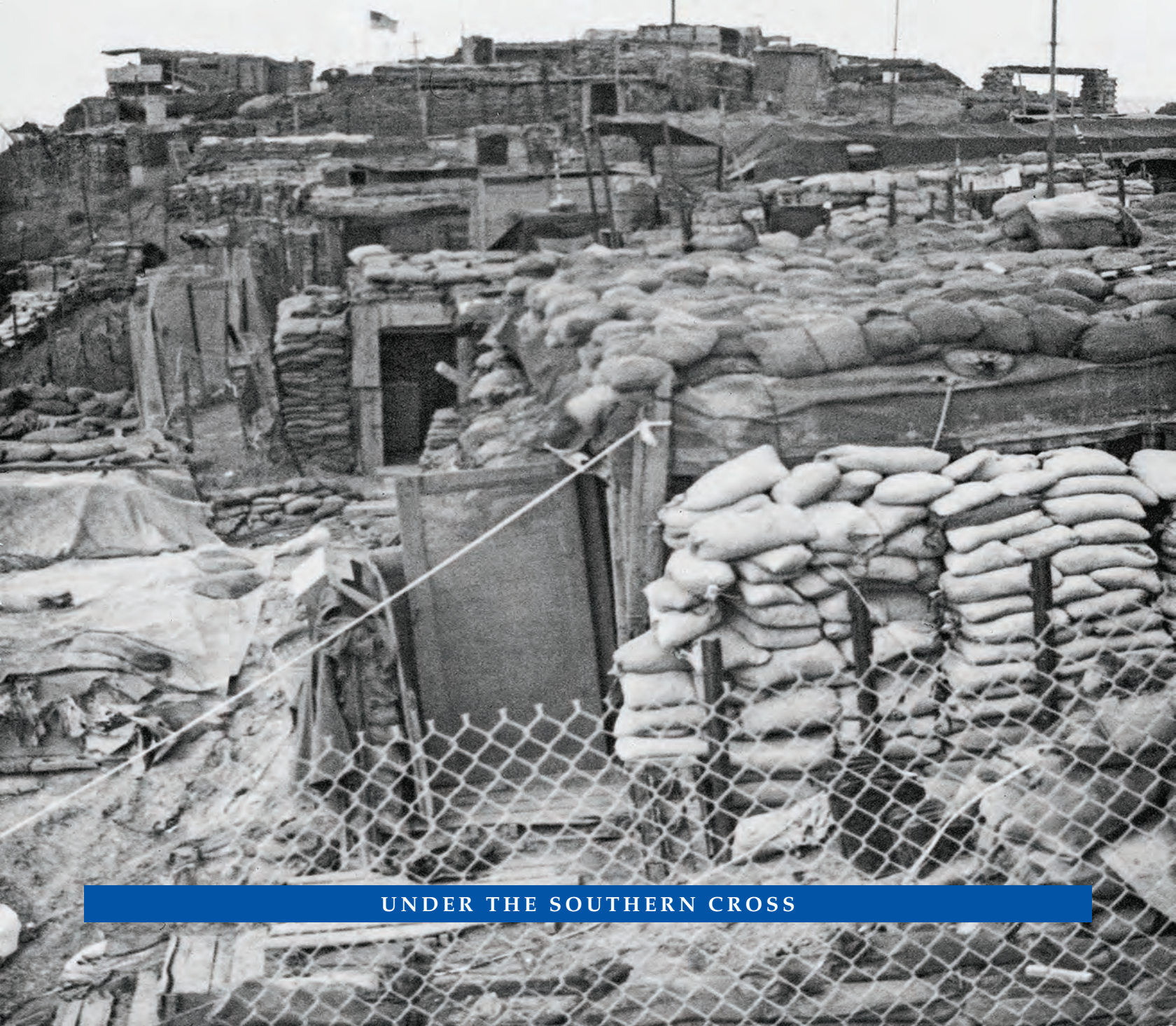




January • February • March *2015*

AMERICAL JOURNAL

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



UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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Editor's Comments

By Gary L. Noller

In late March 2015 a group of ADVA members will travel to Cebu, Philippines to retrace the steps of the Americal Division in the closing months of World War II. The Americal Division initiated action on Cebu with an amphibious landing on March 26, 1945 and were there to accept the Japanese surrender six months later.

Our plans include attending a 70th anniversary re-enactment of the landing at Talisay Beach. Following that, the Americal Legacy Foundation will dedicate a monument at the location of the Japanese surrender to Americal Division forces on Cebu.

As I told family and friends of this trip two questions always came up. The first, "Where is Cebu?", is easy to answer. It is one of the Philippine islands. The second, "Why are you going there?", requires a bit of an explanation.

In about 1987 I had the good fortune to be invited by a World War II veteran to join the Americal Division Veterans Association. A couple of years later I attended my first ADVA reunion and have not missed one since. As a result of ADVA membership and reunion attendance a benefit I have is the friendship that I enjoy with many WWII Americal veterans.

I have heard their stories from the beginning to the end. Some of them joined their home-state National Guard units in the late 1930s to make a couple of extra dollars a month. After the division formed at New Caledonia it served at many locations across the South Pacific. It was near the end of the war that the Americal Division, without an initial landing by the Marines, liberated the island of Cebu. The last assignment of the division was the occupation of Japan.

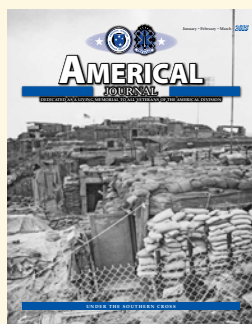
One of the first WWII veterans that befriended me was Joe Feeler. He and his wife Esther lived in Albuquerque when I moved there in 1993. Joe and Esther led the Far West Chapter and actively recruited new members. When I called them to talk about my relocation to Albuquerque they invited me to join them for lunch. I accepted their generosity and met two of the finest people I could wish to meet.



Left to Right- Joe Feeler; Japanese girl, daughter of the photographer; Richard Spickler. Taken at Itsukaichi Police Station while Joe was on M.P. duty, October 6, 1945.

In 1993 there were still some chilly feelings between some World War II veterans and Vietnam War veterans. But this was not the case with Joe and Esther. They made it quite clear that Vietnam veterans served as competently and proudly as World War II veterans. Esther affectionately referred to us younger veterans as "The Vietnam Boys." Associating with Joe and Esther and a handful of other like-minded World War II couples did wonders to my integration into the brotherhood of veterans.


I certainly will not be able to retrace the entire route of the Americal Division in World War II. But the opportunity to see where the Americal ended its combat activity is too good to pass up. It is, I think, an acknowledgment of the respect I have for my World War II Americal buddies- and especially those who welcomed me into the ADVA. They were a good example to follow.



Cover: Home On the Hill:

LZ Center

Photography by Robert A. Spangler
courtesy of R.W. Norton Art Foundation



AMERICAL

JOURNAL

The Americal Journal is the official publication of the Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA). It is published each calendar quarter.

- Editor-In-Chief: Gary L. Noller
- Contributing Editor: David W. Taylor
- Creative Director: Lisa Anderson

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Adjutant's Notes

By Roger Gilmore

First, let me begin with a Happy New Year wish to all ADVA members. I sincerely hope each of you began the new year healthy and with hopes for an ever better year in 2015.

We had very disappointing results in terms of new member additions to the ADVA roster for this reporting period. We added only fourteen new members during the quarter. Last reporting period's new member counts were significantly bolstered by the new members signed up at the ADVA annual reunion in Houston, Texas. The trend of getting new members by word of mouth or Americal Division veterans finding the membership application on the web site continues a slowing trend from last quarter when we added only fourteen new members, excluding the new member sign ups at the reunion.

Members David Eichhorn, Pete Davenport, John Ewing, Joseph Fridley, PNC Jay Flanagan and PNC David W. Taylor sponsored Americal Division veterans for ADVA membership this reporting period. We had one Americal Division veteran very familiar to all NFL fans join the association this period. Mr. Rocky Bleier, who played for the Pittsburgh Steelers for 11 years and was a four time Super Bowl champion, joined our ranks. Mr. Bleier was sponsored by David Eichhorn. PNC Taylor sponsored Mr. Clarence Schreiber, a World War II Americal Division veteran who served with the 182nd Infantry Regiment. We have not had a WWII veteran join in some time, and we are honored to have another of the Old Guard join the association.

The count of new life members added to the ADVA roster is significantly down for this reporting period. We added only thirteen new life members; three Americal Division veterans joined the ADVA as life members and ten annual pay members upgraded to life member status. Nine former members mailed in dues payments for reinstatement to the association during this reporting period.

It is encouraging to see former members reinstate their ADVA membership. I think this shows former members see the value of an ADVA membership. I encourage each annual pay member to keep their dues current and not let their membership lapse. By keeping your membership current, you do not miss any issues of this excellent publication, and your continued membership keeps your children and grandchildren eligible for the Americal Legacy Foundation Scholarship program.

We attempt to keep annual pay members informed when their dues payment has not been received and is past due. All dues payments are payable in the month of renewal. Annual pay renewal dates are January, May and September each year. Assistant National Adjutant Rich Heroux keeps a copy of the most current ADVA roster, and regularly mails post cards to members who show to be past due for renewal. Sometimes, our records are incorrect. If you receive a dues reminder post card and feel it is incorrect, please contact me so I can check the payment records.

In the Taps section of this issue appears the name of Associate Member Francis X. Bradley. Mr. Bradley was a 4th Infantry Division veteran and former editor of the Ivy Leaves, the 4th Infantry Division Association newsletter. I know we have some Americal Division veterans who served with the 4th in Vietnam, and may receive this newsletter in addition to the Americal Journal.

Please remember to send me your address change if you move, or notify me of a member's (or Americal Division veteran) death. My contact information is listed in the directory section of this issue. Any written correspondence regarding address changes, membership status or death of a member or Americal Division veteran should be addressed to the post office box in Richardson, Texas. That address is listed on the back cover. You can also fax me your address change or any other membership changes to this telephone number: 972-412-0089.

Corrections

Thomas M. Allen
A/1/46th Inf Rgmt
Mt. Pleasant, IA

New Members

Brian P. Alexander
635th MI Co
Reno, NV
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Rocky Bleier
C/4/31st Inf Rgmt
Pittsburg, PA
★ David Eichhorn

Milt Harden
D/1/20th Inf Rgmt
Vancouver, WA
★ John Ewing

C. Michael Hartjes
5/46th Inf Rgmt
Wausau, WI
★ Pete Davenport

Carl D. Howell
723rd Maint Bn Co E
Pearisburg, VA
★ Self

Mark Hyman
3/16th Arty
New York, NY
★ Self

William P. Martin
3/16th Arty
Talbott, TN
★ Self

Clarence E. Schreiber
182nd Inf Rgmt Co C
Wauwatosa, WI
★ PNC David W. Taylor

Julius C. Torrentt
3/1st Inf Rgmt
Brookfield, IL
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Keith Whigham
No Unit Given
Greensboro, NC
★ Self

New Paid Life Members

Allen E. Merrill
3/16th Arty
Gettysburg, SD
★ Self

Donald H. Sylvester
1/14th Arty
Everett, PA
★ Joseph Fridley

Roger Wampler
26th Cmbt Engrs Co B
St. Louis, MO
★ PNC Jay Flanagan

William R. Bevins
A/1/52nd Inf Rgmt
North Ridgeville, OH
★ PNC David W. Taylor

John J. Bezuyen
A/4/31st Inf Rgmt
Campbell Hall, KY
★ Sam Mazzola

A. Preston Cameron
6th Spt Bn Co B
Riverview, FL
★ Self

William S. Hacker
D/2/1st Inf Rgmt
Meridan, CT
★ Bernie Chase

William J. Heddlestone
1st/1st Armd Cav
Dover, OH
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Patrick A. McCracken
16th Avn Grp
Memphis, TN
★ Self

Carl E. Midkiff
TF Oregon – 101st Abn
Radcliff, KY
★ William Walker

Warren R. Neill, Jr.
C/3/21st Inf Rgmt
Cicero, IL
★ PNC Rollie Castronova

Jack J. Reid
A/1/46th Inf Rgmt
Arlinton, VA
★ PNC Dutch DeGroot

Robert (Sam) Wetzel
HHC/4/31st Inf Rgmt
Columbus, GA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Re-instated Members

Clyde E. Arnold
D/4/3rd Inf Rgmt
Iuka, IL
★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Frank A. Burnett
1st/1st Armd Cav A Trp
Metairie, LA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Robert J. Drew
TF Oregon 723rd Maint Bn
Barrington, NH
★ John Sikorsej

James G. Fuller
5/46th Inf Rgmt
Roseburg, OR
★ W.E. Smith

Luther Helms
HHC/1/6th Inf Rgmt
Pineville, NC
★ Tom Packard

Ronald Hettinger
A/1/6th Inf Rgmt
Canaan, VT
★ Self

Joseph Jackson
182nd Inf Rgmt Co C
Swartz Creek, MI
★ PNC David W. Taylor

William R. McRae
132nd ASHC
Marietta, GA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Alan R. Wilkins
E/3/1st Inf Rgmt
Beverly, MA
★ PNC Rollie Castronova

New Associate Members

Tina Williams
Greenfield, TN
★ Self

TAPS

World War II Veterans

Lewis W. Bradshaw *
182nd Inf Rgmt
Caliente, NV
October 6, 2013

Jim Medling *
132nd Inf Rgmt Co H
Greenfield, TN
August 2013

Claude E. Morris, Jr. *
132 Infantry A-T
Jacksonville, FL
July 9, 2014

Max E. Reynolds
246th FA Btry C
Melbourne, FL
December 11, 2013

William Sacadat *
132nd Inf Rgmt
Fort Ashby, WV
September 17, 2014

Joe M. Sanchez *
182nd Inf Rgmt HHC
Victorville, CA
November 4, 2014

Vietnam Veterans

David M. Bradley *
1st/1st Armd Cav
Westerville, OH
Date Unknown

William E. Crank
17th Cav F Trp
Richmond, VA
November 30, 2014

Fred E. Darling *
Americal Div HDQ
Fairfax, VA
December 21, 2014

James C. Hagan
E/1/46th Inf Rgmt
Oklahoma City, OK
December 20, 2014

Kenneth J. Herrmann, Jr. *
HHC/4/31st Inf Rgmt
E Pembroke, NY
November 2, 2014

Wilbert Leger
17th Cav F Trp
Gillis, LA
December 30, 2014

Thomas J. Lynch *
D/4/31st Inf Rgmt
Hingham, MA
April 11, 1995

Michael J. Martin *
4/3rd Inf Rgmt
Joelton, TN
December 2, 2014

Danny Richards *
123rd Avn Bn Co B
Bacliff, TX
December 2013

Bill Robinson *
D/4/31st Inf Rgmt
Saugerties, NY
November 2007

Dennis Wiess
1/52nd Inf Rgmt
Buffalo, NY
July 24, 2014

Associate Members

Francis X. Bradley
4th Inf Div
Medford, MA
January 24, 2014

*ADVA Member

Tribute to a Warlord By Les Hines

Ralph Burchfield served as a Pelican/Warlord crewchief from February 1968 – April 1970. We had gone through sister classes at Ft. Rucker and arrived in-country at the same time. He had flown a little with A/123rd Avn. Bn. before settling down with the Warlords (B/123rd Avn. Bn.). He had been shot down 5 – 6 times and escaped and evaded out each time. I think some of these had been missions on the old OH-23G. He once saved an injured Warlord from one of these shoot downs by carrying him out on foot.

Ralph was in a Denver motorcycle gang before he came into the Army. I recall that the accepted rumor was that he was caught rolling drunks off base at Fort Rucker. Appropriate extra-curricular activity for a future Warlord?

He was definitely in the thick of action in 1968 – 69 for the Warlords with Dennis Chapin and John Christine. I haven't been in touch with Ralph for a number of years. My last known address for Ralph had been Pensacola, FL. He passed away on January 20, 2015.

ADVA MEMBERSHIP 31 January 2015

World War II	409
Vietnam	2,485
Cold War	8
Associate Members:	213
Total Members	3,115

Americal Legacy Foundation Report

By Roger Gilmore, Chairman Board of Directors

Americal Legacy Foundation News

Americal Legacy Foundation director David Taylor is currently working with a website designer on the foundation's website. The website is intended to convey our mission and goals to ADVA members and other parties interested in supporting foundation initiatives.

Features planned for the website include enhanced access capability using mobile devices such as Bluetooth and a link to a store for purchasing Americal Legacy themed items such as books and memorabilia. The website will have the capability to accept donations by credit card or check. More about the Americal Legacy Foundation website is planned for future issues of the Americal Journal.



Americal Legacy Foundation 2015 Calendar

The 2015 edition of the Americal Legacy calendar was mailed to all ADVA members of record in November 2014. This edition is another high quality production prepared by ADVA member and PNC Dutch DeGroot. This is Dutch's last issue of the calendar as he has opted to discontinue his design and layout duties for Americal related projects. The Americal Legacy Foundation truly appreciates Dutch's contributions to its mission over the past six years.

ADVA member response to the calendar by way of donations has been tremendous. As of the end of January, the foundation bank deposits

amount to about \$15,000.00 for this calendar issue. The foundation deeply appreciates this tremendous support, all of which will be directed to future monument projects.

If you have not mailed your donation yet please use the pre-addressed envelope included with your calendar to make your donation. Checks or money orders should be made payable to Americal Legacy Foundation. If you do not have the envelope available, mail your donation to: Mr. Gary L. Noller; P.O. Box 1268; Center Point, TX 78010.

Americal Monument at Fort Sill, Oklahoma

The Fort Sill Americal artillery monument, as of the writing of this article, is still awaiting approval at various levels of management and command at the post. To use a legislative term, the project is "stuck in committee".

In mid 2014, following the approval by the Fort Sill Memorialization Board, it was our understanding the next approval level was by the Fort Sill Department of Public Works and Master Planning Department. Our construction plans were submitted to these departments in early October. The engineer review of the monument site is complete. We later learned a post work authorization form is required before the DPW approves the project. This form cannot be completed by the submitting organization, but must be submitted by a unit on post.

David Laukat, ADVA member and artillery monument consultant, is working with the 1/14th Artillery CSM at Fort Sill to get the required authorization form prepared for submission to the post DPW. The 1/14th CSM was prepared to submit the form by the end of January to the DPW. The next step in the process will be a meeting with DPW for a review of the request form and expected approval of the Americal artillery monument.

Our letter to the Fort Sill Post Commanding General gifting the monument to the post is ready to be mailed once we get approval from the Fort Sill DPW. The monument gifting must be approved by both the post commanding general and the Department of the Army before any work can commence on the monument.

Americal Division Monument Joint Ventures

The Americal Legacy Foundation plans to continue the tradition of the ADVA Legacy Committee with a commitment to work with ADVA members and Americal Division veterans on monument projects in local communities that honor the Americal Division legacy. These types of projects can be done in veterans' cemeteries and local city/county parks that honor veterans and their military service.

Our focus over the next five to ten years will be to collaborate with any ADVA member who wants to initiate such a monument project. The foundation will help develop the design and work with planners on a funding plan. The Americal Legacy Foundation will participate, on a cost-sharing basis, by means of a grant for the monument construction and placement costs. Grant dollar amounts will be agreed on before a project commences by a memorandum of agreement.

A past example of this type of project and collaborative effort is the Americal Division monument at the Kentucky State Veterans Cemetery near Radcliffe, Kentucky. Americal Division veteran and ADVA member William Walker initiated the project. Walker came to the ADVA Legacy Committee for design consultation and funding assistance. With funding assistance from the ADVA Legacy Committee, this project was completed in late 2011.

Please contact one of the Americal Legacy Foundation directors listed in this issue's directory for more information on ALF's monument planning and funding process, or a project you would like to initiate.

Americal Monument Unveils Sloat Name

By Roger Gilmore

The fourth quarter 2014 Americal Journal contained two articles (pp 30–32) covering the September 15, 2014 Medal of Honor ceremony at the White House. Americal Division soldier SP4 Donald P. Sloat of Coweta, OK posthumously received the nation's highest award for heroism.

Sloat served as a machine gunner in Co. D, 2/1st Infantry, 196th Lt. Inf. Bde. On January 17, 1970 he gave his life to save the lives of his buddies. He quickly dived on an enemy booby-trapped grenade that had been tripped by a soldier in front of him. The grenade exploded and killed Sloat instantly. Others in the squad were wounded but none but Sloat were killed.

The Americal Legacy Foundation conducted a ceremony on February 6, 2015 to honor the addition of Sloat's name to the Americal Division monument Medal of Honor pedestal. The monument is on the Walk of Honor at the National Infantry Museum near Fort Benning, Georgia. The Sloat family requested that the dedication coincide with Sloat's 66th birthday. Donald Sloat's two sisters, Karen McCaslin and Kathy Sloat, gently removed the Infantry-blue cover to reveal the newly engraved name.

The 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry Regiment, now assigned to Fort Benning, supported the ceremony by providing the color guard for presenting and retiring colors, the chaplain for the invocation and benediction, and the sound system for speakers. The 1-46 consists of five companies and provides new recruits with Basic Combat Training (BCT).

Donald Sloat was remembered for his heroism and service by those who knew him and were with him at the action. Michael Mulheim, speaking on behalf of COL (Ret) Francis Nerone, spoke about Sloat's actions that saved his fellow platoon members. COL (Ret) Alton Coleman, the 2/1st Battalion Commander following COL Nerone, spoke about character traits that embodied Donald Sloat and those like him who exhibit such bravery in combat.

A very special attendee was CSM (Ret) Bennie G. Adkins. CSM Adkins was the other Medal of Honor recipient at the September 15 White House ceremony. CSM Adkins spoke about the humbleness he feels as a Medal of Honor recipient, and the honor for him being among soldiers. CSM Adkins talked about his trips to military units, civic, and school groups to convey his message of service and commitment to keep the memory alive of sacrifice and courage of the armed forces.

ADVA member and Vietnam Historian Les Hines spoke about the other actions which earned Donald Sloat awards for valor. He also encouraged the Sloat family to stay in touch with Americal veterans by attending reunions and veterans events.

Karen (Sloat) McCaslin spoke about growing up in Oklahoma with Donald and seeing him off for his tour of duty in Vietnam. During her talk, she shared her and her sister's memories of their special relationship with their

brother. She also remembered, "When we took Donald to the airport he told mom not to worry because he would be home soon." Donald's mother, Evelyn, initiated the effort to obtain the Medal of Honor for her son in 2009. She passed away on December 24, 2012 but knew her hard work was finally meeting with success.

Several Americal Division veterans attended this dedication ceremony. Bill Hacker and Michael Mulheim were with Sloat when the incident occurred. Among the ADVA members attending were LTG (Ret) Sam Wetzel, MG (Ret) Jerry White, and COL (Ret) Rich Heroux, Beverly Tipton, widow of Elwood Tipton who was with Sloat at the incident, also attended. Approximately 20 other veterans of the Americal Division were present to acknowledge the sacrifice of Donald Sloat and his family.

About fifteen active duty members of the U.S. Army attended the ceremony. Representatives from the 1-46 Infantry included its battalion commander, LTC Matthew Scalia, and Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Richard Meiers. Two representatives from the 196th Infantry Brigade, Ft. Shafter, Hawaii, made the trip for the special ceremony. They were brigade commander COL Scott Mitchell and his top non-commissioned officer, CSM Christopher Johnson.

Following the ceremony, the Americal Legacy Foundation hosted a BBQ lunch at the headquarters hotel in Columbus. The lunch was attended by nearly forty-five individuals who enjoyed a meal of barbeque pork and chicken with all the trimmings. Les Hines, ADVA Vietnam Historian, showed a DVD of the September White House Medal of Honor presentation ceremony. He also displayed other documentary items related to the award of the Medal of Honor.

The Americal Legacy Foundation (ALF) wishes to credit the generosity of its donors for enabling the initial construction of the Americal Division monument and the recent addition of Sloat's name. Thanks also go to the 196th Lt. Inf. Bde. Association, David Eichhorn, President, and Warren Neill, Past President, for funding the Sloat's trip from Oklahoma to Ft. Benning.

Photo courtesy of Mike Twomey



1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Reunion

1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Association will hold a reunion on May 28-June 2, 2015 in Delray Beach, Florida. The reunion headquarters will be the Comfort Inn Oceanside. Rooms are \$99.95 per night plus tax if reserved under the 1/1 Cav room block. Lodging reservations may be made by calling 954-428-0650.

The reunion is open to all current and former members of the unit. Registration fee is \$150 for each trooper and \$100 for each guest. The registration fee includes the banquet, access to hospitality room, tours, gifts, and activities. Make reservations immediately to ensure availability of lodging and event activities.

More information and a registration form may be obtained from Bob Brahm, 7420 N. Mercer Way, Mercer Island, WA, 98040; mibob@comcast.net. An alternate contact is John Murphy at johnnygg3@yahoo.com.

Philly VA Hospital Renamed Honors Michael Crescenz, MOH

CPL Michael Crescenz received a posthumous award of the Medal of Honor for action on November 20, 1968 in Hiep Duc Valley, Vietnam. Crescenz served as a rifleman with Co. A, 4/31st Inf., 196th Lt. Inf. Bde.

A large enemy force ambushed Co. A and pinned several Americans down in the kill zone. Crescenz armed himself with a M-60 machine gun and assaulted well prepared enemy bunkers. He successfully knocked out several bunkers before he was cut down by enemy bullets. His heroism enabled his unit to gain the initiative and repel the enemy force.

Crescenz was a native of Philadelphia and the only soldier from this city to earn the Medal of Honor in Vietnam. In December 2014 President Obama signed a bill that authorized the renaming of the West Philadelphia VA Medical Center in honor of Michael Crescenz. This is the result of an effort that began several years ago and required an act of Congress to complete.

The mother and father of CPL Crescenz received their son's medal from President Richard Nixon in 1970. They had their son buried in Philadelphia to be close to them. After the death of his parents in 2008 Crescenz was reburied in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

Robert Moran wrote a September 15, 2013 special report about Crescenz for The Philadelphia Inquirer. The story, "Echoes of Vietnam", may be found on the internet at www.inquirer.com/medal. Thanks to George P. Barr for providing a printed copy of the feature story.

Co. D, 1/20th Reunion Wrap-up By Cliff Tholen

Our Delta Company brothers, their families and friends began arriving at the Bowling Green, KY Holiday Inn University Plaza in the early afternoon of October 1, 2014. They were greeted at the door by Wendell Strode, Sherry Barger, and Marshall Hall. Agendas, meal tickets,

and other amenities were distributed. Later in the day, a buffet dinner was provided for the arriving attendees.

On October 2 we awoke to a bright and sunny day. Many of us met up at the National Corvette Museum Motorsports Park. Arrangements had been made for two parade laps around the track and also for two "spirited" laps for those who chose to do so. It was exhilarating to say the least. Following that we were able to socialize with each other and rekindle old friendships.

After a bit of a stormy night we had a cooler morning greeting us on October 3. Our scheduled tour of the Bowling Green Corvette Plant began promptly at 9:00 AM. The tour took us through all phases of the assembly of the new C7 Corvette, from basic frame assembly to the body drop through final assembly and quality testing prior to customer delivery. After the plant tour we gathered at the National Corvette Museum for a lunch and a film about the sinkhole that swallowed up eight classic Corvettes.

October 4 was sunny but cool weather. In recognition for their service to Delta Company, Jan and Wendell Strode were presented with a pair of knives that were custom made by Marshall Hall. An auction was once again hosted by John Ewing. The bidding was spirited and over \$7,600 was raised by the auction.

The topic of our next reunion was discussed. It was decided by the group to continue having reunions every two years. It was decided by a vote of the group to hold the 2016 reunion in Branson. Since the group also favors Fall reunions, the tentative dates are September 15, 2016 thru Sept 17, 2016.

John Wolf provided a memorial video to honor our KIA's. We all introduced ourselves with special attention being given to recognizing the first time attendees: Ernest Garza, Bill Wellday, Milt Hardin, Dave Novak, Leonard Snoddy, Craig Collins, Larry Burkhardt, and Victor Oliver. Wendell Strode's outstanding work in organizing the last five reunions was recognized by a standing ovation from the group. The issue of Dave Lovegren's MIA status was discussed with input from Jason Wright, Joe Lupo, and Cliff Tholen. Cliff provided contact information at the DPMO (Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office) for those who have relevant information that may assist in bringing closure to this issue.

October 5 was our final day. We met for a farewell breakfast. Our organization had grown to a point where we have over 150 attendees and the proper management of this has become a significant task. Accordingly, Wendell Strode will continue as the president of the group and will be providing general leadership and guidance, but responsibilities for maintenance of our website will be overseen by John Wolf. Cliff Tholen will assume responsibilities for communications, assist in event planning, and work with John on database management issues. Bob "Mac" McLellen will remain as treasurer.

The reunion was a great success. Friendships were re-established, eight new brothers were able to attend their first reunion, the fellowship and love we have for each other was demonstrated time and again throughout the course of the reunion. We look forward to seeing each other in Branson in 2016.

Never Forgotten

By Janna Hoehn

Maui, Hawaii has been my home for 25 years. Six years ago my husband and I made our first trip to Washington, DC. The Vietnam War was going on while I was in high school so the first memorial on my list was the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Even though I never knew anyone killed in Vietnam I wanted an rubbing of one of the names.

I approached the Wall and choose a name, Gregory John Crossman, a MIA. When I returned home I decided to research Gregory and try to find his family. I wanted to send them the name rubbing in the event they were never able to go to the Wall. In return, I hoped they would share a photo of Gregory with me.

Off and on for six months I researched every way possible. I never found any family and was quite disappointed. However, I had one more possibility. It was my cousin, our family historian. Six weeks later she found a college photo of Gregory.

Two years later I saw a story on our local news about the "Faces Never Forgotten" for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. The goal is to put a face with every name that is etched on the Wall. I immediately sent the photo I had of Gregory Crossman.

Five days later I received an e-mail from Jan Scruggs, Founder and President of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. He thanked me for sending the photo as it was the

first for this soldier. He asked me if I could help him find the photos for the 42 Maui County soldiers that were killed in Vietnam. I told him it would be an honor. I always hoped I could do something for Vietnam veterans because of the way they were treated when they returned. Here was my chance.

What I thought would be a very easy project with Maui being so small was anything but easy. I started by combing the phone books and calling every like name of each soldier. I found about ten this way. I researched archived yearbooks for every high school on Maui and found a few more. I found three more by reading obituaries at the library.

I went to the Maui News and they printed a beautiful front-page article about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and the Education Center. Then I started receiving calls and photos from all over the United States. I was unaware how many people read the Maui News on-line. The Maui News ran an article about every six weeks and listed the photos I still needed. Every time they ran a story I would receive another photo or two. After six months of searching I had a photo of every soldier from Maui County.

Once I had all the photos I decided I did not want to keep this to myself. I needed to share it with Maui County. I made a display with all 42 photos and took it all over Maui. I gave presentations to high schools, libraries, and civic groups. It has been very well received.

Once I finished finding all the Maui County photos I moved on to my hometown in California and found the six soldiers from my childhood home, Hemet and San Jacinto, California. I have been very involved in trying to locate photos of the Native American soldiers. This brought me to start searching for all soldiers in California. Over 60 newspapers throughout California have run a story about this. The response has been amazing. I have collected over 1,100 photos since May 2013. With your help it will be more.

All of these photos will be submitted to the "Wall of Faces" on-line memorial with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. They will also be displayed in the future Education Center that will be adjacent to the Vietnam Wall in Washington, DC. Putting a face with a name changes the whole dynamic of the Wall. It keeps these soldiers alive and will honor them. Our heroes, stories and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

My plea is this: I would like to hear from relatives, friends, and classmates who can provide a missing photo for a name on the Wall. Even if you don't have a photo but can tell me which school they attended would be so helpful. We need to obtain a photo for every name etched on The Wall. There are 58,300 names. To date we have over 38,000 photos. I am also looking for people who would like to volunteer to do some footwork in their communities to help find photos. Please submit any photos or information to me at neverforgotten2014@gmail.com. For more information about the Education Center or make a donation to help build the Center go to: www.vvmf.org/thewall.

Mahalo

Editor's note. Unfortunately there is no list of Americal Division KIAs that lack a photo for the Faces Never Forgotten display. The following is a procedure that can be used to determine if a photo is needed: Go to www.vvmf.org/wall-of-faces/. Put the name of the KIA in the search box. This will bring up all listings with that name and will show photographs if they are available. You may wish to submit a photograph to Janna Hoehn even if one is displayed as your photo may be of higher quality.





Dear editor,

The photo was taken by my neighbor at the local 4th of July parade in 2014. As you can see I am the only one wearing a VFW hat and am always the only one wearing one. A lot of people don't even stand when the flag comes by and I just want to tell them the proper etiquette. I am a Life member of Gross Yaksh VFW Post 6498 and will be celebrating 45 years. I taught the girls drill team for twelve years and treated the girls like a drill SGT and we won over 90% first places in all of our parades. God bless those drill sergeants from basic and AIT. On New Year's Day a bunch of people will gathered on the shores of Lake Michigan near the Vietnam War Memorial and plunged into the water and became members of the Polar Bear Club. They all are a little crazy as the water is dangerous, but it has been going on for over 50 years.

Jim Gales; galesgemoll@aol.com

Dear editor,

Fellow Co. E, 1/46th Inf. soldier James Colby "Jim" Hagan passed away suddenly on December 20, 2014 in Oklahoma City, OK. Jim served in Co. E during 1969 in the 4.2 mortar platoon. He then followed Joe "Porky" Berghoff as 4.2 mortar forward observer (FO). Hagan was out with Recon as FO for several months until a serious injury late in 1969 led to his evacuation back home to Oklahoma for recovery.

Richard Pils; pilsr@aafes.com

Dear editor,

The Great Midwest Chapter met for the annual meeting at the 29th Annual Winterfest on January 17 in New Glarus, WI. More new veterans came this year thanks to retirement from a life of hard work.

A group of 20 or more caring, good, accomplished, real men, including the ADVA national commander, had great conversations. We discussed veterans issues, reunions, tours of duty, VA services, fundraisers for veterans who are benefiting themselves more than they should be, ADVA National working together with or without the chapters, and life in general. Deep respect was shown to all attending the meeting. Everyone deserved it. All are proud of being Americal veterans and should be because we earned it! Still looking for any new ideas on a GMW Chapter Reunion. We haven't given up yet. I salute you all. May Peace and Happiness be part of your life!

Dale Belke; GMW Chapter Cmdr

Dear editor,

I would like to provide you with an update about the dedication of a monument at the grave of Jesse Drowley in Spokane, WA.

We had a great ceremony on Veterans Day. This was due in part to the grant that you provided for us. With the assistance of the Spokane Preservation Advocates, the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #20, and the Jonas Babcock Chapter DAR, we were able to meet our goal of \$5,000. As an offshoot, besides getting a beautiful monument that is a credit to the memory and sacrifice of S/Sgt Jesse Drowley, over 50 members of his family attended the ceremony. Many had not seen each other for many years. Others had never met.

It was a very cold day. Right after the unveiling we retired to the Sunset Mausoleum for the rest of the program. It is with heartfelt gratitude that we, the members of the Jonas Babcock Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, again thank you for your belief in this project and in us. A two-minute video produced by KHQ television may be found at <http://www.khq.com/clip/10839293/veterans-day-memorial-dedication>.

Rae Anna Victor; raeannav@comcast.net

Dear editor,

Joe M. Sanchez died at approximately 3:00 AM on November 4, 2014. Joe was an original member of the Americal Division and served in 1945 in the Philippines. He mentioned involvement at Cebu and Bougainville. Joe was extremely proud of his service. He pointed to the Journal. He was unable to speak. I think he was telling us, in his own way, to let you know of his passing.

Lisandro Dehoyos; crimcorpinv@yahoo.com

Dear editor,

It's my unpleasant task to inform you that Michael J. Martin, 65, passed away on December 2, 2014 from cancer related to Agent Orange. You will remember that Michael entertained us with his singing at several Americal reunions (St. Louis, Cleveland, Washington, DC).

He was born in Lubbock Texas and died in Joelton, Tennessee. Mike was in Charlie Co., 4/3 Inf., 11th LIB, 1968-69. He was a point man and tunnel rat and was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and Combat Infantryman Badge. SP4 Murphy earned the Silver Star for action on 15 August 1969 by assaulting and knocking out an enemy machine gun position. His buddy Michael Dunphy said, "Michael Murphy was a man's man."

Martin was cremated and, according to Dunphy, his wish was that a party could be held in memory of him. His daughter, Adrienne "Andy" Martin, will try to see if something can be done at the annual Melbourne, Florida reunion held each April. Dunphy told me he saw Mike about four years ago when they had a big unit get-together. After that Martin's health started to decline with one issue after another. He was in hospice with his daughter at his side when he died.

As you know, Michael J. Martin was very well known in Americal circles and by Vietnam veterans in general. He was a big advocate for veteran causes. Michael is survived by his wife, Lynette Couch; and his daughter as well as by many dear relatives and friends.

David W. Taylor; Contributing Editor

Dear editor,

I am proud to announce the 1/52 Inf., 198th LIB reunion for 2015. Any 198th LIB or Americal vets are always welcome. The reunion will be March 26-29, 2015 at VFW 4709, 1303 Semands St, Conroe, TX 77301. This is located about 35 miles north of Houston and is right near I-45. The location has an area in the back where we will set up our kitchen and shelters. We will cook some great Texas BBQ, seafood, and reunion chow.

We have secured a book of rooms at La Quinta Inn and Suites, 4006 Spray Berry Lane, Conroe, Texas 77303. Their phone for making reservations is 1-866-527-1498 and identify yourself as a member of 1/52 Infantry Reunion, block confirmation number 0259435. They have agreed to give a room rate of \$99 plus tax per room. Please make your reservations with them directly. The reunion fee, which includes all food and drinks, except for alcohol, which is allowed, is to be paid to Dennis Loop, 502 Long Shadows Circle, Spring, TX. 77388. Contact is to Dennis or Eva at 281-651-7198, Dennis cell 832-443-5684. email is Vvet71@aol.com.

First Time Attendance- \$100 for an individual or \$150 for a family. Prior Attendance- \$130 for an individual or \$175 for a family.

Dennis Loop

Dear editor,

I want to report that my father, Jim Medling, has passed away. He was a member of ADVA and a WWII vet, Americal Division, 132nd Infantry, 2nd Battalion, Company H. He was wounded on the island of Cebu on March 30, 1945 (I think). His leg was amputated three times. He spent a long time at Percy Jones in Battle Creek. He was discharged in February 1947. He was a cotton farmer. He died on August 13, 2014.

Tina Williams; bwilliam@utm.edu

Locators

Looking for: Anyone how knew or has information about my father, Robert E. Frye. He served in the Americal Division in the South Pacific and turned 91 in January. I would like to somehow reconnect him with any remaining soldiers who served alongside him. Contact: Robert L. Frye, robert.frye@momentive.com

Looking for: Anyone who was at LZ Bronco from March to April 1969 or LZ Center and LZ Baldy from May to Dec. 1969 that will attest to the fact that there was enemy small arms fire, perimeter probes or firefights during these periods of time. My MOS was 71H20 (company clerk). At Duc Pho (LZ Bronco) with B/4/3 I remember while on guard duty and day light hours receiving incoming small arms fire, perimeter probes and firefights. Contact: Steve Schroder, elect1231@verizon.net.

Looking for: Informaton on Ralph Alton Branson, Jr., PFC, 11th LIB, Jan. 9, 1968 to Mar. 17, 1968, killed non-hostile by burns near Quang Ngai. We are trying to gather info to put in a book for our local small town school. They are interested in history and I want to be able to give them facts. Contact: Katie Roberson; Vienna, MO; kates3sons@att.net

Looking for: Anyone who served with me in Co. D, 4th Bn., 3rd Inf., 11th Inf. Bde., "Old Guard" and 4th Bn., 21st Infantry., 11th Inf. Bde., "Gimlet," 1967-69. Contact: Alfred J. Pinder #-51739, South Florida Reception Center, South Unit, 13910 NW 41st St. C2133, Doral, FL. 33179-3014.

Looking for: Jimmy R. Scott, Ed Bradley, Ed McCloughlin, Ted Peppers, Paul Wade, or anyone else who served with me in Co. B, 23rd S&T Bn., Chu Lai, January 1970 March 1971. Contact: Mark A. Buczko, markbuczko@comcast.net.

Looking for: Anyone who served with my brother, Bob Halbert, a LRRP in the Americal Div. 1968-69. Contact: Sam Halbert, 770-231-6021

Looking for: Glenn Wilson (from Greenfield, Ohio), who served with the FDC section A Btry., 3/16th Artillery. Chu Lai, 1967-68. Contact Jack Hobson, rhobson@columbus.rr.com

Looking for: Informaton my father's outpost in Vietnam. He is not sure on the date it happened but the op was overrun. The name was OP Sugar Mill Hill and so far we have only found a map showing where it was. We are hoping to find some of the guys he was with if they made it. Contact: Raymond Meyer, marinehuho300@hotmail.com



2015 ADVA National Reunion Norfolk Virginia October 28 – November 1

Location

You will stay at the best place to lodge in downtown Norfolk in the beautiful and newly remodeled Norfolk Waterside Marriott, 235 E Main Street, Norfolk, VA 23510. Call Marriott at (757) 627-4200 or (800) 228-9290. The Group rate (Americal Division Veterans Association) will be offered 3 days before and 3 days after reunion dates, based on hotel's availability. The reunion guestroom rate is \$109 + tax (currently 14% + \$2 Occupancy Fee) - WWII members will have their individual room rate reduced to "no-charge" when they check-in. There is also a special rate of \$129 + tax if you elect Concierge Level. The cutoff date is 9/25/15. Recommend everyone book early to ensure lodging at the reunion hotel. The Marriott is offering complimentary self-overnight parking. There is no parking for RVs in the Main Street garage or on city streets. We are working on finding a lot close to the hotel for short term RV parking.

Tour and Banquet Planning

To address some long standing ADVA reunion issues (on-line reunion registration and pre-selected banquet seating with your friends), we teamed up with a leading reunion management company. You may now register for the 2015 ADVA Reunion online with The Armed Forces Reunions Inc. (AFR) and pay by credit card at www.afr-reg.com/americal2015. You may also register by completing and mailing the Activity Registration Form on the next page.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29 - 9:00am – 5:00pm FT. EUSTIS AND COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG TOUR - \$48/person includes bus, escort, and tour guides. Enjoy a day of history as this tour brings you to the U.S. Army Transportation Museum at Ft. Eustis and an overview of world renowned Colonial Williamsburg.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30 - 11:30am – 2:00pm SPIRIT OF NORFOLK LUNCH CRUISE - \$42/person (cost will be reimbursed for WWII members and a spouse or escort following the reunion). Have a delicious lunch with a great view on the Spirit of Norfolk, the premiere cruise boat on Norfolk's waterfront. The harbor lunch cruise with live entertainment features the sights of Hampton Roads harbor and the mighty ships at the Norfolk Naval Station, the largest Navy base in the world. Enjoy a wonderful buffet while the captain narrates. Book early because this tour will sell out!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31 - 9:00am – 12:00pm NORFOLK BOTANICAL GARDEN TOUR FOR SPOUSE/GUESTS - \$47/person includes bus, escort, and admission. This time of year the Meadow and Natural Areas are beautiful with stunning seasonal colors, fall foliage and migratory birds.

6:00pm – 10:00pm BANQUET DINNER – \$47/person (no cost for WWII members). As requested by ADVA membership, members and guests can select seating assignments with friends/family before the banquet. We have an exceptional menu and some unique entertainment before, during, and following the banquet that will make for a memorable event that should not be missed.

Transportation & Shuttle Information

We are currently working with the city of Norfolk for shuttle service from the Norfolk International Airport (ORF) to the Norfolk Waterside Marriott (6.9 miles). Look for updated shuttle Information on the ADVA Website and in upcoming Americal Journal publications. American, Delta, Southwest, United and US Airways offer convenient daily access to Norfolk International Airport. Southwest is currently showing the best travel rates at their web site, www.southwest.com. Folks in the Northeast can save 90 miles of driving using the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel vs I-95 & I-64. There is also new Amtrak service to the Harbor Park Station (NFK) in Norfolk, with an easy connection on the city of Norfolk light rail system between the Harbor Park and MacArthur Square station, a little more than a block from the reunion hotel.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions please call our Reunion Chairman, Larry Swank, at 301-892-0855 or email lswank@aol.com

AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. You may register online and pay by credit card at www.afr-reg.com/americal2015 (3% will be added to total). You may also register by completing the form below. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before September 25, 2015. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.
322 Madison Mews
Norfolk, VA 23510
ATTN: AMERICAL

AFR OFFICE USE ONLY

Check # _____ Date Received _____
 Inputted _____ Nametag Completed _____

CUT-OFF DATE IS 9/25/15

	Price Per	# of People	Total
TOURS			
THURSDAY: Ft. Eustis Transportation Museum & Colonial Williamsburg Overview	\$48		\$
FRIDAY: Spirit of Norfolk Lunch Cruise	\$42		\$
SATURDAY: Norfolk Botanical Museum (Spouse/Guest Tour)	\$47		\$
SATURDAY: BANQUET (Please select your entree)			
Bistro Filet with Bordelaise sauce	\$47		\$
Herb Cured Chicken Breast with Roasted Tomato and Shallot confit	\$47		\$
Native Grouper with Lobster and Leek Beurre blanc sauce	\$47		\$
Vegetarian Cuisine	\$47		\$
WWII Main Attendee Banquet Dinner at no charge — Please select an entrée: <input type="checkbox"/> Bistro Filet <input type="checkbox"/> Herb Cured Chicken Breast <input type="checkbox"/> Native Grouper <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian	\$0		\$0

REQUIRED PER PERSON REGISTRATION FEE

Main Attendee — ADVA Member	\$20		\$
Main Attendee — Non-member, Fee includes one year ADVA dues & benefits	\$35		\$
Main Attendee — WWII ADVA Veteran registration and membership at no charge	\$0		\$
Spouse and/or Guests (each)	\$20		\$
Total Amount Payable to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.			\$

PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WANT YOUR NAMETAG TO READ

MAIN ATTENDEE: FIRST _____ LAST _____

UNIT _____ YEARS WITH UNIT (YYYY) _____ — _____ 1ST TIME ATTENDING? ☐ YES ☐ NO

☐ WWII ☐ Panama ☐ Vietnam ☐ 182nd Infantry Regiment (separate) MANG

CHAPTER: ☐ Eastern ☐ Southeast ☐ GreatMidwest ☐ South-Midwest ☐ Far West ☐ 23rd MP ☐ 2/1st Regiment ☐ Inactive

SPOUSE NAME (IF ATTENDING) _____

GUEST NAMES _____

MAIN ATTENDEE STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

PHONE NUMBER () _____ - _____ EMAIL _____ @ _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

(Sleeping room requirements must be conveyed by attendee directly with hotel)

MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO

PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS? (Every effort will be made to provide this service) ☐ YES ☐ NO

ARRIVAL DATE _____ DEPARTURE DATE _____

ARE YOU STAYING AT THE HOTEL? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ ARE YOU FLYING ☐ DRIVING ☐ RV?

IF YOU ARE FLYING, PLEASE LIST PLANNED:

ARRIVAL DATE: _____ / _____ ARRIVAL TIME: _____ DEPARTURE DATE _____ / _____ DEPARTURE TIME: _____

For refunds and cancellations please refer to our policies outlined at the bottom of the reunion program. **CANCELLATIONS WILL ONLY BE TAKEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00am-4:00pm EASTERN TIME (excluding holidays).** Call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion.

"Like" us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ArmedForcesReunions



Bandmaster Chester E. Whiting and the Americal Division Band

By Richard W. Taylor

In his 1963 publication, *The Baton and the Pendulum*, Chester Earl Whiting creates a vivid personal history of his career as an Army Bandsman. The account included his nine months as Bandmaster of the Americal Division Artillery Band, from August 1942 until April 1943, and of his fourteen months as Bandmaster of the Americal Division Band, from July 1943 to September 1944. Certainly the five chapters that Whiting devoted to the history of the bands of the Americal Division and their activities on New Caledonia, Guadalcanal, Fiji and Bougainville are compelling, and provide a rare look into the contribution of Army Bands, musical and otherwise, during wartime. This then is the story of just one of Chester Whiting's "special" bands, at a unique time in history when nearly 500 bands were brought into federal service to create organizations like the Americal Division Band, to serve in theaters of combat around the world.

Mounted Cavalry to Mechanized Army

Whiting's career as an Army Bandsman did not begin with the Americal Division Band. He had been leader of the 110th Mounted Cavalry Band of the Massachusetts National Guard for 16 years before he became an active duty Army Bandsman. The 110th was brought into federal service in 1940, and redesignated the 180th Field Artillery Band, one of many U.S. Army bands soon to see action in the South Pacific. In his South Pacific diary Whiting describes the closing of the era of mounted cavalry, and the beginning of the era of the mechanized Army: "On a chilly October day in 1940 the Regimental Bugler blew 'Boots and Saddles' and we passed in mounted review for the last time playing *Auld Lang Syne*. The next day our horses were shipped to Front Royal, Virginia and a short time later we were redesignated the 180th Field Artillery Band.

War Games

On January 28, 1941, the newly-designated 180th Field Artillery Band moved to the training center at Camp Edwards, on Cape Cod, where it began the transition from Cavalry to Artillery. Whiting recalled: "We were assigned to the 26th (Yankee) Division and, simultaneously, I was promoted to Division Band Leader. The 26th Division enjoyed plenty of good music, concerts, parades and dance music."

For nine months the band underwent extensive basic training at Camp Edwards, and then traveled south to participate in the First Army War Games in North Carolina. Returning to Camp Edwards on December 6, 1941, the band had completed its one year of federal service. Whiting and his "Massachusetts men" were preparing to return to civilian life. He recalled that the next morning "...the first reports of the bombing of Pearl Harbor came over the radio. That attack changed the destiny of the entire world."

It also changed the personal destiny of Chester E. Whiting, and that of the Army Bands program of the 1940s. With the declaration of war, federal service was extended from one to three years, and six weeks later, on January 20, 1942, the band found themselves at the Brooklyn Army

Base, boarding the SS Argentina, redesignated the United States Army Transport Argentina (USAT), for the duration.

Task Force 6814

Only weeks after the declaration of war, a hastily-assembled task force with 20,000 officers, nurses and enlisted men, was off to war somewhere in the South Pacific, but no one knew exactly where. The convoy included eight ships: SS Argentina, SS Barry, SS Cristobal, SS Erickson, SS McAndrew, SS Santa Elena, SS Santa Rosa and SS Island Mail. The Flagship Argentina, carrying Whiting's 180th Artillery Band, was a converted passenger liner in which the luxury accommodations had been quickly replaced with pipe bunks. Conditions were deplorable and unsanitary, and the water ration was one canteen a day. *The Twin-Ocean Gazette* published 2,500 copies a day to keep the troops informed, and live radio broadcasts from Japan reported the entire Task Force 6814 had been sunk in the mid-Pacific.



Warrant Officer Chet Whiting, 180th Field Artillery Band, Camp Edwards, Massachusetts, 1941

New Caledonia

After a short stay in Australia, Task Force 6814 was headed to New Caledonia. As elements of the force arrived on the island they were widely dispersed as part of the strategy to form a coastal defense to protect New Caledonia from invasion by Japan. Whiting recalls: "There were nine bands in the Task Force, but when the Americal Division was formed on New Caledonia, I believe there were five bands: the 180th Field Artillery Band, the 101st Medical Regiment Band, and one each of three Infantry Regiments, the 182nd, 132nd, and 164th."

Whiting's 180th Field Artillery Band and the 101st Medical Regiment Band both arrived at Noumea on February 26, 1942. Due to the threat of an imminent air attack, the 180th Band was immediately sent away from the capital to Pont-des-Francaise. The 101st Medical Regiment Band remained in the politically-charged capital city of Noumea, where the Task Force Headquarters was initially located. The 101th Band had the greatest public visibility of all the Task Force bands on New Caledonia, playing for many public concerts and parades. Their primary duty, however, was touring various medical facilities around the island.

The 182nd Regiment Band arrived two weeks later in March, followed by the 164th Regiment Band in April. With the arrival of the 164th, a spontaneous battle of the bands erupted as the 101st Band played the arriving 164th Regiment ashore. The Task Force bands had assignments all over the island, but there were occasional interactions between the bands. In August, Whiting's 180th temporarily took over duties for the 101st at Camp Stevens, where the newly-established Officers Training School was located.

Physical training and conditioning were the order of the day for Whiting's band. The men spent much of their training time running up and down mountains and keeping up with the Force Forward Command Post as it relocated to the village of La Foa, and later to Païta, where General Patch relocated his headquarters in May. As they moved about the island, Whiting's band took on the job of "Musical Ambassadors," participating in community events like the Jeanne d'Arc Day celebration in the small town of Bourail.

At this point, the title "Americal Division Band" may well have applied to several bands serving on New Caledonia. But by May, with substantial reorganization of the Task Force completed, the mission of defending the island was turned over to the newly-formed Americal Division—the first division ever formed outside of the United States, and the only division never assigned a number. Whiting's 180th Field Artillery Band was then redesignated the Americal Division Artillery Band, on August 15, 1942. No other band of the Task Force 6814 was redesignated to include the word "Americal" in its title.

Bands provided entertainment at every opportunity but the primary mission of everyone, including bandmen, was to train for the invasion of the Solomon Islands. Whiting describes the stay in New Caledonia as uneventful. From his diary: "Not a shot was fired, except on the practice range." But north of the island the critical Battle of the Coral Sea was underway, precipitated by the arrival of a Japanese task force which some thought was headed to invade New Caledonia. The United States Navy made sure it never got there.

Two months after the Coral Sea victory, the Americal Division was on its way to Guadalcanal. The bands of the division would face many hardships in the next two years, but for the 182nd Infantry Band, problems started even before departing New Caledonia. Leaving their conductor and instruments behind, some bandmen shipped out as "infantry snipers" for their stay on Guadalcanal.

Guadalcanal

The war was no longer remote and the months of training on New Caledonia were about to be put to use, but not for playing music. Whiting describes the debarkation at Guadalcanal: "The band, being in the second wave, reported to its assembly station below decks, well below, for a period that seemed interminable. After the first wave had cleared the ship we were called to our debarkation station, which, incidentally, was the highest place on the ship with the exception of the bridge. Barracks bags were dropped over the side into the Navy barge and then we began our long descent down the scramble net. This was a scary experience, for going over the side of a ship with a full pack on your back, a gas mask under one arm and rifle slung over the other, is a treacherous maneuver."

The band's barge had problems, however, and everyone



Captain Chet Whiting at wars end, combat Veteran and Director, Americal Division Band

was obliged to jump into the water short of shore. Passing equipment hand-over-hand to shore, they made their way to their position near Division Artillery Headquarters, close to Henderson Airport. There was little sleep that first night ashore as enemy planes, dubbed "Washing Machine Charlie," greeted the band members with their first air raid. Whiting remembers Guadalcanal: "Well, there were fifty-eight air raids during that period, and that awful month while sitting them out in a dugout. Nearly every one of us was a malaria victim, and probably an equal number were bitten by scorpions. Few, if any, escaped 'jungle rot,' and I suppose those scary earthquakes should be considered also. Rain, that depressing tropical rain that never seemed to let up, should not be discounted. But, no—none of these qualifies for top honors; it was mud—that treacherous, filthy, Guadalcanal mud."

Bandsmen were given various non-musical assignments on the island until February 9, 1943, when General Patch, Commander of the Americal Division, announced that the last vestige of organized Japanese control on the island was destroyed. Nearly two months after arriving on Guadalcanal the Americal Division Artillery Band, picked up their instruments and gave their first concert.

The Americal Division Band is formed

Whiting's diary records the event: "Of the nine bands in Task Force 6814, only five had been at New Caledonia when the Americal Division was formed in May 1942. But in March 1943, there were but two bands with us on Fiji, the Americal Division Artillery Band, formerly the 180th Field Artillery Band, and the 182nd Infantry Regiment Band. These two bands formed the new AMERICAL DIVISION BAND and because I ranked the late Joe Freni by a few days, I was appointed Commanding Officer and Leader. Neither band enjoyed giving up its identity, nor its historical prestige."

The new Americal Division Band would soon find itself in harm's way on Bougainville, but first they faced a battle with malaria. The very mention of the Fiji Islands conjures images of tropical paradise to most, but Whiting, while organizing and training a new division band, found the island to be "Nature's worst creation." In his ten-month stay on Fiji, the troops' major occupation was recovering from malaria. The treatment was pills, pills, more pills—and rest.

After a year in Fiji, the ongoing battle with malaria and other tropical maladies was improving, the division had been reorganized and brought back to full strength with additional troops, and a new band, the Americal Division Band, had taken the field.

Bougainville

On January 3, 1943, on the third and last echelon of transport ships, the Americal Division Band arrived at Empress Augusta Bay, Bougainville; on the morning of January 12, 1944, their nine-month stay on Bougainville reminded Whiting of Guadalcanal—malaria, rain, air raids, scorpions, ants, centipedes, earthquakes, artillery barrages, and tropical downpour were just part of the Bougainville experience. In his diary Whiting reflected that, "Bougainville was rough, for the war was in evidence at all times. We had to first establish an area by cutting through a dense jungle, then digging fox holes, and later, deeper and more substantial dug-outs. I recall one of the many recurrences of malaria when I lay for two days in my dug-out waiting for the fever to subside."

The Americal Division Band had various non-musical jobs initially, but later that changed: "As the months dragged on we played as many programs as we were physically able to play, thereby contributing much to the happiness of our troops and at the same time alleviating some of the monotony of our own existence. It had been known for some time that our band would be returned to the States before the coming fall and we awaited quite patiently the arrival of our replacements."

Only a month after the band's arrival on Bougainville, the Hollywood Victory Committees sent the first of many Hollywood celebrities to the island. Francis Cronin writes in his *Under the Southern Cross* that, "In February, Randolph Scott came to Bougainville, supported by the Americal Division Dance Band." March again saw intense fighting; halting the concerts and movies within the perimeter, but in April a series of USO shows arrived. Cronin again describes the event: "Under instructions from Division Headquarters, some five thousand men of the Americal gathered at the large parade ground near Evansville. Seated on a newly-constructed stage was the Americal Division Dance Band, quietly awaiting word to begin festivities." The band was joined by the main event of the day, a show starring Bob Hope, Francis Langford and Patti Thomas. It was the first USO presentation on Bougainville.



Twelve Massachusetts men formed the first Combat Infantry Band and all were members of the Americal Division band

It was during this period in the spring and summer of 1944 that Whiting created a musical tribute to the Americal Division with a series of marches that he was inspired to write while on Bougainville: *Doughboy and Marine*; *Combat Quartermaster Q.M.C. March*; *Colonel Landers March*, commemorating the late Artillery Commander, Brigadier General Harvey M. Landers; and the *Americal Division March*, dedicated to Division Commander, Major General John R. Hodge.

For some members of the band the war would end at Bougainville, while for others it would continue until the surrender of Japan. Those Massachusetts men, who, along with Whiting, had had their service extended for three years at the outbreak of the war, were now expected to be rotated home in the fall of 1944. They would be transferred soon, but the decision was made to keep the Americal Division Band at full strength on Bougainville with replacements from the recently-discontinued 129th and 180th Army Ground Forces Bands. Whiting had expectations of returning to civilian life to resume teaching in Massachusetts, but the Army had other plans for him back home.

One official function remained before leaving the South Pacific. On September 28, 1944, Chester E. Whiting, W-2000111, Chief Warrant Officer, United States Army, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. The citation reflected both his and the Americal Division Band's achievements in the South Pacific. It read in part: "As a result of CWO Whiting's efforts the Americal Division Band is considered the greatest single factor contributing to the morale of the troops of the Americal Division."

Two days after the presentation, 40 members of the Americal Division Band were rotated back home. Ten of these men, along with Whiting, were reassigned to Fort Meade, Maryland. They became the first members of the 1st Combat Infantry Band, the only band in United States Army history to be formed entirely of combat bandsmen representing every theater of conflict during World War Two.



Lieutenant Colonel Chester Whiting, Director, Army Field Band, from Warrant Officer to Lieutenant Colonel "In 36 easy lessons", 1924-1960.

Americal Division Band

Rotation list to USA, 21 February 1944: (CWO Whiting, Chester E., Bandmaster), Henry, Edward (Ted) B., Kearrey, James J., Whiting, Frank B., Comeau, Albert E., Colaruotolo, Joseph W., Martino, Henry J., Smalley, Samuel C., Barufaldi, Joseph W., Basford, Herbert L., Boguszewski, Roman S., Comeau, James J., Marino, Gaspare S., Napoli, George NMI, Nicol, John M., Rapoza, Armand P., Schmidt, Clayton E., Shultz, Samuel, Magnus, Philip A., Adams, Burton A., Biz_r, Arthur J., Bowes, James J., D'Agostino, Joseph A., Fiset, Philip L., Foley, Joseph E., Hebert, William J., Medeiros, Manuel NMI, Potter, Everett A., Powell, Edward B., Romagna, Peter P., Settles, Robert H., Shea, John G., Wolfram, Carl

A., Bangs, Robert G., Caia, Pasquale NMI; Gilholm, John S., Janczy, Edward J., Rabe, Per E., Schrotman, Jacob NMI; Silva, Edward H., Paul, James P.

This "band of brothers," the Americal Division Band, lived the story of the American ground soldier, and many of them helped tell it over and over again as members of Whiting's later bands: the 1st Combat Infantry Band, The Army Ground Forces Band and The United States Army Field Band. Almost 70 years after WWII, The United States Army Field Band is still telling that story. It is the living legacy of war-time bands like the Americal Division Band, and Army bandsmen of the era who knew what war was, because they were there.

A Small Legacy in Cebu

By Brian "Doc" Bartlett

Headstones and Monuments

The grunts from ancient times to today have fought others from faraway lands in forgotten battles that meant nothing except to the powers that orchestrated their struggle from golden chairs far from the scene of battle. They had their own purposes and goals, whether it be natural resources, political retribution, or an impossible search for earthly fame and glory. The grunts leave no memory of their passing. The dark red blood of their companions, thicker and heavier than the boys who survive deem possible, slowly seeps into the foreign soil. Any sign of their passing is soon washed deep into the ground by dark rain from above, and the earth continues with no memory of their presence or their passing. There are rare times when, much later, others come and -using concrete or marble - place temporary insignias of a singular event at that

spot. But in reality it means nothing except to those who were there, who witnessed the events.

At the most it may mean something to the children or the grandchildren of the boys who were there; because there is still a human link alive in the minds of those offspring. But for the participants of the event, inevitably age takes over and soon there is no one alive who was there; and all memory of the suffering of the grunts whose lives were touched by war is washed into the dark earth, chasing the thick red blood that once lingered on the ground for a short moment. And eventually any monument built by man marking the spot will be destroyed by some conqueror that does not approve of that particular memory; or time itself will wear it away. That is the legacy of war.

An urban cemetery in Cebu City

In 2012 a handful of U.S. expatriates living on the Island of Cebu gathered together and chartered a chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Ulysses G. Buzzard Chapter 12130. Buzzard was a Medal of Honor recipient in the

Spanish-American War who himself became a Cebu expatriate, married a 19 year old island girl, and was buried on the island. Like Forrest Gump, he earned his Medal of Honor carrying wounded men to safety. Buzzard's grave, until recently, was largely forgotten in an urban slum cemetery overgrown with weeds. There are still tall weeds, trash, and bags of human skulls in old rice bags tossed nearby.

Fifty miles north, at the other end of Cebu Island

Some members of the Cebu VFW post had driven by and noticed the tattered surrender site sign far north on the island and stopped to see if there was any other information about what transpired there.

They only found a simple metal sign with Japanese lettering on it. The owner of the property, Eusebia Ycot, said that Japanese veterans who were there at the surrender used to come each year at the surrender anniversary date. But she said that they have not come for several years, perhaps they are too old to travel now or have died, she thought.

Our small, newly formed VFW post thought that it would be nice if a more permanent monument could be erected before all traces of the event vanished from the site. I am a combat infantry medic from Vietnam, 1970 (3rd Platoon, Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, 198th Light Infantry Brigade, Americal Division). I had been a member of the ADVA (Americal Division Veterans Association) until I let my membership lapse when I came to the Philippines.

Our new VFW post had little cash. As the only member of the VFW chapter who was in the Americal Division, I knew that their legacy committee had recently built an Americal Monument outside Fort Benning, Georgia at the National Infantry Museum (NIM). At my suggestion, our monument committee chairman Terry Davenport contacted them in early 2013 and he ended up negotiating an agreement that the ADVA would match three dollars for every dollar we could come up with. After much time and many steps, the monument became a reality.

I was the first (and only?) person

Monument marks the end of fighting on one island of the largest war in human history.



Doc Bartlett - an Americal Vietnam Veteran who lived on Cebu Island from August 2012 to January 2015.

to interview sole living surrender eyewitness Eusebia Ycot and published (on our VFW website) an account of her story and an appeal for building funds. That article from our website follows:

Americal Division "Ends" World War II

A fading and peeling metal sign, the erection date and sponsor of which are unknown, and a small porcelain pedestal of Japanese writing, are the only written evidence between this historical treasure on a site of ground and eternal oblivion.

Hiroshima was bombed on August 6, 1945, Nagasaki on August 9th. "V-J Day", the official Japanese announcement of surrender, was August 15th. But World War II did not really end until thirteen days later when at 10:00AM on August 28, 1945, the last major Japanese unit surrendered to the Americal Division on a remote jungle hill crest on northern Cebu Island in the Philippines. They had not believed reports that the war had ended. The reason that the largest war in the history of the human race did not drag on any further and ended at this particular time and place is due to the heroism of a particular Filipino



A tattered sign on the island of Cebu, fifty miles from the capital city, was the only indication that, at this spot, the final surrender of Japanese troops took place.

civilian (Eusebia's Ycot's dad) and the actions of some unknown and unnamed Americal Division Medics

I was an Americal combat infantry medic in Vietnam in 1970. I now live in the Philippines with my Filipina wife. Cebu Post 12130 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, of which I am currently the post surgeon, is of some unknown and unnamed Americal Division Medics.

I was an Americal combat infantry

medic in Vietnam in 1970. I now live in the Philippines with my Filipina wife. Cebu Post 12130 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, of which I am currently the post surgeon, is presently attempting to coordinate with the Americal Division Veteran's Association, for the placement of a permanent memorial at the surrender site. On September 1, 2013, I was able to witness the signing by Eusebia Ycot of a document allowing the Americal Division to establish a memorial on the site. Sixty eight years and three days had passed since August 28, 1945.

The present owner of the land is a historical treasure; she was the (then) five-year old daughter of the man who owned the land where the surrender took place. She is a calm woman with clear eyes, who looks younger than her 73 years. She says that she likes to eat healthy foods, and of course she still gets up at 5:00AM each morning to tend her goats. She has lived on this spot since her birth the year before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. She said that she has been a widow for 25 years, and has just retired after teaching third grade for 31 years at the local elementary school. She now also runs a tiny road front "Sari Sari" store, where she sold me a cold Coke for 10 pesos, about 25 cents. She says that she lives off a pension of 10,000 pesos (about \$240) a month, but hopes to save most of the money so that her



Buzzard's gravestone in Cebu City



Eusebia Ycot at home on Northern Cebu island, the Philippines

granddaughter can go to college. Her mind is very sharp, and her memories of the day that World War II actually ended on Cebu are very clear. It ended here, at her house, where she still lives.

For many years, Japanese survivor-soldiers who were on Cebu at the surrender paid an annual pilgrimage to Eusebia Ycot's home and she allowed



Eusebia Ycot and attorney signing Memorial Agreement September 1, 2013

War II Japanese soldiers have returned, and it is possible that they are now deceased or too infirmed to make the long journey here from Japan.

Eusebia said, "My father was a very brave man and his actions prevented many Japanese from committing suicide." Her father knew that the Americans were coming up the road from Cebu City, fifty miles to the South. The defeated and starving Japanese had now been pushed back nearly to the north end of the island. There was no place left to retreat to.

"My older sister was quite pretty, and my father put her in a barrel and told her she must stay there until he figured out what the Americans were like. He did not want her to have relations with them. But since I was only five years old I got to watch everything, and I remember."

"When my father heard the American column coming up to the



Eusebia Ycot can point out the exact spot 50 meters from her house where the table was set up for the surrender documents. Doc Bartlett is on left and fellow Veteran Mike Melis is on the right. Another 100 meters to the west of picture are the stone rubble remains of the water well around which the Japanese soldiers stacked their thousands of weapons.

them to place a memorial bamboo cottage on the site. The cottage is being maintained by her family and in front is a small metal and ceramic memorial column displaying the names of some of the Japanese soldiers. It has been several years since any of the World

crest of the hill, right over there (about 200 meters to the South) he went out and stood in the middle of the road and motioned for the column to come to a halt. That was a very brave thing to do. My father told them that there were three wounded Japanese soldiers



Eusebia Ycot simulates with stick her story of Japanese soldiers placing their “sticks” (rifles) on the ground as they appeared from the terrain around her house.

in our home. The American medics came and treated the wounded Japanese and also gave them food and water. Because of my father’s actions the Japanese hiding in the jungle all around our home became aware of how the Americans were going to treat them and 2,000 surrendered the first day and by the end of the third day it was about 10,000 Japanese and it all happened right here at my house and I watched it all.”

She went and picked up a small stick, about a half inch in diameter and two feet long. She held it up and said, “Each Japanese soldier came carrying a stick (rifle), and as they entered the surrender area each soldier put his stick on the pile. The Americans were then counting the sticks and tying them into bundles so that they would have a count of how many Japanese soldiers were surrendering.”

With a sweet smile she said, “I will never forget my in northern Cebu, the Japanese Imperial Forces led by Gen. Katoaka, together with Gen. Fukue, Admiral Harada and two other Japanese generals and along with 2,667 Japanese soldiers (including Japanese women nurses from the Japanese field hospitals), stood on a grassy knoll where each Japanese officer surrendered his samurai to the regimental commanders of the Americal Division.

After Gen. Kataoka surrendered his samurai to Gen. William H. Arnold, the Japanese troops in Ilihan stacked their weapons, mortars, grenades and ammunition in one big pile. The Japanese troops were boarded on six-by-six trucks for the 50-mile journey from Ilihan to the port of Cebu City.

In the next two days, an additional 7,200 Japanese troops

surrendered in Ilihan, bringing the total number of Japanese troops who surrendered to the Americal Division in Cebu to 9,867. They were all transported back to Cebu City and loaded into waiting troopships for the trip back to Japan.

Committee chairman Terry Davenport did nearly all the legwork tying down engravers and contractors. Bid designs submitted, though beautiful, were more than our meager budget could handle. So I sat down one evening and made a bare-bones no-frills design of what we wanted; and that is what Terry went back to the contractors with.

Final improvement changes made in the design to put the ramp at the side to make it more wheel chair accessible and to use concrete blocks make it higher off the ground and more visible from the road were wisely made by chairman Terry Davenport.

Eusebia Ycot’s home was totally destroyed by the Yolanda Super-Typhoon and she also has a dream of sending her granddaughter to college. Any financial contributions to this wonderful woman can be channeled through VFW Post 12130 Commander Alex Roese. Contact Americal Legacy Foundation President (and ADVA National Adjutant) Roger Gilmore



Cebu VFW Post member Terry Davenport, Committee Chairman for the surrender monument project, hugs Eusebia Ycot after the signing of the monument agreement

An Interview With History

By David W. Taylor

ADVA WWII Historian Dave Taylor interviewed Americal WWII Veteran and artillery officer Leon Fenstermacher on January 25 2014 at the Kent Ridge Assisted Living Facility in Kent, Ohio. On March 17, 2014 Fenstermacher turned a young 101 years of age.

Taylor: Leon, can you give me some background on your life prior to World War II?

Fenstermacher: I was born on March 17, 1913 in Indiana. While I was attending banking school at Ohio State University in the 1930's I joined the ROTC. Back then it was mandatory that all male students participate for at least two years. After my mandatory two years were up I decided to continue in the program knowing I would be eligible for a commission that could be used to pay off my \$70 per quarter tuition.

This was the middle of the depression. I didn't graduate in 1935 as I was supposed to do because I was short on two subjects that were required. I talked to the dean to see what could be done. This dean was a stockbroker on the side and he got me a job in a bank in Columbus, Ohio for a college quarter. He said, 'you go down there and work for the bank for the quarter and I'll give you the credit for a certain subject.' Another professor told me, regarding the other course I needed to complete, 'Well I have a couple of books I'd like you to read. You read those and then come back and I'll talk to you.' So that's what I did in the middle of the depression to complete college. I was the first to complete college in my family; back then getting a college degree was a very big deal. I received my degree and the bank asked me to stay on after graduation. So that's how I got my job in the depression.

Taylor: But war was on the horizon and you were commissioned in the artillery. So where did your civilian life end and your military life begin?

Fenstermacher: I got orders on June 2nd, 1941 to report to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. All the men on my orders were ROTC graduates from Ohio State, Indiana State and Perdue. And we all went to our Artillery Basic Officers course at Fort Bragg. That was the summer of the great maneuvers the Army had all the way from Louisiana and Mississippi up though the Carolinas and Tennessee.

After officers basic training late in the year my battalion commander said "I'm going to send you for additional training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma." My wife and I took some short leave en-route to Fort Sill, in Columbus, Ohio and it was during our



Henderson Field, the airstrip captured from the Japanese by the Marines. To the right side is the main fighter landing strip. Heavy Japanese bombardment of the field from ships and bombers were witnessed by Fenstermacher, but the field was never rendered unusable by the enemy forces. (Source: National Archives)

drive to Fort Sill that we learned the Japs had bombed Pearl Harbor. At Fort Sill we started with three of us from Fort Bragg who were in artillery school. Then we got word that our whole artillery regiment from Bragg was coming to Fort Sill. Back in those days we had the old guns, like the 75mm cannons, we had not been issued the 105mm artillery pieces yet.

The War Department was sending troops to the South Pacific so they jerked a number of us artillery officers out of Fort Sill and sent us up by train to New York and we became part of Task Force 6814, the forerunner of the Americal that was being sent to Australia and then on to New Caledonia. When we formed the artillery battalions in New Caledonia - I was 28 at the time - there was an artillery unit from the 182nd Regiment of the old Yankee Division and that is where we got our first 155mm howitzers.

Two things stand out in my mind on Guadalcanal. First, after we were offloaded, the ships quickly pulled out because they were afraid to be hit by Jap bombers and Jap ships. So there we were for a while, with nothing but what we had on our backs. The other thing was the naval battles we observed. The Japanese wanted to destroy the airfield on Guadalcanal (which the Marines named Henderson Field) so we could not use it to launch air operations to other parts of the Solomon's as well as use air support for the ground operations on the canal. We could hear the heavy shells from Japanese ships fly over our heads and plowing into Henderson Field. But the Japanese were not successful in stopping operations. Off the coast we could see the Japanese and American naval fleets battle each other through the night. The next morning I could go out on a hill and see ships half sunk and ships sinking. It was something else.

Taylor: What particular assignments did you have on Guadalcanal?

Fenstermacher: I was in our battalion headquarters most of the time as the Assistant S-3. That was a break I got so I wasn't in the field with the batteries very much unless someone was injured I would substitute for the Forward Observers (FO's) until a replacement was found. When we went to Fiji after the operations on Guadalcanal our battalion commander was shipped back to the states. He had been a reservist and a veteran of World War I, then a college professor in civilian life. He got through the operations on Guadalcanal because he was smart enough to let his officers run the battalion.

We shipped to Fiji where there were two Army General Field Hospitals. And a good thing too because at least 50% of our soldiers in the division had malaria and needed a long recovery, as well as receive new troops and get them trained. As a Captain I was one of the senior officers working in our artillery battalion on Fiji, because of the malaria. By the end of our stay in Fiji we had a big turnover in officers. I was one of the few original officers left. I had enough points to get rotated back to the states but I decided to stay on.

Taylor: So what was the situation on Bougainville?

Fenstermacher: I was slated to be the S-3 in our battalion but one of the new officers coming in ranked me so I went to the 164th Infantry Regimental Headquarters to be an artillery liaison officer there. While I was there one of our batteries was located near the air strip and a plane was shot down either taking off or landing. They tried to blame one of our batteries for shooting it down. The battery commander was fighting it. I don't know what happened after that if he was cleared or relieved. After the fighting settled down on Bougainville the order came down that four artillery officers with seniority status (points) could be shipped back to the states to cadre stateside units that could be shipped back over. I was one of the four and we went to the air strip and flew to Guadalcanal.

At Guadalcanal they put us on a list to fly out of there and we waited and waited for about a week. Apparently others were

pulling strings to fly out ahead of us and we weren't making any headway at all. One afternoon I went down to see where we were on the list. I was asked if I was "interested in going back on a ship? There is one leaving this afternoon." So I said, "Let me go back to the other guys and see what they want to do." I went back and they all said, "Yeah, let's get the hell out of here. Sure beats sitting on Guadalcanal" (I think the chance of getting malaria there was also heavy on our minds).

So they took us out on a skiff to where the ship was anchored. We climbed up the ropes and got on board. It was a Victory Ship on its first trip and had a captain that was new, also on his first trip commanding the ship. We thought to ourselves, "Oh Boy!" It took about 120 days to get back to San Francisco and we were out on the sea all by ourselves. When I came over to Australia on Task Force 6814 I got seasick but now, on the way back to the states I was fine but a lot of the Navy crew got seasick. We officers ate each meal with the ship's captain. It was a lot different than when I went over on Task Force 6814.

We arrived back at San Francisco in the middle of the night. We knew we had arrived because we could hear the anchor with its chains rolling over the anchor pulley as it dropped into the bay. The next morning we went outside but couldn't see any more than 10 feet in front of us because of the heavy fog. We had anchored just before you went under the Golden Gate Bridge and were first in line of offload that day. You couldn't go under the bridge at night because they had deep-water gates that swung close to keep any Jap subs from sneaking into the harbor.

Taylor: So what happened to your Army career when you returned to the states?

Fenstermacher: We went ashore to the nearby Army Depot headquarters and from there the four of us from Bougainville each went our own way. The Army told me they'd send me new orders to my home in Ohio. When they came I was told to report to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. My wife and I started driving down there (this was in late May 1944) in my 1937 Dodge Coupe. We were driving after dark in North Carolina on old Route 61 trying to get to the next town to stop. My car conked out and I pulled off the side of the road. I told my wife I didn't where we were so we decided to sleep in the car (I was wearing my uniform at the time).

The next morning (It was Memorial Day) I started walking to find where the next town was. I had only walked a short distance when a car pulled over driven by a lady who had two kids in the car. They picked me up to take me into town, which was only three blocks from where I had parked the car! She took me to a garage that was open. Although this was Memorial Day this was still in the days where the South did not celebrate Memorial Day as the north did. They pulled the car into the garage and the owner said, "You folks go get some breakfast and the come back and by then I'll let you know what is wrong with the car". So we came back after getting something to eat and the car was fixed. So I said, "How much do I owe you?" He said they charge was \$7 but that I didn't owe him a thing! So it paid to wear the uniform!

We drove down the rest of the way that day to Columbia, South Carolina and Fort Jackson. I reported in and was told my battalion was not there but up at Fort Bragg so we got back in the car and drove up to Fort Bragg. My battalion tuned out to be a special artillery unit whose special guns could shoot for miles. But the guns (they didn't have many) were all in Europe. My sense from talking to some of the battalion staff was that, if we were going to invade Japan, our battalion was supposed to take those guns.

I stayed at Fort Bragg but came down with malaria again. After a year we were to be sent to Manila in the Philippines. I was the movement officer for the train ride to the California. We got to St. Louis and had to stop because the new crew that was to take us the rest of the way wasn't there yet. It was hot as hell. Finally the new crew arrived and I had to get everyone back on



Leon Fenstermacher (left) with ADVA World War II Historian David Taylor (Source: Dave Taylor)

board from the beer saloons in town. The conductor asked me, "Would you like to ride up in the engine?" I replied, "Sure!" As we were pulling out of St. Louis the chief engineer asked me "Would you like a job?" So I said "Sure!" He said, "Whenever I give you the signal, you blow the whistle". So I did that through every little town we went through until we got to Kansas City. But after Kansas City we traveled leaps and bounds as the land opened up and we were on full throttle down through Colorado and into California.

When our ship landed in Manila, the Philippines, the commander and I got on a boat and went to shore in advance of the battalion. I remember seeing in the whole harbor the tops of ship masts sticking out of the water from all the Japanese ships that were sunk during the war.

So they put all of us on a train and we went north of Manila to a reception area that had all of the old Quadrangle-style tents. We were there about a week with no equipment (I don't think our guns ever arrived) when we received the word the bombs had been dropped in Japan and the war was over.

Then we got orders to send our battalion to another reception area about 25 miles south of Manila. Our battalion then began the process of getting decommissioned. I had plenty of points to get out so I was sent to another reception area to be discharged. I was there from August to November 1945 when I was able to get back to California on another ship. This ship carried a lot of American civilians detained by the Japanese in Manila during the war. This time I got seasick on the ship and spent the whole 21 days of the trip in the dispensary. We arrived at the Port of Los Angeles and the doctor asked if I could walk off the ship. I said "absolutely!" and I went to a reception camp about 25 miles east of Los Angeles. I came back to Indiana to an Army camp. My wife came to get me and we visited friends in Indianapolis on a short leave. Shortly after that I was discharged.

Taylor: I am curious. How was transition to civilian life? What did you end up doing for a career?

Fenstermacher: I ended up working for a bank in Coshocton, Ohio where my wife got a job as well. While in Coshocton I got a call from the Army, which was making an effort to get officers in the Army Reserve and they would count all my prior service from the time I was commissioned in 1935. Well, I couldn't turn that down. I eventually retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. We moved to Kent, Ohio in 1957 to work for a bank where I eventually became the President. The Army Reserve pay allowed my wife and I to travel in all 50 states, most of Europe and dozens of other countries. We had been married for 72 years until her death in 2012 at the age of 98. I look back at it now, the Army experience and a good marriage was great. I think she'd agree.

Combat Correspondent - Vietnam

By Gary L. Noller

In June 1969 Robert Spangler left college with 58 credit hours and joined the U.S. Army. One of his college classes was in photography and journalism. This gave him the incentive to enlist as a 71Q20, Information Specialist. After basic training at Ft. Bliss, Texas he was sent to Ft. Huachuca, Arizona for training for General Clerk. But he did not give up on the idea of being a journalist. He spoke with the commander at the Public Information Office (PIO) and received an immediate reassignment to that office.

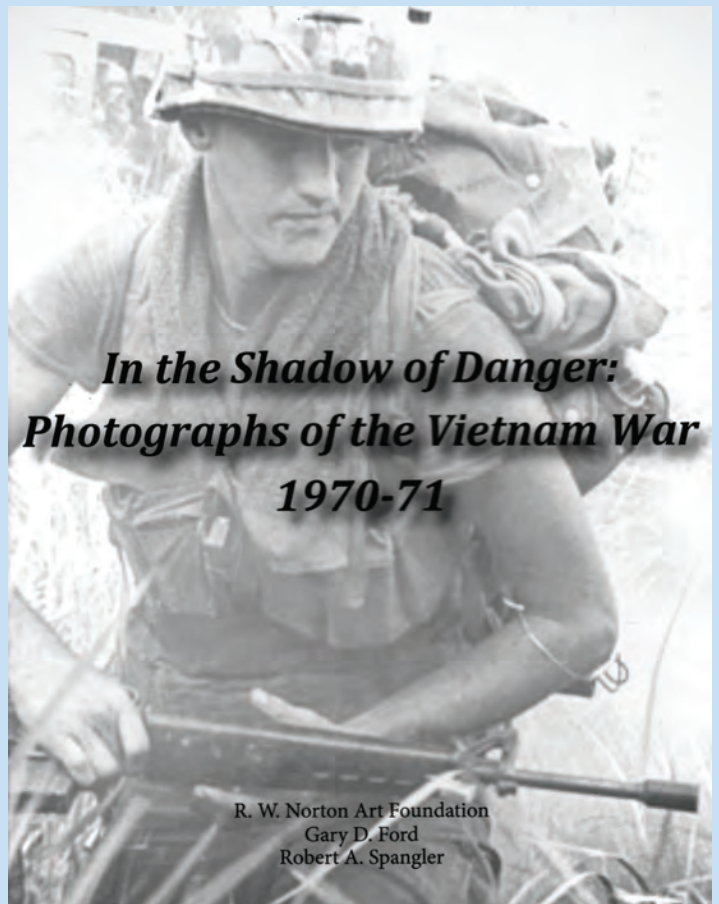


This pattern would follow Spangler on his subsequent deployment to Vietnam and later to Germany. In May 1970 he arrived in Vietnam and won a bid for assignment as a combat correspondent with the 10th Public Information Detachment of the 196th Lt. Inf. Bde. He finished his tour in Vietnam in May 1971 and received orders for Germany. After the usual wrangling he began duties as the Non-commissioned Officer



In Charge (NCOIC) of the PIO at the 2nd General Hospital in Landstuhl, Germany.

Spangler had the foresight to personally preserve many of the photos that he took in Vietnam. He spent most of his time in the field and his camera



Purchase of the book (about \$20) can be arranged by calling the R. W. Norton Art Gallery at 318-865-4201 or by visiting their website at www.rwnaf.org.

Related internet links:

To read about the photo exhibition:

www.rwnaf.org/media-room/view/?id=80



successfully captured the nitty-gritty of life in the jungle. His photographs became part of the official record of the Vietnam War. He accumulated over 500 photos from his duty in Vietnam. He developed the film himself and sent paper prints home for his parents to safeguard. Many of his photographs are also preserved in the U.S. Archive and available to veterans who know how to do the research to find them.

But 80 of Spangler's photos with related text are readily available in his large cover book titled *In the Shadow of Danger: Photographs of the Vietnam War 1970*. The book, co-authored by Gary D. Ford, is a spin-off from a 2012 showing of Spangler's photographs at the R.W. Norton Art Gallery in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Many veterans did not have a camera in Vietnam so Spangler's photographs provide them a much needed look-back at life in the jungle and a way they may inform others of their experiences. Spangler states, "It is my hope and prayer that these photographs serve as



a tribute to the veterans who served in Vietnam, many of whom have never heard the words : "Thank You", for their service.

Spangler is currently employed as a kitchen designer at Lowe's Home Center in Longview, Texas. He says, "It has been an honor and a privilege to meet so many Vietnam veterans and have them share their stories with me. The exhibit and book have become a life-changing event for me.



My Tour In Vietnam - August 1971 – July 1972

By James Gales

Part 1

After spending 13 days at Ft. Lewis, Washington, my name finally came up on a flight manifest. We left by air and the first stop was in Hawaii to refuel. We were allowed to get off the plane but we could not leave the terminal. I guess they were afraid we would swim back to the United States. We all headed to the airport bar where we were told it was a 21 year-old drinking state. A lot of guys could not buy a beer because they were not yet 21. It almost started a riot. An officer stepped up and said that all of these guys were going to a war zone and if not served beer he would order them to trash the place. As a result of his statement the beer was flowing freely. But we could only have two beers each because of the number of guys they had to serve. A glass of draft beer at the airport bar was

\$.99 cents- what a rip. Back home it was a quarter dollar tops. We had a long flight. Most guys used the time to catch up on sleep and make small talk to suppress their apprehension of what was lying ahead. We touched down in Cam Ranh Bay in August 1971. As soon as we were in the touch-down path we got our first view of Vietnam. The beauty of all the different colors of green was just stunning. It was one of the most beautiful sights I ever saw, better than the view of landing in Hawaii.

As soon as they opened the door the outside heat engulfed the whole plane. It was oppressive. This was followed by the stench of rotting vegetation, shit, gas, and garbage all wrapped up into one giant odor that no Nam Vet would ever forget. Welcome to the Nam! After basic training at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky and advanced training at Ft. Polk, Louisiana, this was not what I was expecting. They called Ft. Polk

“Little Vietnam” because of the similarities of the heat, sand, bugs and rain. But it was no where near the degree of everything in Nam.

Things were slow at Cam Ranh Bay. I got stuck there for a week. I tried to avoid getting seen by lifers to avoid details but I got detailed filling sand bags twice. Little did I know I would be filling sand bags from that day until the day I left the bush. At night we got stuck on bunker guard. There was no way to get out of sight as there was three formations a day and we had to be at all of them.

We had ARVNs on the base and they took the training course with us. They were the South Vietnamese soldiers, average about five feet and two inches tall, and maybe weighed 110 pounds. They were runts as compared to the size of most Americans. For the first few nights they sent out ambushes using ARVN soldiers. They seemed in no hurry to go out and acted like they didn't want to be there, much less fight. On my turn to go out on ambush I went with Woodrow (Woody) Collins. We were ambushed sometime after 1:00 AM and it was confusing because we did not know that we could fire at will and we did not know where we were supposed to shoot. It lasted all of a few minutes; one dink got hit and was patched up by a medic. That put the fear of God in us all. My first impression of the ARVN was pretty accurate. They didn't seem motivated to fight, were lazy, and avoided going out on ambush. If they did go out they usually went out a short distance where it was safe and avoided making contact at all costs. Woody and I should have been put in for a CIB (Combat Infantryman Badge) as we were in our first fight with real bullets flying all around.

After the ten-day course was



Author unloading supplies from most reliable form of transportation- Huey Slick.



Author making a run to the Phu Bai PX. Armed with .45 cal pistol. Purchase of case of Coca-Cola visible in back of truck.

done Woody and I were sent to Da Nang to join up with our unit. Bravo Company, 2/1st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade that was part of the 23rd Infantry Division, Americal. I was a 81-mm mortar gunner and I was assigned to the mortar platoon. I picked out a cot in the mortar platoon hootch and then took a tour of the area to locate the shitter, mess hall, PX and the bunkers where we were pulled guard duty all day and night. Guard duty during the day was three guys pulling eight hours. At night shifts of three guys pulled a three hour posting. No one dared fall asleep on guard duty. We were afraid to get shot. If we got caught sleeping we got busted a pay grade and fined along with a few days of KP and shit burning detail.

I drew an M-16, ammo, claymore mine, grenades, and all the rest of the gear a grunt would need. Fully loaded I topped off at carrying 110 pounds of gear. They told us very little other than we were free to shoot at anyone entering the perimeter barbed wire. I had bunker guard with two other guys I didn't know which meant I couldn't and didn't trust them to not fall asleep. So I learned to

stay awake all night long. On the average I lived on three hours of sleep per day. Of course, Woody and I had to fill sandbags every day. The food at the mess hall was crappy and if we did not get in line early we might not get much food if any at all. Many guys ate in the wrong mess halls and screwed up the food counts.

I only spent a couple of days in the rear and then was sent out to join the mortar platoon. It was on Hill 151. I would spend almost my whole Vietnam tour on firebases. A firebase was usually a little hill in enemy territory with a bunker line around the whole hill. The bunkers were made of sandbags. Everyone had to help fill sandbags and keep adding them to each and every building and bunker on the firebase. Five layers of sandbags protection was common, but eight layers were required to survive a rocket attack. Some firebases had artillery, 4.2 inch mortars (four deuce), and 81 mm mortars. Every large bunker had a M-60 machine gun on it. Every bunker had claymores out in front. A barbed wire fence circled around the whole firebase. This defense often consisted of three different types

of wire that were over lapped: piano wire, regular barbed wire, and razor wire. For an early warning system empty C-ration cans with a couple of stones in them were tied to the barbed wire to make noise if the wire moved. Some firebases had a trench all around the hill. We could move around and be partially protected from small arms fire. Every day we worked our asses off. With the intense heat we were wet with sweat through all our clothes down to our socks. We learned to drink a lot of water and any other liquid the Army offered. Sometimes we had juice or milk with hot food. When we got to go to the PX we bought cases of coke for two bucks a case. We had to carry everything we had and when we would move next.

Every morning at one hour before sun up everyone on the hill was awake and on alert in a gun-out or on a bunker. That was supposed to be the best time for the enemy to attack. We called it stand-around, (it was really stand-to) because we usually just stood around hoping to get a fire mission or some action. After the alert we cleaned the mortars and personal weapons, shaved, washed up, and restocked all ammo that was used the night before. If we had a mess hall only a few people were allowed in the breakfast chow line at a time. We did not want to bunch up and get a lot of people killed if a round was shot at us. Coffee was a must and breakfast was usually eggs, sometimes real, cold cereal if there was milk, sometimes pancakes or French toast, and maybe bacon or sausage if you were real lucky. If no mess hall was available we ate C-rations. C-rations consisted of canned food and instant coffee. Later in my tour as I learned all the tricks. I got some captain bars from the clean clothes pile

and used them to procure LRRP rations. These rations were freeze-dried food that were prepared by adding water. These rations not only tasted better but were also more filling.

After chow we worked on details such as filling sandbags used to maintain and reinforce the bunkers. Some sandbags were neglected by other units which was downright lazy and not safe. Hootches on firebases were often made from ammo boxes filled with dirt and stacked on top of each other. The ammo boxes were topped off with culvert half-sections inverted on top of the ammo boxes. The steel culvert halves were then covered with five to eight layers of sandbags. The door to the hootch was a poncho liner to keep light from getting out at night. It also kept out the elements such as the constant rain or dust.

Daytime ambushes were often sent out from the firebases. Each platoon would take a turn or provide two guys for an ambush squad. At night we manned a listening post (LP). Our platoon sent three guys outside the barbed wire at dusk. They went out a few hundred yards and sat down until it got dark. Then they moved to a new location in case the enemy had watched them. By doing so they were not where the enemy saw them first sit down. There was no smoking, talking, or sleeping on your shift. Noise discipline was a must.

At night we manned a defensive bunker from 9:00 PM until the sun came up. Three guys each stood a three hour shift. We had to trust the guys we were with but some were known to fall asleep and some would set their watch up to save five minutes of guard duty. I was a gunner so I was often in the mortar pit to fire missions. We



81mm mortar squad during a fire mission on Firebase Linda. Ammo pit is located to the right of the crew.

fired almost every night and some nights we fired at predetermined targets. These were the likely spots the enemy would use to sneak up on the firebase. The predetermined targets were decided by lifers in the rear- some of them had never seen the firebase. We also stood one to three hours of pit guard every night. Someone had to be in the pit at all times to answer the phone if a fire mission was called in. The person taking the call turned on the aiming stakes lights and woke up one other guy who woke the rest of the crew. Since I was a gunner my hootch often was part of the mortar pit and if we took a direct incoming round I would be history.

Everyone had to pull KP except the NCOs. They didn't have to do jack shit except to be in charge and to supervise details. If an NCO was good he pitched in to show his men he was just like them and worked as hard as them. That earned my respect. Those who were lazy, and there was a lot who were, got put on my "stay away from them" list. When on KP we reported to the mess hall at 5:00 AM and immediately

started to help the cook. If KP back in the world was hard, KP on a firebase was pure hell. We constantly had to haul water for the two 55-gallon drums used for washing and rinsing pots and pans. The water was down on the chopper pad and we took two five-gallon cans and filled them up and hauled them back up the hill to the mess hall. We also had to provide water for the cooks to cook with. At night before we were done we again hauled water so the next day was ready to go. The water was heated with diesel fuel which also was down on the chopper pad. We had to haul diesel in two five-gallon cans whenever it was needed. The heaters were dangerous and everyone who pulled KP had their hair, mustaches, and the hair on their arms singed as sometimes the heaters exploded. Thank God paper plates and plastic silverware was used and we did not have to wash them.

KPs also had to haul the garbage to one spot on the hill and dump it over the side. Every once in a while the garbage was sprayed with fuel oil and burned and the

rest of the time it stunk- especially in the hot dry season. On some fire bases they let Vietnamese go through the garbage and salvage what they wanted. I thought that was a bad idea. This let them get to see the base close up and they could look for claymores and make drawings from memory on the placement of the guns, ammo pit, and even the shitter. The shitter sounds strange, but officers had their own. The gooks knew which one it was. Every once in a while they would fire a few mortars or a rocket and try and kill a lifer using the shitter.

On any one day we could haul between 600 and 1,000 gallons of water and fuel oil. My neck size went up by two inches and my arms grew a few inches too. If a chopper came in with supplies for the mess hall the KPs had to go down and retrieve the load. The choppers came in with supplies many times a day. Hell, sometimes we had to go down and carry things even when the chopper had stuff for someone else on the hill. After all the pots and pans were done, the mess hall and equipment cleaned, and everything was ready for morning, we were finally done. Some firebases had a small shower

consisting of a 55-gallon drum with a spigot. We hauled as much water as we need to clean up. Most times we washed up in our steel pots. KPs did not have any duties the night they pulled KP unless there was a man shortage and then we got guard duty. They tried to let us get some rest after evening stand around and before the first shift of pit guard. We still had to get up if there was a fire mission. We had fire missions almost every night and we could be in the pit for hours or even all night. I learned to live on three hours of sleep and power naps.

I was with the mortar platoon on Hill 151 when I experienced my first enemy attack. I hadn't yet been in country for 20 days when we got a few rockets fired at us. They flew over the top of us and we could hear them whistling by. The first two went over us and out past the barbed wire. The next two were short. Welcome to the Nam! We moved locations every 45 to 60 day to keep guys fresh and to rotate us to the good firebases as well as to the shit holes.

I had about three weeks to learn how they gunned in Nam. It was different from 81 mm training at

the mortar school. The gunner who was my teacher was a short-timer with less than 30 days until he went home. I remember him as Red from Tennessee. The other gunner on gun two was Joe Patterson. He was a good guy and was willing to help me out to learn what I needed to know. The old guys treated new guys like shit because we were new and because we needed to re-learn how to gun.

In stateside training we had an assistant gunner who moved the bi-pod legs on the mortar tube. In Nam the gunner moved the legs by using one hand to grab one bi-pod leg while using the other hand on the top of the tube to rotate it to the direction of fire. This landed the legs perfectly so there were fewer adjustments to make in the new position. Red was nice enough to show me this a few times. I practiced this technique during daytime fire missions. I also had to fire missions at night. I did all illumination rounds and slowly got to fire high explosive (HE) missions. It is a steady diet of you're the gunner and it's up to you how long it takes to get fully trained.

Red made me practice during all of my free time and that could have been all hours of the day and night. I also took to practicing on my own when guys were sleeping during the hot hours between 10:00 AM and 1:00 PM. I took it seriously and vowed to be a better gunner than Red or Joe when my tour was up. The time went by quickly. When Red and Joe left and I was the main gunner. In two months I was as fast and accurate as Red and Joe. By the end of my tour I was the best gunner I ever saw and I competed against everyone from every mortar crew.

In October 1971 we were sent to Chu Lai to pull security for the 26th Engineers. The whole unit was standing down and we were their security force until they left. It



Hurry up and wait. Author taking a nap while waiting for chopper to arrive to transport to a new location.

started off as easy duty with a guard shift during the day every once in a while. Mostly it was playing spades during the day and bunker guard or ambush at night. There was a mess hall so breakfast and supper were hot meals. There was usually hot water for showers which were near our hootch. If we wanted to stay clean, and staying clean was very important, we took a quick shower even if cold water is all we had. While we were at Chu Lai two things happened to me that would change my life forever. They would come back to haunt me for the rest of my life. They are anniversary dates, just like a birthday. Every October they come back to visit me. For years they popped their scary head up whenever they felt like it.

The first happened shortly after we had a delicious meal of C-rations. We were sitting around our hootch playing spades. My buddy, Harold T. Durham (Tex) and I had been playing as partners and had a winning streak going. We beat any and all comers and were at thirty wins in a row. We had just settled in to a new pair of challengers when someone came running and yelled that five bloods (African-Americans chose this name

for greeting each other) were in the water and were in trouble. They had gotten into trouble while swimming in the South China Sea and they would drown if help didn't arrive. Tex told me not to go as he sensed danger. I should have gone with his instincts as he was short and could smell danger. He warned me as I sprinted out the door and ran the two blocks to the beach. When I got there I saw guys out 100 yards or so and they all were panicking. I was one of a hand-full to arrive at the beach and I stripped down to my boxer shorts in no time. I saw a guy straight out from me and dove in and swam towards him. It didn't take long to reach him. Two other guys met me at the same time. The guy reached out and grabbed my hand in the thumb-grip handshake and smiled at me and proceeded to pull all three of us under. When we came back up I said I was going to turn him around and grab his hair and pull him by it. He yanked all of us under again and this time it took us all longer to get back up. At that time he was panicking so bad the lieutenant who was one of the guys gave us a direct order to leave this guy and try and make it back ourselves. By this time we had

drifted out another 100 yards or so. I felt bad to leave him, but had we stayed he would have pulled us all under to our deaths.

By now I was spent. I looked towards the shore and saw guys standing on shore and some in the water trying to make a human chain to reach out to guys. I was a good swimmer, but not great, and I had never been in water where there was an undertow and with waves that were eight to ten feet high. I once read about trying to body surf the crests of the waves going in towards shore. I went for a ways and then got slammed in the face by the waves coming back out. The undertow had a strong pull trying to take me back out. I swallowed salt water every time a wave came back at me. I began to think I was not going to make it. It seemed so far to shore. I just kept telling myself to keep doing what I was doing. I don't know how many times I went under and how many times I swallowed water. I did manage to see I was getting some headway. What stood out in my mind was I saw a large group of bloods standing around watching. None were in the human chain and very few were in the water much past their knees. I wondered why they weren't trying to help me or the others. There was no rope along the beach. There were life savers on posts along the beach but guys took them for pillows. To bad, they might have saved some lives.

I went down again and everything went in slow motion. I saw my whole life. Everything and everyone in my family that was important to me and my girlfriend passed before me in a surreal way. Then I seemed at peace. When I came to I saw our first sergeant throw a life saver towards me. It hit the wave and went back towards shore. He threw it again and I must have caught it and passed out. When I



Local roadside lemonade stand. Ice cold lemonade was available for about two piasters.

woke up I was up on the beach and people were giving me first aid and I started throwing up salt water. They asked me if I was okay and I said, "Yeah, I'll make it." But they put me on a chopper anyway and I think I went to the 95th Evacuation Hospital. I stayed there until they saw I was okay. Then I hitched a ride back to my unit. My sergeant chewed me out for going in the water and then he gave me the night off. No thank-you or thanks for trying while half of the guys just stood around doing nothing. I did not know if the original bloods all drowned.

When I returned to my area I found that everyone was gone from my platoon for night guard duty. I was in the hootch by myself. I was kind of mad the captain didn't stop by and check on me, stop to say "nice try" or that maybe he would put me in for a medal. I don't know if there was one I would qualify for, but didn't really care about a medal because I didn't save anyone and almost lost my life. I did think later on that something should have been put in my file that I did try and save someone. In the morning when my platoon came back from guard duty. They filled me in on what had happened. Choppers ended up using ropes to pull the guys from the water ropes.

At evening chow when I was still at the hospital some bloods jumped a white guy and beat the crap out of him because they saw him down by the beach doing nothing but watching. I really was pissed off. I got a gut reaction to find out who these bloods were and where they were at when the guys were drowning. Were they in the group standing on the beach watching just like the white guy? Tex was also really pissed off. He thought they should have joined the chain that was trying to reach me and the others. He said we need to address



Author with captured enemy machine gun at Tam Ky LORAN station. LORAN station guided B-52 bombers to targets.

this issue ASAP.

The bloods did a special handshake with each other they called the dap. They used it to skip in line at the mess hall and it did piss us off. There was much racial strife between blacks and whites at the time. But white or black we were all in it together. It was us against the lifers and the system. Tex and I decided we would make up our version of the dap and go to the mess hall that evening, walk to the front of the line, do our dap, and then start swinging at any bloods who approached us. I had some grenades in my pockets and had my knife and M16. I was ready for revenge and to make a statement that what went down was wrong and some one had to pay for it. The officers should have felt the tension and addressed it, but they did nothing. To our surprise, everyone in the mess hall watched us do our dap. A few bloods started to move forward but when I pulled out a frag that stopped that. One blood actually stood up and came to the front and said to the others to stop the crap as the guy with the frag was out in the water and almost drowned. Then every one just left the mess hall. The tension was

always there after that and fights happened every so often over racial crap. But this was stupid behavior. When we went out to the bush we were all in the same situation and we all were being screwed over by the lifers. We should unite instead of beating each other up. Some of the bloods I knew later thanked me for trying and I was never hassled again by any bloods.

The down side is five soldiers died and I keep thinking about it and the same thought stays with me. I was the last guy to see that guy alive and I would like to let his family know that the last thing he did was smile. I want the family to know that he did not die alone, there were three of us with him. All five bodies were recovered. Each of their commanding officers had to write a letter to each family and let them know their son died. Who knows what they wrote, but I'll bet that none of them wrote that their son died chasing a damn football. It was usually they died in the line of duty. Each family deserves to know the truth and I have always wanted to speak with someone from my guys family to let them know what happened that day.

To be continued....

Refugees Given Aid

[Reprint Jan. 1970 Southern Cross]

THUAN AN – “They come down out of the hills owning no more than what is on their backs,” explained 1LT Spencer M. Baba (Bethesda, Md.) “They have no land and live mostly by odd jobs.”

The peasant refugees come to the refugee center at Tam Ky seeking help which is provided by a joint military-civilian pacification effort. Here several American college students, including a group belonging to the United World Missions, and the infantrymen of the 2-1st Infantry work together to better the lot of the Vietnamese refugee.

“Over 50 refugees are making cups, mugs, and water pipes,” claims Dennis Metzger (North Manchester, Ind.), a former American college student, who now teaches bamboo handicraft to the refugees.

There are sewing classes to teach the people to make clothes for themselves and other refugees along with a school, a mission and an orphanage.

Not all the refugees are adults. The orphanage shelters and feeds the homeless children. Some of these children are finding out for the first time what it means to be free from hunger, and they are quick to show their enthusiasm.

“We turn down the side road,” says PFC Lester Joubert (New Orleans, La.) from the Civil Affairs section of 2-1st Inf., “and by the time we get to the orphanage, there are 100 kids around us.”

One of the recent activities of the orphanage was a Christmas party provided for the children. D Co., 2-1st brought the toys; the orphanage staff provided the tree, and everyone joined in the Christmas spirit.

Reverend Dang-Ngoc Cang, Superintendent of Mission Activities explained that the idea behind the center is to help the refugees become self-sufficient.

“It’s the only way,” 1LT Baba said. “We are not going to be here forever.” (196th IO)

Short and Left Behind

By Rick Olson

D/1/46; 10/68-10/69

Les Hines recently sent me copies of some 1/46 Infantry newsletters. In Vietnam I did not see a 1/46th newsletter because they were not sent to the bush, or if they were, none ever got to me. I spent a full tour in a rifle platoon and never worked in the rear area.

Before I left the bush we had an unusual incident in Delta company- an incident that I would bet never made publication. The incident occurred where the whole company left a night laager.

As background, when moving out it typically took 20 or 30 minutes to exit the whole company of a night laager position especially when we were in dense jungle. And, since we rarely ever got more than a few hours sleep any night in the bush, we were perpetually tired and would try to catch up on sleep whenever possible. While waiting for the company to move out we would put on our packs. If you were the last platoon moving out in the line (and it might take an indefinite amount of time before the lead squad had cut enough of a path in the jungle) we would sit down on our packs and wait. Typically a pack and weapons might be 60 pounds and standing still with a pack is harder than walking with them.

Then one day, perhaps in late September or early October 1969, my squad was the absolute tail end. We were the last in line to leave the night position just east of LZ Professional. Three of us fell asleep sitting on our packs. Nobody in the company noticed we were missing until they got perhaps a half klick or more away.

The three of us “dozers” then woke up and we realized we were there alone and this situation was extremely dangerous. VC or NVA in the area usually knew where we slept and they would

scrounge the night ladders looking for food and sometimes for bullets or equipment that got accidentally left behind.

There was no point in trying to follow a trail in the bush and to find the whole company. It would be pointless. We didn’t have a radio. We were screwed. So the three of us prepared for the worst and set up claymores in case the NVA got to us before the company sent someone back.

Luckily the rest of the platoon returned to us before the NVA did. But it was dicey and hearing noises we could have shot our own guys, or they could have shot us. This is not the way it should have happened, but it did. And at that time I was getting to be about the “shortest” grunt in the whole company- waiting for my tour to end.

I suspect that a platoon leader got one helluva chewing out. Pretty basic infantry stuff to count all of the men. But that was Vietnam. The bush was a trying and tiring experience and leaders were not especially seasoned.

I want to thank Les Hines and LTC James B. Simms for obtaining 1/46 newsletters from the history center at Carlisle Barracks. It is useful to have the long forgotten names of men printed in these newsletters and the hometown information in case anyone wants to make a contact. I can see where my company brought in 25 or so new men in just one newsletter, so with such considerable turnover, it is hard to keep track of all of them during my full year in the bush. (As I look back at the incident being left behind, I suspect it was a result of having such a large number of new guys in the bush.)

Perhaps I served with 200 other grunts in D Co. at one time or another. We shared some level of combat action. We all knew each others names and faces then. But now just a distant memory. Just a handful have ever made recontact with me to this day.

[Rick Olson preceded Spencer Baba as National Finance Officer for the Americal Division Veterans Association.]

198th LIB Change of Command

By Les Hines; Vietnam Historian



I recently transcribed the 26 May 1969 issue of the 198th Brigade newsletter and became curious about Col. Robert B. Tully. I found that he is in good health in his early 90s. He sent me a photo of himself and the rug he received at the change of command ceremonies in 1969. I also received photos of the ceremony from Bill Betchel a veteran of H/17 Cavalry. Betchel sat right behind the attending dignitaries at the ceremony. Betchel's photo shows a chair reserved for Col. Tully. The following is the text of the news article.

VOL. 1, NO. 3/LZ BAYONET, VIETNAM/ 26 May 1969

NCOs Honor Col. Tully

LZ BAYONET—Departing 198th Brigade Commander, COL Robert B. Tully, was honored this week by the Senior Non-Commissioned officers of the brigade at the new Headquarters and Headquarters Company Mess Hall here.

Brigade staff officers and Senior NCOs were present for a buffet-style dinner to pay their respects to the homeward bound Brigade Commander, who headed the "Brave and Bold" from 2 December 1968 to 25 May 1969. COL



Tully departed yesterday for his new assignment with Headquarters, Department of the Army, in Washington, D.C.

Brigade CSM Buford W. Parnell served as toastmaster, and immediately following the dinner presented the colonel with two mementos of his tour of duty as commander of the 198th.

One was a four-by-six-foot white rug emblazoned with the brigade patch, specially made in Hong Kong. Another remembrance of the 198th was a photo album of brigade staff officers and Senior NCOs, including those of the four battalions and their companies and units and detachments attached to the brigade.

A third item, however, will remain at LZ Bayonet. Two large easels were set up to hold it, and at the appropriate moment HHC CO CPT Myron S. Morgan and 1SG John W. Hartman Jr. unveiled a four-by-eight-foot sign showing that the newly constructed HHC Mess Hall was officially named the "Tully Dining Hall." The sign included large replicas of the Americal Division, 198th Infantry Brigade and I Corps organizational patches.

COL Tully thanked the men, and complimented the food preparation by Field Grade Officers Mess Steward SFC James R. Martin and HHC Mess Steward SFC Henry Lee and their staffs. Concluding his remarks, he commented, "I salute all members of the 'Brave and Bold' and wish to express my sincere appreciation to you for your outstanding performance. It is a pleasure to serve with you."

CSM Parnell summed up the feeling of the assemblage, saying, "We are here tonight to honor a man we respect and admire, to say goodbye to him, and to wish him bon voyage."



New Legacy Collector Knife



Americal Division Veterans Association members:

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- This edition features the Case Stockman knife with an amber jigged bone handle. It has three Tru-Sharp surgical steel blades. The blades are a 2 5/8" clip point, a 1 7/8" sheepfoot blade, and a 1 3/4" spey blade. The knife is 3 5/8" long when it is closed. This handsome knife has nickel silver bolsters and shield.

And - it is proudly Made in the USA.

- The largest blade of the knife is etched with the Americal shoulder patch and the words Americal Division. Each knife also comes with a durable wooden storage box that displays the distinctive insignia of the Americal Division and the motto: Under the Southern Cross. Each knife will be numbered 1 of 150.

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DEDICATION



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

Eligibility for Membership

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

World War II	1942-1945
Panama	1954-1956
Vietnam War	1967-1973

Eligibility includes those who served with Task Force 6814 (WWII) and Task Force Oregon (Vietnam). Branch of service is immaterial.



Application For Membership /Change of Address Americal Division Veterans Association

Send applications and dues to:
PNC Ron Ellis, Asst. Fin. Officer
4493 Highway 64 W
Henderson, Texas 75652

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Street: _____ City: _____ State/Zip: _____

Americal Unit: _____ Dates of Service: _____

Name of Spouse: _____ E-mail: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sponsored By: _____ DD214 (Optional): _____

Change of address notification should be sent to Mr. Roger Gilmore, P.O. Box 830662,
Richardson, TX, 75080, gilmoraces@aol.com, 214-497-6543.
If changes are seasonal please provide dates.

Please enclose dues: 1 year \$15
(WWII Vets pay \$12/year)
Life Dues: 75 years & over = \$50
Under 75 years of age = \$125