lyons and I went water skiing one day in front of the USO club. I knew there were sharks in the water because I had seen them for sale in the nearby Ky Hoa fish market.

Dr. Lyons had developed a friendship with the Ba To Commander, an Army Ranger Captain. He invited me on a "mission" to Ba To to deliver several cases of chickens and steaks to the troops. 1Lt. Kathy Holzman, a nurse at the 91st Evac Hospital, came along for moral support. She was the most beautiful woman I met during my tour.

One evening at the 91st I learned of a planned assault on Kham Duc the following morning. I was told the launch direction and stayed awake so that I could snap some photos. I got into position at about 0500 hours and the Hueys whizzed by, but it was too dark to get a shot. A little disappointed I went to the Americal Officers Club and took a shot of the sun coming up on the South China Sea showing the commanding general's landing pad and a Cobra on perimeter patrol in the distance. This is my favorite photo from Vietnam.

One evening in January I learned of a 91st Evac Hospital humanitarian visit to the Tam Ky compound of the Quang Tin Province Chief during the TET celebration. I was able to convince Col. Kenwyn Nelson, the hospital Commander, that I would be a valuable asset as his photographer. Col. Nelson refused at first, but when I told him that I had a fatigue uniform he relented. Off we went in a three Huey formation from the 91st Evac Hospital landing pad.

My final trip to the field was with two Red Cross "Donut Dollies", Suzanne Shoemaker and Michelle Marganski to LZ San Juan Hill. Suzanne and Michelle spent a couple of hours raising the troop morale with friendly conversation and popcorn popping. However, upon departure lift-off our Huey blade hit the blade of a nearby chopper. Our Huey began to vibrate violently as the pilot tried valiantly to bring it down in one piece. Michelle had not fastened her seat belt and she was thrown to the floor, bouncing uncontrollably, just inches away from shooting out the open door and down a heavily booby-trapped hillside perimeter. Due to our skillful pilot the chopper landed safely and tragedy was avoided. We had to wait a few minutes for a "taxi" to pick us up.

After the LZ San Juan Hill excitement I only had 15 days left in country. For my Chu Lai departure Maj. Rish got me a "reserved seat" in the cockpit of a C-130 Hercules for my trip to Saigon and back to "the world".

I have donated all of my Vietnam photos, slides and memorabilia to the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University which is accessible to the public on the Internet.



Stunning sunrise at Chu Lai - 1970



Americal medivac at Chu Lai airfield



Ba To chopper crew wait for take-off



USO facility at Chu Lai



91st Evacuation Hospital nurse 1LT Kathy Holzman



Americal Division Headquarters at Chu Lai



AmericaL MPs with ice cream



Sunrise at Chu Lai Officers Club



LZ San Juan Hill



Donut Dolly at San Juan Hill



Donut Dolly at San Juan Hill



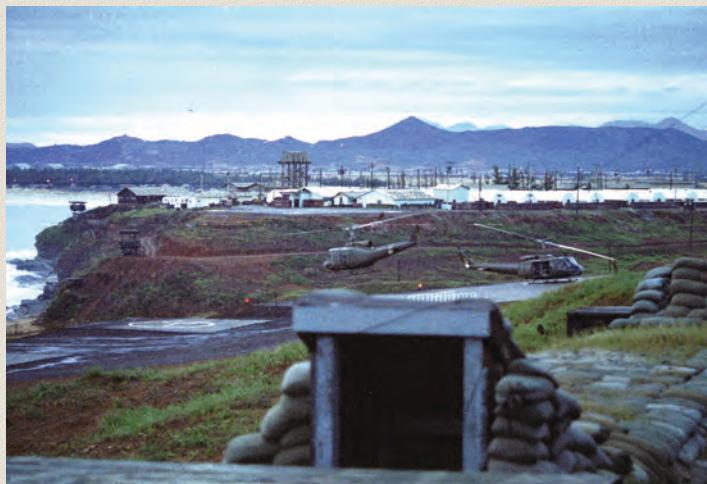
Major Rish (USAF 1970)



Sunrise at Chu Lai Officers Club



AmericaI soldiers at Ha Thanh



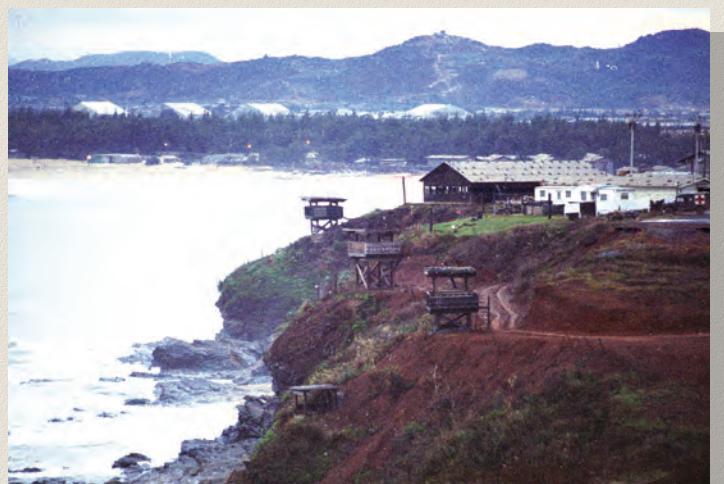
91st Evacuation Hospital - Chu Lai



91st Evacuation Hospital - Chu Lai



Tra Bong airfield



91st Evacuation Hospital - Chu Lai



A Journey to Destiny – Part III

The Philippines and Occupation of Japan Edited by David W. Taylor

On To The Philippines

After a Thanksgiving dinner in 1944 on the Island of Bougainville, the Americal began the packing and crating of equipment and supplies to their next destination, wherever that would be, while the Australian Army continued operations on Bougainville to defeat the remaining Japanese.

By 3:00PM on January 8, 1945 the first two ships bearing units of the Americal cleared Bougainville's Empress Augusta Bay and headed westward. It was not until January 27, however, that the last of thirteen ships arrived to take on the Americal's cargo and troops.

As the Americal sailed away from Bougainville the tide was shifting to the Americans in the Pacific War. Back in February 1944 Marine and Army troops in the Central Pacific, under the control of Admiral Chester Nimitz, had taken the Marshall Islands from the Japanese, marking the first invasion of enemy-controlled territory. Later in February and March General Douglas MacArthur threw the Japanese off balance with strong landings on New Ireland and in the Admiralties. He then followed with a powerful thrust at Hollandia, on New Guinea's north coast, which cut off an estimated 150,000 enemy troops to the east.

Admiral Nimitz's forces countered with new assaults in the Central Pacific as Saipan, in the Marianas fell to the United States. When the Japanese fleet came to the rescue of their garrison 140 enemy planes were shot down and fourteen ships were sunk. Troops of the Central Pacific Command quickly added Guam. In the Marianas U.S. air units were now within 1,500 miles of Japan and also the Philippine Islands. On October 20, far in advance of the originally planned date, troops of the U.S. Sixth Army crossed the beaches on Leyte in the East Central Philippines, to begin the re-conquest of the islands lost to the enemy in 1942.

It was into this situation that the Americal Division was now being injected in the early days of 1945. For all intents and purposes the campaign on Leyte was over in terms of control of real estate but many Japanese forces

remained on the island. Despite suffering crippling losses in the Second Battle of the Philippine Sea, the Japanese Navy continued to rush soldiers to Leyte in any seagoing craft they could find. And, in early January, Luzon, to the north of Leyte was becoming a bitter battleground. Much still remained to be done to free the entire Philippines from Japanese control. Operations on Leyte were now under the control of the Eight Army, commanded by Lt. General Robert L. Eichelberger. Concerned that the many Japanese left on Leyte could be evacuated to fight the U.S. on another island, Eichelberger ordered that all mopping-up operations on Leyte continue with as much manpower as possible to destroy the Japanese forces.

Western Leyte

The morning of January 21, 1945 found that the first echelon of the Americal Division, The 164th Regimental Combat Team, which included the 245th Field Artillery, was being assigned to the Eight Army. The 164th mission was to go into action on Leyte on January 27th, to relieve other units of the XXIV Corps southwest of a line from Jaro to Valencia to Palompon and conduct extensive mopping-up operations in the area. The estimated enemy force in the 164th sector was three thousand Japanese. Many of the enemy were reported to have gathered in the area around Palompon on the coast, hoping to be evacuated by the Japanese Navy.

The 164th was the first of the Americal troops to enter the terrain of the Philippines and found it was vastly different than the terrain encountered on Guadalcanal or on Bougainville. Completely missing was the blanketing mat of tall, heavily foliaged trees and ever-present low, dense underbrush. What they encountered were broad plains dotted with coconut palms dotted with many crudely built huts in which the Filipinos lived. Alongside the many trails and roads were countless mud holes in which there wallowed equally countless Carabaos – native beats of burden for the Filipinos.

Along the coast lay a rugged chain of hills and mountains, varying in size and character from gently-sloped grassy knolls to steep-sided, rock-filled mountains, on which the Japanese had established their strongest positions. Throughout the area the 164th went to work, relieving portions of the 77th Army Division. It wasn't long before enemy contact was made. Company K of the 3rd Battalion came under heavy machine gun fire in the coastal village of Villaba. The company secured a position before nightfall and, in the dark of night, the enemy attacked but were driven off. In the morning twenty-six enemy dead were found around Company K's position. On February 7th patrols from the 1st and 2nd Battalions around Valencia killed another thirty-six Jap soldiers.

The 2nd Battalion, 164th Regiment established a new base of operations near Palompon and the 3rd Battalion of the 182nd established a base of operations south of the 164th sector. Other units were assigned to the 164th, such as the 21st Reconnaissance Troop and Filipino guerillas from the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 96th Filipino Regiment. Small-unit actions were the order of the day and the Americal soldiers were up to it. For example, on February 14 an eighteen-man patrol led by a Staff Sergeant killed thirteen of the enemy in a ravine. By the evening of February 15 a total of 577 Japanese had been reported killed by the 164th, with only two prisoners taken.

As the long-range 164th patrols outdistanced their supply lines, the Piper Cub aircraft of artillery forward observers dropped much needed supplies. When well-prepared Jap defensive positions were encountered, the Americal's artillery pounded them with efficiency. The 182nd's 2nd and 3rd Battalion and the 132nd 2nd Battalion were also added to the fray in the Americal's war with the Japanese in western Leyte. The general scheme of maneuver was for 164th units to drive the Japanese north in the direction of Villaba with 182nd units, along with other Filipino guerilla battalions covering the eastern flanks, to keep the enemy from moving inland. The 132nd troops also added pressure in the northern sector.

The move north placed a great strain on the 245th Artillery Battalion, which was now in support of six infantry battalions. The Japanese, now fighting as cornered rats, put up stiff resistance. On February 25 three companies from the 132nd assaulted a hill, killing 205 Japanese after heavy fighting. On March 10 the 164th Infantry Regimental Combat Team, supported by artillery, Filipino guerillas and a medical section, was placed under the control of the Eight Army to be available for shore-to-shore operations in other parts of the Philippines.

By late March all Americal units on Western Leyte were preparing to be sent elsewhere. The combat expertise earned in the jungles of Guadalcanal and Bougainville was demonstrated time and time again in the small unit warfare conducted on Leyte. The 245th Artillery Battalion had fired 12,165 rounds in support of Americal troops. During operations in northwestern Leyte, Americal units killed an estimated 3,500 Japanese soldiers and captured 68 others. It was now time to move on.

The Straits

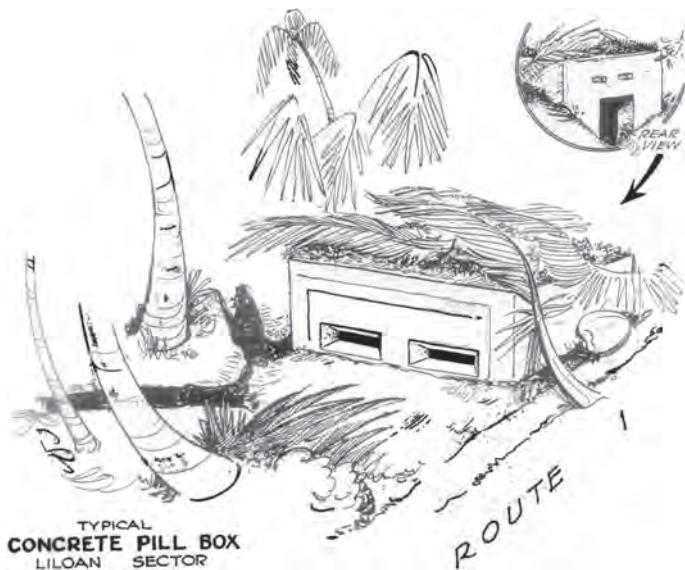
With Mop-up operations firmly established on Leyte, attention was drawn to the island of Samar, the third largest in the Philippines. Most of the island consisted of such forbidden terrain that it was of no strategic importance to the Americans or Japanese. But small-scale operations were planned to end any Japanese resistance in the northern and western coast of the island, the only areas with any population of consequence. The 1st Battalion of the 182nd was ordered to Catbalogan, the capital city along with supporting forces to include Battery B of the 246th Artillery Battalion, medical service and Philippine guerilla forces. Their mission was also to neutralize the northern tip of the island as General MacArthur wanted the San Bernardino Strait secure for a safe passage through the Visayas to Luzon. The strait provided the shorter route to the north. To do this, the 182nd would also have to clear the Balicuatro Islands, the northwestern tip of Samar, plus Capul Island and the Naranjo Islands. A reconnaissance of these islands from PT Boats, to look for shore landing zones, was met by Jap 75mm gun fire. The varied operations got underway on February 19.

The landing on Capul by Company A of the 182nd was met by Japanese small arms fire and knee mortars. But the opposition was overcome and the Americal soldiers moved inland with two platoons of Filipino light infantry. One patrol encountered stiff resistance which was overcome in ninety minutes, the Japanese scattering at a cost of 28 enemy dead and 5 Americal casualties. By February 23, Company



Men of the 3rd Battalion, 164th Regiment, come ashore from LCI 686 on Bohol, Philippines (National Archives)

Jap Concrete Pillbox (57th Engineers Army Document: "Obstacles, Mines & Booby Traps Found On Cebu")



A had secured the island to the northern tip, capturing along the way three British 75mm guns and a pair of damaged Japanese motor launches. The few remaining Jap forces tried to get off the island in any manner possible. On February 25 two LCM's (Landing Craft Medium) operating off the west coast of Capul intercepted six native canoes filled with Japanese soldiers leaving the island. Firepower from the machine guns on the landing craft eliminated approximately twenty-five Japanese.

On February 20 Company C of the 182nd landed on Biri along with some Filipino infantry. The company moved up the west coast but was stopped along the southern limits of the town of Biri where the Japanese fought tenaciously. While Company C's riflemen bulldozed their way through the town other Japanese were active a short distance to the north. At 4:35PM approximately twenty Japanese were seen on top of an ammunition dump within their defensive perimeter. Then, within seconds of the Japs spotting the approaching Americal soldiers, the dump erupted in a ball of flame and smoke and the enemy combatants perished, making the task for the Americal's soldiers much easier.

C Company continued to push through Biri and took up night positions a mile north of town. Their day's activities netted fifty-one Japanese dead and one prisoner. On February 23 Company L of the 1st Filipino Regiment took control of operations on Biri and the small 182nd contingent was withdrawn.

Some remaining enemy resistance continued in the northern sector of Samar, where the enemy refused to give up despite the hopelessness of their position. One 182nd patrol encountered Japanese near Mauro, killing eight of the enemy while suffering three casualties and two missing soldiers. Later the Americans found one of the missing soldiers rifle's and, in an abandoned Jap field hospital found many of their personal effects. Among the documents found was an enemy soldier's diary who recounted the fight they had with the Americans and noted that they took two prisoners. The diary entries were terse...

"...took two PW and MG ammunition"

The following entry, dated February 24, stated the outcome briefly:

"...the two PW taken yesterday were executed."

The news of the executions spread throughout the Division which collectively vowed to remember the atrocity whenever they met the Japanese again. Fighting continued in the northwest sector of Samar as the 182nd slowly tightened the noose around the remaining Japanese. Company B was engaged in heavy fighting around Mount Bermodo. Typically the Americal soldiers provided the main attack force for these encounters with the enemy while the Filipino infantry were used as flanking forces or to cover the presumed escape routes of the Japanese. By March 9 all Americal units were withdrawn to Leyte and the Filipinos continued the mop-up operations, with no mercy shown to the Japs they encountered.

As a result of these operations on Samar, in the San Bernardino Strait and on Buri and Ticao, the 1st Battalion of the 182nd Infantry and 1st Battalion, 132nd Infantry and attached troops had solidly secured the shortest overwater supply route to Manila from the eastern extremities of the Philippine archipelago. Activities of these units brought death to 301 Japanese soldiers and forced eight to surrender.

Cebu

While the Americal was conducting operations on Leyte and the islands of the San Bernardino Strait, the high command turned its attention to the Visayas, the islands of Panay, Negros, Bohol and Cebu. Cebu was of critical interest because the seaport in Cebu City, prior to the outbreak of war, had become the second-ranking seaport of the Philippine Islands. The division received orders to prepare to invade Cebu with the 182nd and 132nd Regiments, and portions of the 164th, the bulk of which still remained under command of the Eighth Army.

The invasion was set for March 26 with heavy naval bombardment to precede the beach landing, along with heavy Army Air Force cover to defend against air attacks by the Japanese while the men were moving ashore. The invasion would take place in the vicinity of Talisay, some five miles southwest of the city of Cebu. With the beachhead secured, the Americal was to advance rapidly north into Cebu City to capture the capital and its vital port facilities. Simultaneously, Lahug airfield, a short distance outside of the city to the north, would become the target for other infantry of the Americal.

The island of Cebu was destined to become a big obstacle in the path of fulfilling the Philippine Islands mission assigned to the Americal. Stretching 140 miles in length and ranging from twelve to twenty miles in width at its center, Cebu's 1,700 square miles ranked it as the seventh largest island in the Philippines. Essentially an island mountain range, its two cores of hills rose in places to heights of more than three thousand feet; countless steep-sided hills in the interior presented rugged scenery indicative of extremely high mountains.

In the Cebu-Bohol-Negros Oriental area in the early days of March it was estimated that there were more than thirteen thousand Japanese troops of which some twelve thousand were presumed to be on Cebu. Approximately ten thousand of these were spread along the islands east coast from Naga, southwest of the capital, to Liloan, to the northeast, with the bulk of the power concentrated around Cebu City. An estimated two thousand more occupied small garrisons along the north and northeast shores.

Philippine guerilla forces on the island were estimated to be about 8,500 but with only about 2,700 assorted weapons. After the Japanese invasion of Cebu City in April of 1942, frequent Japanese punitive raids in all parts of the island made efficient organization of the guerillas practically impossible. But guerilla activity had increased prior to the Americal landing and the Japanese Army knew that an invasion would soon be at hand. The Americal attack-group churned their way across the Mindanao Sea toward the target area. Following a route to Cebu that Ferdinand Magellan might have taken 424 years before, the Americal moved to take its last major enemy-occupied island in the war.

At 7:30AM on March 26, 1945, ships trained their heavy guns on the Talisay Beach and for one hour tons upon tons of shells bombarded the beach area and inland to destroy mines and break up any enemy emplacements. Then at 8:30AM the first attacking echelons of the Americal rolled up onto the shores of Cebu.

While the Japanese resistance during the first moments of the landing was practically non-existent, unmanned and unprotected enemy defenses offered the first major stumbling block to the troops as they began to move inland. With a suddenness that was both surprising and devastating, ten of the first fifteen LVT's (Landing Vehicle Tanks) were abruptly disabled or destroyed by improvised mines with which the Japanese were found to have filled the beach. The unexpected minefield temporarily stunned the first assault waves and caused a halt to movement inland. A detailed examination would later reveal the beach mines laid by the Japanese were the most elaborate and effective yet encountered in the Philippines.

Once lanes through the mines could be cleared the attacking infantry moved inland. Supplies and support units were quickly offloaded the landing vessels to provide the support the infantry would need on its rapid push to Cebu City. The 182nd and 132nd Regiments found numerous anti-tank ditches, log fences and steel-rail obstacles all erected to stop or delay the movement of track or wheeled vehicles. All roads leading from the beach towards the extremities of Cebu City were mined and the landscape was studded with pillboxes and barricades, yet Japanese resistance was light except for a short battle at Pardo, halfway to Cebu City, which resulted in 88 Japanese killed and 10 taken prisoner. The first day on Cebu cost the Americal 8 killed and 39 wounded, with most of the casualties coming from the mines encountered during the beach assault.

Troops of the 1st and 3rd Battalions, 132nd Infantry rolled into the outskirts of Cebu City on the afternoon of March 27. Before abandoning Cebu City the Japanese destroyed or damaged a number of buildings and homes which had previously been in good condition. Their destruction followed the destruction by the Filipinos prior to the Japs arriving in April 1942 and further damage by allied air strikes against the Japanese in September 1944. There wasn't much of the city left. The 182nd continued its flanking movement west of Cebu City. When the 182nd began to fan out into the high ground northwest of the city limits they encountered strong fire from a number of enemy machine guns and mortars.

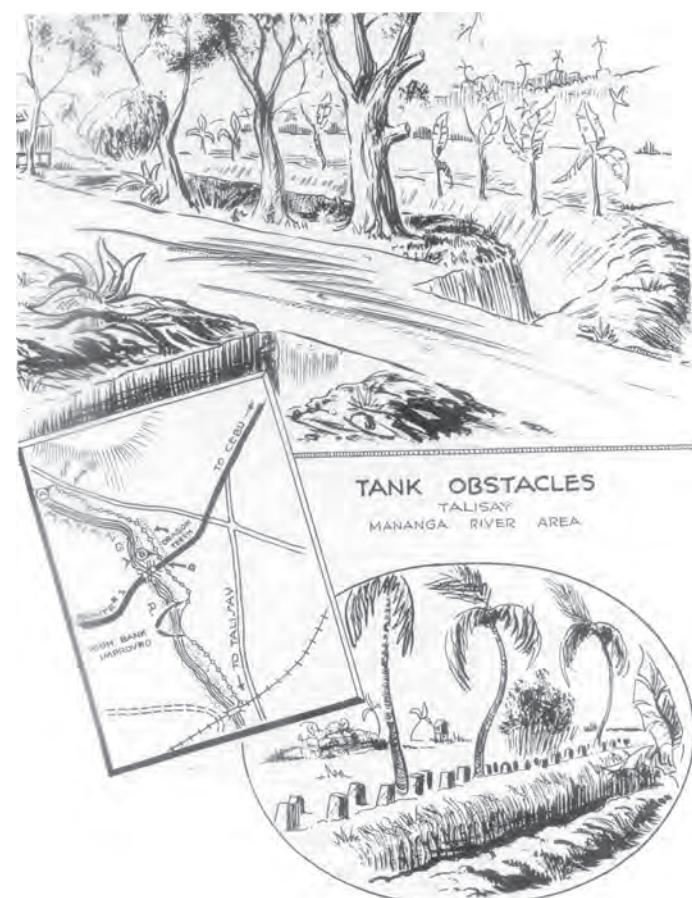
It was apparent to the Bay Staters of the 182nd Regiment, the Japanese occupied strong positions in the hills west and northwest of Cebu City. Hill 30 and Go Chan Hill were approached by the 1st Battalion and taken under heavy enemy fire. After several brutal assaults the enemy defenses were breached. Tanks of the 716th Tank Battalion supported the 3rd Battalion in their movement toward Guadalupe which resulted in more than 30 pill boxes being neutralized. The 2nd Battalion captured Lahug Airfield in the face of heavy plunging fire from enemy positions in the hills to the northwest. It was plain to the Americal's commanders and planners that none of their objectives would remain secure as long as the enemy held the high ground to the west and northwest of Cebu city.

Company G of the 132nd hopped across the bay to Mactan Island and found the island's airfield to be in operational condition. This allowed Army and Navy aircraft to use it in support of the Americal's operations on Cebu, because the Cebu City airport, Lahug, was too insecure due to the enemy mortar fire from the hills above it.



Jap Octagonal Pillbox (57th Engineers Army Document: "Obstacles, Mines & Booby Traps Found on Cebu")

Tank obstacles near Talisay Beach, Cebu (57th Engineers Army Document: "Obstacles, Mines & Booby Traps Found On Cebu")



Go Chan Hill was attacked with the 3rd Battalion of the 182nd carrying out a flanking attack from the northwest while the 1st Battalion, supported by Company B of the 716th Tank Battalion, heading into the "front gate" of the hill. The 3rd Battalion was met by heavy small-arms, machine gun and mortar fire as they followed the general trace of a dirt road that led them to their objective. The road was heavily mined. Likewise the 1st Battalion was met by heavy fire and was forced to halt before their objective, despite tanks in support, due to growing casualties. The decision was made to pull back both attacking battalions and pummel the hill area with artillery and aerial bombardment before renewing the assaults.

Alpha Company of the 1st Battalion had secured a hard-fought position on the eastern spur of Go Chan Hill. Before the general pullback was ordered, the Japanese detonated two large explosions under the feet of A Company's soldiers, from a massive amount of TNT hidden underground and in small caves. The Company was rendered totally ineffective. When the survivors rallied to evacuate their wounded down the hill they came under heavy mortar fire. It remains unclear to today why the Japanese did not counter attack through Company A's lines, which could have caused serious casualties to the rest of the 1st Battalion, but they remained in place. A subsequent examination of the hill spur, which became known as Watt Hill, revealed the explosions were remotely detonated from the main enemy position on Go Chan Hill.

On the morning of March 30 the 182nd launched all-out vengeful attacks, supported by heavy artillery, chemical mortars, flame throwers, tanks, air strikes and 20mm anti-aircraft guns placed in direct fire to the hill. The 1st Battalion pushed back up Go Chan Hill from the front while the regiments 3rd Battalion swung around the hill to pounce on the Japanese from the rear. The hill was captured.

With Cebu City secured, the 3rd and 1st Battalions, 132nd Regiment moved into the interior northwest of the 182nd zone of action to patrol and look for Japanese. Further south of Cebu City, near the beach landing the 2nd Battalion continued to clear areas of the enemy and turn control of key terrain over to Filipino guerillas who were now emerging from years of hiding and evading, to help take control of their island. But in the clearing operation the battalion encountered stiff resistance, and on one day alone, March 29th, they knocked out fifteen enemy pillboxes.

With Go Chan Hill secured it was now felt the core of the Japanese resistance would be located on Babag Ridge, the highest ground in the interior behind Cebu City. The challenge would be great, Babag Ridge consisted of a series of hills, behind which the Japanese could withdraw to another series of hills, Horseshoe Ridge, Coconut Hill, Bolo Ridge, etc.

Up through this strategic terrain, troops of the Americal would now have to grope, climb, struggle and fight if the Japanese on Cebu were to be beaten. The enemy forces had every advantage; positions, observation, prepared fire lanes, large stores of supplies and sufficient manpower. The task ahead looked to be one weighted down with insurmountable obstacles, but all units of the Division waded into it with a grim determination to see it through.

The efforts began on April 1 as the 2nd Battalion, 182nd Infantry moved northwest of Go Chan Hill to strike at Bolo Ridge, which overlooked the small town of Guadalupe. They were supported by tanks from the 716th Tank Battalion, man-carried flamethrowers and lots of guts. The fighting was tenacious and the 1st battalion 132nd came up to relieve the 182nd soldiers once they had established a foothold on the ridge after much fighting. With the help of more tanks, the ridge was finally taken on April 3.

The 3rd Battalion of the 132nd had established positions northeast of the Lahug Airfield but ran into an elaborate set of enemy fortifications and tunnels which had to be "softened up" before a successful assault could be made. On April 3 destroyers in the harbor trained their guns on the enemy emplacements and rained more than a thousand shells into the positions. Damage from the bombardment was reported to be heavy, but the Japanese suffered even more when eighteen B-24 bombers plastered the area with seventy-two tons of bombs. To add to this, eighteen P-38 bomber/fighters dropped thirty-five napalm bombs which placed a pall of smoke over the entire sector. Patrols moving up reported that the few positions which somehow had escaped damage were abandoned.

The following day the entire 182nd Regiment moved out against the Japanese on Horseshoe Ridge. The attack was buttressed with tank-support and the Japanese focused their defensive measures on the potent armor. Individual enemy soldiers, armed with heavy charges of explosives rushed out toward the tanks, bent upon destroying them in simultaneous missions of self-destruction. The enemy completed the self-destruction part of their mission, with the help of the men of the Americal, but no Jap soldier ever reached the tanks.

The fighting for Horseshoe Ridge was furious; on some occasions wounded men gave up their litters to others who were more seriously wounded, and they instead, crawled down the hill to seek medical aid. Before dawn on the second day the Japanese struck hard at the 182nd Infantry's lines on the left and center portions of Horseshoe Ridge. It became apparent that additional help would be needed. Hurried messages to company, battalion and regimental command posts in the rear alerted all personnel. In a matter of minutes clerks, typists and supply sergeants had dressed, snatched up their rifles and were moving forward. Mess sergeants, cooks and KP's turned off the field ranges, dropped pots and pans, grabbed weapons and ammunition and joined the Bay State reinforcements hurrying toward the thunder on Horseshoe Ridge.

The reinforcements helped the regiment to hold the line against the Japanese attacks but it was apparent to the Division Commander, Major General Arnold, that he needed more forces to take the ridge. He radioed the Eighth Army Commander with the request that the Americal's 164th Infantry Regimental Combat Team, now held in Eighth Army reserve, be sent to Cebu and released back to division control. The request was granted.

The 132nd Regiment continued its advance northwest of Cebu City and Lahug Airfield with an objective to take Hill 26. April 7 saw the 3rd Battalion advancing unopposed. Its Company K, out in front, came up against heavy resistance and pulled back to the battalion's main line. Companies I and L pushed forward in their sector, finding numerous

pillboxes, in some of which they found mines wired for remote detonation, similar to what had occurred on Watt Hill a little more than a week before. The closer the battalion approached Hill 26 the stiffer the resistance from the enemy. With the support of three tanks, a pair of 57mm anti-tank guns and a 90mm anti-aircraft gun, the battalion launched an all-out attack at 10:00AM on April 10. After four hours of bitter fighting the Illinois infantrymen overran the last enemy pillbox and reported Hill 26 secure.

The increased movement of the 132nd Regiment was designed to place pressure on the Japanese left flank, which was preoccupied with defending the ridges against assaults from the 182nd Regiment. To the left of the 182nd Regiments' lines, however, enemy strength on Hill 20 presented a serious threat to the safety of future advances. Shortly before dawn on April 8 the 85th Infantry of the Filipino 82nd Division, with Company E of the 182nd in support, attacked Hill 20. Heavy fighting with counterattacks by the Japs ensued, but by 3:30PM on April 9, the Filipino-American attack had taken Hill 20.

Tenacious fighting continued for Horseshoe Ridge. A fierce attack was launched by company A to take Coconut Hill. It reached the crest of the hill but was too worn down to go further. Companies B and C relieved Company A and continued the attack but were met with a murderous barrage of 90mm mortar fire which inflicted many casualties. Nevertheless, the hill was taken at 4:40PM on April 12.

By the evening of April 11 all the 164th Regiment had arrived on Cebu together with their artillery support, the 245th Field Artillery. The 164th 3rd Battalion was left in Cebu City with Battery A, to prepare for another mission. The plan for the rest of the 164th and their supporting units was to make a broad sweep around the Japanese right flank which was to be followed by a strong attack against the rear of the Babag Ridge defenses. Because guerillas of the 82nd Filipino Division now contained the Japanese right flank it was possible for the 164th to move around the flank and up the Mananga River without interference or detection.

The final all-out assault on the Babag Ridge defenses began on the morning of April 12 as the 3rd Battalion, 182nd Infantry, aided by the 2nd Battalions Company G, ground forward to Hill 21. The battalion pounded at the frontal approaches to the hill time and time again during the day, only to be thrown back on each occasion by unbelievably stubborn Japanese resistance. Later in the day the 2nd Battalion of the 132nd moved in to strike from the northeast, but the enemy turned back the flanking attack with heavy losses. By dark the tank-supported attack was halted.

Because the situation required much movement across open terrain during the day, heavy casualties had to be accepted by Company G in the attack as the Japanese swept nearly all approaches to the hill with intense and accurate fire from automatic weapons of all calibers. Evacuation of these casualties across the exposed ground presented a problem that was not easily solved without the utmost in sheer determination and self-sacrifice on the part of many.

After dark, Captain John Murphy, commander of Company G, took the situation in hand. Moving quietly up the hill in the blackness of night, he and his men crept within a few yards of the Japanese positions and lunged forward with a daring night bayonet attack. The attack took the enemy by complete surprise and Company G drove to



Soldiers of the 164th Infantry Regiment wade ashore north of Dumaquete, Negros Island (National Archives)

Troops of E Company, 2nd Battalion, 164th Infantry move into the hills near Dumaquete, Negros (National Archives)

Battery of 155mm Howitzers (245th Field Artillery) fire on Jap positions, Negros Islands (National Archives)



within seventy-five yards of the crest of the hill where, at close to midnight they reorganized to hold their gains. The Japanese countered with a hard counterattack but the tired infantrymen held their positions. At dawn other elements of the 182nd moved up to reinforce and, by 9:00AM the Hill had been cleared by the enemy.

Attacks continued by the Americal's 132nd and 182nd Regiments, against Jap-held positions such as Hills 25 and 22. Each attack was supported by heavy artillery and mortar fire as the infantry took some ground, were counter-attacked, then slowly slogged their way forward to take more ground, yards at a time, in hilly terrain with excellent enemy defensive fields of fire. Finally, on April 18 portions of the 132nd Regiment met elements of the 164th regiment which had come in from the enemy's rear. Scattered fighting ensued which the Filipino guerillas dealt with efficiently. For all practical purposes this terminated active Americal operations in the Babag Ridge area. The 164th would subsequently be sent back to Leyte after missions on Bohol and Negros to be once again, under control of the Eight Army.

Bohol & Negros Oriental

When the heavy fighting on Babag Ridge was underway the 3rd Battalion of the 164th situated in Cebu City and reinforced with an artillery battery and Filipino guerillas, landed on Bohol Island, southeast of Cebu City across the Bohol Strait. The battalion landed and secured Tagbilaran on the southwest corner of the island, then split into two groups to search for the Japanese, with simultaneous drives to the east and northeast.

The enemy on Bohol was composed of the 2nd Company, 174th Independent Infantry Battalion, estimated at 158 officers and men. An additional Visayan Military Police Unit, composed of Filipino's who chose to collaborate with the Japanese, raised the enemy strength to approximately 300. Filipino guerillas on Bohol were active with small ambushes and intelligence-gathering activities.

The 164th 3rd Battalion linked up with the Filipino guerillas after landing in Tagbilaran with no enemy resistance. The patrols began moving inland but, in the first few days yielded no enemy contact. On April 15 a Japanese force of undetermined strength was located near the barrio of Ginopolan, six miles above the southern coast. Companies K and L, supported by artillery fire attacked the Jap positions. Heavy fighting, including Jap counterattacks ensued and the 3rd Battalion's Company I was added to the fray. On April 20 the Japanese pulled back, leaving twenty-six of their dead and, no doubt, taking many wounded with them. Two days later Company K ran into more enemy positions near Nonand and more fighting erupted. Despite the strong enemy resistance, the 164th, with artillery and mortar support forced another Japanese withdrawal, this time the enemy left seventeen dead behind.

Filipino guerillas scoured the island, finding small patches of enemy soldiers, disorganized and in disarray, with which the Filipino forces could easily deal. Realizing that Bohol was secure for all intents and purposes, General Arnold withdrew the 3rd Battalion to Cebu, leaving only Company I to support the guerillas and garrison the island.

There still remained the task of securing the province of Negros Oriental to the west of Cebu Island, across the Tanon Strait. On April 26 the 1st Battalion, 164th landed near Looc, six miles northwest of the capital city of Dumaguete, and began to march down the main highway, across the airfield and into the city. The 2nd Battalion came ashore shortly later and initiated a drive to the southwest across the Ocoy River Valley to Candaway in an attempt to cut off any Japanese retreat from Dumaguete. As they did on Bohol, the North Dakotans linked up with Filipino guerilla forces which would serve to block or delay Japanese movements.

The Japanese force opposing the 164th soldiers was estimated to be approximately 800 around Dumaguete with smaller groups of enemy soldiers inland. Aware that the Philippine Islands were all but lost, the Japanese commander ordered that Jap defenses be prepared in the foothills of the 6,000 foot-high Cuernos de Negros, which was forbidding mountainous terrain.

When the 1st Battalion reached Dumaguete they found poorly camouflaged mines at the airfield but continued on into the city, being very cautious about mines and booby-traps. The retreating Japanese attempted to set the city on fire but were largely unsuccessful in their haste to leave the city. Filipino citizens had abandoned the city for fear they would see their houses go up in flames but quickly returned when the 164th arrived. The city was quickly established as the base of operations for the 164th and Battery B, 245th Artillery was positioned on the grounds of the local university.

The 164th 2nd Battalion swung inland upon landing at Looc, passing through the tiny Barrio of San Antonio then moving south over open country. Road blocks were set up on interior dirt roads to prevent the withdrawal of Jap forces on trucks. On April 27 the 2nd Battalion turned west from Palimpinon to the hills beyond. They encountered Japanese trucks carrying small groups of soldiers to the interior. They were promptly eliminated. Once the 164th soldiers reached the interior hills, more enemy contacts were made.

The 164th 1st Battalion in Dumaguete found large stores of abandoned Japanese supplies but no soldiers. It was clear the Japanese had fled to the rugged terrain in the interior, an area that even the natives of the island had shunned. The 1st Battalion joined up with the 2nd Battalion to form a two battalion front, with the 1st attacking west and the 2nd to the southwest.

In the meantime, another battery of 105mm Howitzers and a battery of 155mm Howitzers offloaded on the docks of Dumaguete to prepare to support the fighting that would come. Nowhere would the enemy have more of an advantage than in the rugged interior of southeast Negros. Heavily eroded terrain, deep gullies and narrow ridges gave the enemy ample opportunity to delay the 164th advance by sparingly employing small groups of soldiers in positions dominating the terrain below. A mere handful of men could, and sometimes did, halt the advance of an entire battalion.

The actions by Company E on May 1 were indicative of the fighting experienced. The company, supported by Company G, secured the first main ridgeline in the Cueros de Negros foothills. After taking the objective against moderate resistance, the company was subjected to fifteen Japanese counterattacks but it held its positions. Twenty-nine dead Japanese were found nearby.

The 164th regimental command shifted some of its rifle companies to be trucked back to Dumaguete, up to Looc and then west to Malabo, which was now controlled by Filipino guerillas, to sweep south behind the Japanese main area of resistance. The rifle companies were each supported by heavy machine guns, Filipino guerillas and native porters.

The fighting between the 164th and the Japanese on Negros could be characterized as a boxing match, with the 164th infantry units constantly landing blows, and their opponent constantly breaking contact, then the 164th shifting positions to come at them from another direction.

The stubborn Jap defenses were also hit with air strikes on May 7 by a dozen P-38's. Attacks and counterattacks continued with no quarter given to either side. For example, over a period of three successive nights Company F ably turned back no less than twelve strong thrusts against its night perimeter. By the morning of the third day, fifty-seven Japanese had been slain.

The enemy, realizing that the North Dakotans could not be stopped, chose to move deeper into the interior, carefully withdrawing its forces in stages, but the 164th, like the infantry professionals they had become, doggedly kept pressuring the enemy. The regiment's artillery fire never let up. More air strikes were used on May 23, with napalm fire bombs falling on enemy positions and avenues of escape.

As a result of this sustained drive the enemy strength was almost entirely spent. Enemy resources and supplies were all but gone. The only option left for the enemy was to move further West into the unexplored interior, where death from disease and starvation awaited them. The regiment carefully looked at the enemy's options, and, in concurrence with Brigadier General Ridings, the Americal Assistant Division Commander, sent some units on a ship-to-shore movement to the west coast to block any Japs coming out of the interior, if they survived the overland trek. Other units were sent to the south coast where reports indicated some Japanese were headed. Still other 164th units were sent to Dumaguete to rest and refit. Days later after sporadic enemy contact, reconnaissance indicated the Japanese had again established positions on the eastern ridges of the Cueros de Negros. The artillery had previously fired many rounds in that area and therefore were ready; they fired a devastating artillery barrage after which Companies A, F and G moved in to mop up the last Japanese in the area.

By June 19 it was over for the enemy in Southern Negros Oriental. The remaining enemy were scattered so much they were difficult to find. The Army's 507th Parachute Infantry Regimental Combat Team, which had operated in Northern Negros, relieved the 164th to take control of the entire island, in conjunction with Filipino guerillas. During the 164th Regiments' sixty-day operation in Southern Negros, 527 Japanese were killed and seventeen captured.

Final Acts

The question now arose in the minds of the Americal Division Staff on Cebu as to what happened to the bulk of the 7,500 Japanese once known to have manned the Babag Ridge defenses on Cebu. Because the southern flank had long since been contained, it seemed certain, and reports bore it out, that the enemy had moved north. Plans were quickly put into place for a chase to pursue the enemy.



1LT Phillip Archer and 2LT Alven Connell, both of the 132nd Infantry Regiment examine one of 3,000 jap rifles found in the Yokohama area (National Archives)

Americal military policeman PFC Louis Leindecker directs traffic with the aid of Japanese police at Hachioj, Japan (National Archives)



As the enemy fled north on the island they moved into the area dotted by many small towns or "Barrios". Civilians found along the Japanese route of retreat going north pointed out that the now-disorganized Japanese were resorting to horrendous atrocities against the population as they fled from U.S. forces. Angered by these reports General Arnold, the Americal's commander, ordered a leaflet printed in Japanese to be dropped on enemy troop concentrations by pilots in the Artillery's L-4 light aircraft. It was brief, forceful and to the point, noting among other things, "Individuals and unit commanders of those responsible will be punished for these crimes...you have sunk so low as to disgrace the name of Japan forever...no inglorious suicide on your part can erase what you have done."

In an effort to seal off the western coast of Cebu and halt any Japanese evacuation attempts, The 182nd was trucked to Tabuelan, thirty-six miles due north of Cebu City, where they made contact with guerilla troops of the Filipino 88th Infantry. The regiment fanned out on many patrols, encountering only scattered resistance. The 132nd Regiment likewise pushed up the east coast from Cebu City to roll up any Jap resistance it encountered. The Filipino guerillas, loosely organized before the Americal's invasion of Cebu, were now more tightly organized, better led and equipped, and increasingly took up the fight against small groups of Japanese, with the advantages of fighting on native soil and receiving intelligence reports from villagers in their native language.

On May 30 final assault movements were made by the 182nd and 132nd Regiments in their sectors, with a push inland on multiple fronts to route out identified enemy positions of any consequence. The Filipino guerillas were used in blocking positions to hit retreating Japanese, as well as operated with the Americal in assault operations and to provide a reserve force as well. The first week saw countless encounters with the enemy, supported by small-arms and machine gun fire, but each time the enemy's fire was responded to by heavy concentrations of artillery and small arms fire followed by determined attacks of the Americal. By June 15 it was largely done and the Americal began withdrawing to the east coast near Cebu City with the various units of the Filipino 82nd Guerilla Division consolidating control of the Jap areas. The division established its headquarters in Carmen, twenty-one miles northeast of Cebu City and took over the task of garrisoning and patrolling the greater part of the island.

The 164th Regiment was subsequently relieved from 8th Army Control and was sent back to Cebu to be with the rest of the division, the first time the division had been consolidated since it left Bougainville. Because of the widespread nature of the division's operations on Cebu and the dispersion of the Americal's forces, followed by consolidation and soon, training for their next mission, a summation of the total Japanese casualties on Cebu could not be completed. Estimates indicated that approximately nine thousand Japanese had been killed on Cebu in the ninety-seven-day campaign of the division. The Americal's own casualties ran over two thousand killed and wounded.

Between June 30 and July 23, the life of the Americal Division was centered on amphibious landing exercises. They were conducted by each regiment. Between June 30 and July 7 the 132nd Illinois regiment was put through its paces; the 182nd Regimental Combat Team trained in amphibious operations between July 10 and July 15; the 164th received

its training from July 16 to July 23. The units, when not receiving the amphibious landing training, were engrossed in care and maintenance of equipment, guard duty, close order drill, organized athletics and some recreational time. It was during this period that the division received its congratulations from General Douglas MacArthur for its roll in the Visayan (Southern Philippines) campaign, which noted in part: "...my heartiest commendation for the brilliant execution of the Visayan campaign. This is a model of what a light but aggressive command can accomplish in rapid exploitation."

After the amphibious training was completed the division began an intense period of training ashore. There was no doubt in anyone's mind where the next objective would be, Japan itself. In Mid-February when the Americal was on Leyte the U.S. Marines established a toe-hold on tiny Iwo Jima, only 775 miles from Honshu, Japan's principal home-island. Later the following month the Marines established a beachhead on Okinawa, in some of the bloodiest fighting in the Pacific Theatre during the war. Okinawa was less than 500 miles from Japan's southernmost island. The aerial bombing of Japan was intensified which included horrendous fire-bombing tactics which burned whole cities where Japan's war factories were located. The Americal's training was intensified; the earlier 15-hour training weeks had given way to 24-hour training weeks. In early August a 39-hour training week was begun which included specialized courses about Japan, such as "Japan Plots to Conquer" and "How to Stay Alive in Japan."

Unknown to the Americal's soldiers the planning for the invasion of Japan was well underway at General MacArthur's headquarters in the newly-liberated city of Manila, the Philippines. Under "Operation Olympic", the invasion of the Japanese homeland was to begin in the fall and the first phase was to seize and secure beachheads on Kyushu, the southernmost of the Japanese home islands. Under this scheme, General Walter Krueger's Six Army, consisting of the I, IX, and XI Corps along with the V Marine Amphibious Corps would attack Kyushu. The IX Corps would feint to Shikoku, the island to the north of Kyushu and then remain in reserve. The XI Corps would consist of the 43rd Infantry Division, 1st Cavalry Division and the Americal Division which would make one of the two main assaults on Kyushu. Thus the Americal was destined to be in the thick of the opening phase of the invasion of Japan.

On the morning of August 6, 1945 a lone B-29 bomber, the Enola Gay soared in over the city of Hiroshima on southeastern Honshu, and dropped the first atomic bomb ever detonated in combat. Before the Japanese could make a clear estimate of the staggering toll of casualties and of the overwhelming extent of the damage, the second atomic bomb was dropped three days later. The city of Nagasaki, on western Kyushu was practically obliterated by the blast.

Guarded press releases appearing in the Americal Division news sheet on the morning of August 7 told of the devastation wrought on Hiroshima by one bomb, described as being equal to destructive power of twenty thousand tons of TNT. It was hard for the soldiers to come to grips with what the destructive power of such a bomb really meant. Finally, on August 14 the news was released to the world that Japan was willing to surrender. The Americal's pre-invasion bivouacs in Liloan on Cebu turned into bedlam of joy. Guarding against a let-down, the

Sixth Army under which the Americal still served ordered continued intensive training until the surrender was made official on August 15. General Arnold, still commanding the Americal, flew to XI Corps headquarters where he was told, if the surrender held, the Americal would be part of the occupying forces on Japan.

The divisions task then centered on somehow notifying the remaining Japanese on Cebu that the war was over. This was not an easy task as the enemy forces had little or no means of communications. American/Filipino offensive operations were halted but cautious patrols continued to guard against small attacks from Japanese looking for food. The division dropped leaflets over areas known to harbor Japanese soldiers as well as posted the same leaflets on trees and at road crossings throughout the area.

After several contacts which included sending a Japanese officer to the Americal's headquarters to listen to surrender broadcasts from Tokyo, Lieutenant General Sadashi Kataoka, Commander of the Northern Cebu Forces, surrendered. Two other groups located on northern Cebu, independent of Kataoka's command, were eventually contacted and they too surrendered. Across the island other, smaller groups also drifted in. By the end of August, more than 9,800 Japanese surrendered, far in excess of U.S. estimates of the enemy strength left on the island. The U.S. 77th Army Infantry Division, hardened with combat experience on Leyte and Okinawa, took over the task of controlling the remainder of the Japanese coming in from the hills. The Americal began departing Cebu City on ships destined for Japan on August 30. Their shooting war was now over.

Japan Occupation

During the formal Japanese surrender on September 2nd onboard the decks of the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, the Americal was on the high seas headed for occupation duty in Japan. At dawn on September 8th the USS Harris with the Americal's staff on board, dropped anchor in Yokohama Bay. By September 10th all units of the division had moved from their ships to their assigned assembly areas in and around the Yokohama area.

In general, Allied occupation policy in Japan had three principal objectives. First, Japanese militarism and military nationalism were to be abolished. Second, liberal social and government tendencies were to be encouraged. And last, conditions were to be created which would insure that Japan could never again become a menace to the peace of the world.

The Americal Division's occupation responsibilities had a threefold mission: (1) to make a reconnaissance of all Japanese military and industrial installations within assigned zones; (2) to guard each installation to assure fulfillment of the surrender terms; and (3) to carry out such orders as the commanding general of XI Corps might require.

Control of the Yokohama area itself, minus the dock area, fell to the Americal divisions artillery units. Moving west and northwest from Yokohama the three infantry regiments occupied sectors which, in some instances corresponded with those of the units of the 11th Airborne and 27th Infantry Divisions. In the north the 164th Regiment moved into an area west of Tokyo; just to the south of Yokohama the 182nd occupied a sector west of the Division Artillery, one which widely surrounded the Division command post at Fuchinobe Station. Farther to the south the 132nd Infantry

took over a sector which bordered in Sagami Bay and which extended for more than fifteen miles along the beach. Over a period of two weeks, however, the regimental sectors were enlarged, extended and adjusted, allowing the Americal to relieve the 11th Airborne and 27th Infantry Divisions.

The Americal Division's area of responsibility now encompassed more than 1,650 square miles of land but it was also ordered to begin a careful reconnaissance of Yamanishi Prefecture to the west, another 1,500 square miles of land, which fell under division control. Occupation duty for the Americal was marked by long hours of work, and constant changes in tasks to be accomplished from Eight Army Headquarters as the occupation forces attempted to demilitarize Japan while attending to cultural sensitivities. The Division's Nisei interpreters were stretched to the limits by working on a load of classified documents that had to be translated. To help the division's many patrols search areas for industrial plants and military posts, over 50 Japanese natives were hired as interpreters for the division. Among the targeted locations were anti-aircraft sites, depots and supply dumps.

By the morning of October 1st, 460 Japanese installations had been located and searched, classified as follows

Aircraft plants	69	Oil refineries	10	Hospitals	14
Arsenals	5	Metal working plants	3	Prisons	3
Iron and steel plants	20	Building material plants	16	Battery factories	8
Munitions plants	5	Transport facilities	1	Drum/can plants	8
Ordnance shops	18	Photographic plants	15	Airfields	15
Chemical plants	19	Signal installations	32	Gun emplacements	16
Automotive factories	18	Electrical installations	30	Army departments	4
Tank parks	4	Machinery factories	30	Depots/dumps	86
Military camps	18	Machine factories	19	Warehouses	20
Navy installations	14	Machine shops	16	Misc. installations	42
Shipyards	10	Laboratories	14		
Rubber-processing plants	6	Schools	56		

By October 25th the 1st Cavalry Division was set to begin the progressive relief of the Americal Division with the Eight Army issuing a Movement Order that the Americal was to prepare for shipment to the United States "on or about November 1" By the evening of November 3 the first movement orders came. The transport "Sea Witch" was tied up in Yokohama harbor ready for the first echelon of the Americal to return home to America, with destination the Seattle Port of Embarkation, and then, for the divisions staff, to Fort Lewis to inactivate the division. By November 17 after the USS Admiral Coontz had sailed, approximately half of the Americal's troops were clear of Japan. By the end of November, the last of the units of the Americal had moved out of Tokyo Bay en route to Seattle. For the men of the Americal Division their life overseas was now completed.

With mere slips of paper, the stateside staff of paper-pushers began to accomplish what the Japanese had not been able to do on Guadalcanal, Bougainville or in the Philippines; without offering the slightest resistance, the Americal Division was being written out of existence.

Finally, in accordance with special orders issued through the Seattle Port of Embarkation at one minute before midnight, on December 12, 1945, the last units of the Americal Division were retired to the list of inactive WWII United States Army units. The Americal passed into history quietly and without ceremony. By Christmas Day 1945 – the first peacetime Christmas in five years – service in the Americal became a memory in the minds and hearts of over forty thousand men who served in its ranks in World War II.

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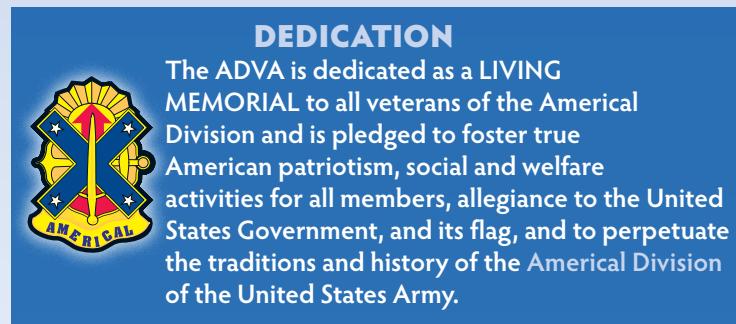
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