



AMERICAL JOURNAL

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



UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

DIRECTORY 2014 — 2016

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One Vet's View

Visit to the Manila American Cemetery

By Gary L. Noller

In March 2015 I was fortunate to be with a group of ADVA members visiting the Manila American Cemetery. For about two hours we walked among the graves of just a few of the 17,097 souls buried there. Sprinkled among the graves were those who once served with the Americal Division. I cannot say how many Americal soldiers are buried there, but based on the portion I saw, I guess maybe a few hundred.

Our visit came at the end of a great week in Cebu visiting World War II battle sites. The group continuing to Manila included Roger Gilmore, National Adjutant; Spencer Baba, National Finance Officer; PNC Ronald Ellis, Assistant National Finance Officer; and Vern Pike, Board Member. We also spent a day visiting Corregidor Island.

We were met at the cemetery by Mr. Hubert (Bert) Caloud, Assistant Superintendent. He had advanced notice of our visit and went out of his way to make sure our short visit was fitting and appropriate. In particular, he told us of the history of the cemetery and plans for future improvements.

A few of the statistics about the cemetery: Dedicated December 8, 1960, administered by the American Battle Monument Commission (ABMC), 152 acres, 17,097 graves, 29 Medal of Honor recipients, 3,740 unknown soldiers, several sets of brothers and father and son pairs.

The ABMC administers several cemeteries in Europe and over 218,000 graves are under their care world-wide. Manila is the only ABMC site in the Pacific area. The National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific located in the Punchbowl in Honolulu is administered by the Veterans Administration. Manila is the largest cemetery under ABMC supervision.

In addition to the graves the cemetery features the Tablets of Missing listing the names of the 36,286 U.S. Military members who were lost but never recovered. The story of World War II is told on 25 ten-foot high maps located on the walls in rooms in the hemicycle. The achievements of the Americal Division are well noted.

The cemetery is within the grounds of the former Ft. McKinley and is in excellent shape. Vegetation is bright green even in the dry season and not a twig can be found out of place. All headstones are equally spaced six feet apart in all directions. Visitors make use of an on-site chapel for prayer and reflection. Although the cemetery is located in a booming revitalization zone in the suburb of Taguig City the grounds remain quiet and hallowed.

Our final duty at the cemetery was a memorial service in the chapel. Caloud surprised us by reading a passage from the end of the book *Under the Southern Cross* by Francis Cronin. The reading was an outstanding way to end our visit.


Additional information about the cemetery can be obtained from Hubert O. Caloud.



Assistant Superintendent. American Battle Monuments Commission. Manila American Cemetery, McKinley Road, Fort Bonifacio | Taguig City, Philippines 1634 | T +632 844 0212. Mail may be sent to Unit 9600, Box 1855 | DPO AP 96515-1855 | USA .

As a sidebar, Caloud retired from the U.S. Marine Corps and had a good friend in the Americal Division in Vietnam. He writes of his friend, "My friend in the Americal was Michael " Mike" Tudor from Traer, Iowa. Was in E Company 3-21 from about October of 1970 until the last of the Division withdrew to Ft. Lewis where he was discharged. He was an 11 Charlie and spent most of his time up on LZ Center. Mike passed away in Arizona a couple years ago but has two sons would be very interested to talking to anyone who knew Mike."

Visiting the Manila American Cemetery was one of the high points of our ten day trip to the Philippines. Everyone in our group came away with an increased appreciation for the sacrifices of those who gave their lives for our country. We were also very happy to see their service is remembered and that their final resting places are honored and in good hands.



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

New member additions to the ADVA roster for this reporting period are only slightly better than the last reporting period. During this quarter we added eighteen new members. This is an increase of four new members over the last period. The Association continues to see a gradual decline in new members. We have no immediate plans for a mass recruiting effort to add new members, so word of mouth or the Americal web site are the only means of reaching out to Americal Division veterans to bring these individuals into the ADVA. If this trend continues, our membership total will continue to decline rather than remain stable or increase slightly.

Members Dale Rink, Bill Lobeck, Michael Dachille, Danny Phillips, Les Hines, Larry Hammes and PNC Gary L. Noller sponsored Americal Division veterans for ADVA membership this reporting period. We had no WWII veterans of the Americal Division join our ranks this reporting period.

New life members added to the ADVA roster, either by annual pay members upgrading to life membership or an Americal Division veteran joining the association as a life member, was at its lowest total in many periods. We added only five new life members; all were annual pay members upgrading to life member status.

Former association members applying for reinstatement continues a very positive trend. This reporting period, nine former members sent in dues payments for membership reinstatement. If each annual pay member keeps his dues current, this reporting statistic would be completely eliminated.

For annual pay members with a May renewal date, your dues renewal notice with new membership card, good until May 2016 upon payment of dues, went to the United States Post Office for mailing the last week of April. Please look for this renewal notice and mail your dues payment promptly using the pre-addressed envelope included with the mailing. Your dues payment keeps the association financially solvent and funds the printing and mailing of each quarterly issue of 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. If you wish to contact me by electronic means, my email address is gilmoraces@aol.com. From the Americal Division website, a link is available to contact me by email with your membership concerns or questions. From the website home page, click on Commo, then click the Contact Us link. Under Contact The Staff section, select National Adjutant. A pop up screen gives you an email form to write your question; once you complete your email text and click Submit, the email comes directly to my AOL email address.

New Members

Raymond E. Bir
HHC 3/21st Inf
Leesburg, FL
★ *Self*

David L. Bowling
523rd Sig Bn
East Point, KY
★ *Dale Rink*

Larry Cassell
C/5/46th Inf
Lone Oak, TX
★ *Self*

Michael P. Francis
1/82nd Arty D Btry
Oro Valley, AZ
★ *Self*

Warren D. Frank
39th Cmbt Engrs
Lavalle, WI
★ *Bill Lobeck*

Scott M. Gatewood
D/3/21st Inf
Memphis, TN
★ *Danny Phillips*

Benjamin H. German
B/1/6th Inf
Hampstead, MD
★ *Michael Dachille*

Michael E. Goettee
123rd Avn Bn
Conroe, TX
★ *PNC Gary L. Noller*

Charles A. Heagle
523rd Sig Bn
Clifton, IL
★ *Self*

Michael W. Muhlheim
D/2/1st Inf
Fredonia, KS
★ *Self*

David C. Shaw
723rd Maint Bn Co D
Spring Lake, MI
★ *Self*

Richard G. Sytsma
B/1/20th Inf
Grandville, MI
★ *Self*

Bob Van Tholen
11th LIB
Glenview, IL
★ *Les Hines*

Ronald Walquist
196th LIB
Idaho Falls, ID
★ *Self*

Paul A. Waters
E/1/6th Inf
Owego, NY
★ *Self*

Robert Williamson
196th LIB
Boardman, OH
★ *Self*

Stanley H. Wills
1/82nd Arty C Btry
Finleyville, PA
★ *Self*

Robert K. Wiss
1/52nd Inf
N. Kansas City, MO
★ *Larry Hammes*

New Paid Life Members

Charles B. Ankrom
3/16th Arty
Palm Coast, FL
★ *PNC Larry Swank*

Merrill Franklin
Navy Seabees
Elberton, GA
★ *James B. Adams, Jr.*

Luther M. Kurrass
198th LIB
Pine Mountain, GA
★ *Self*

Wade L. Rodland
C/1/6th Inf
East Freedom, PA
★ *Danny Dinges*

Robert S. Spangler
132nd Inf Rgmt
Horseshoe Beach, FL
★ PNC David W. Taylor

Re-instated Members

Brian Bartlett
D/1/52nd Inf
Reno, NV
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

James B. Daniels
196th LIB
McAlpin, FL
★ Self

James Daniels
26th Cmbt Engrs Co A
Pownal, ME
★ Michael Trimble

Ed Deverell
B/4/21st Inf
Aurora, CO
★ Slater Davis

Mayo K. Gravatt
B/1/46th Inf
Blackstone, VA
★ Bill McLaughlin

John Haas
A/5/46th Inf
Woolwich Twnshp, NJ
★ Self

Michael J. O'Connor
D/4/3rd Inf
San Pedro, CA
★ Les Hines

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

John J. Swek
5/46th Inf
Redford, MI
★ PNC David W. Taylor

TAPS LISTING; MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

World War II

Robert Fulton *
221st FA Btry A
Natick, MA
November 2014

Carl E. Kohler *
57th Engrs
Millbrook, AL
December 2011

Joseph Otmar
164th Inf Rgmt
Salinas, CA
April 13, 2015

Alfred Piscitello *
101st Med Rgmt
Gloucester, MA
January 28, 2015

Robert E. Van Osdol *
57th Engrs Co C
Astoria, OR
December 30, 2014

Vietnam War

Jerry O. Anderson *
6th Spt Bn
Conyers, GA
October 12, 2014

Terry Babler *
1/1st Cav A Trp
New Glarus, WI
April 28, 2015

Anthony J. Conti
1/6th Inf
Southington, CT
March 19, 2015

Lloyd Luker
17th Cav H Trp
Unknown
Unknown

Josef Luptowitz *
D/4/31st Inf
Palm Springs, CA
February 11, 2015

Tony May *
B/3/21st Inf
Phoenix, OR
February 24, 2015

James McNeill *
14th Avn Bn
Seagrove, NC
December 18, 2013

Max J. Mizejewski
176th ASHC
Anaheim, CA
September 20, 2014

Steven B. O'Keefe *
A/4/21st Inf
Sunset, TX
January 3, 2015

Donald Raymond
17th Cav F Trp
Ladysmith, WI
December 1, 2001

Danny Schulze
Sidney, OH
February 2015

*ADVA Member

Membership and Voting Rights

Classes of Membership: There shall be three (3) classes of members—ACTIVE, HONORARY, and ASSOCIATE. Only active members shall have the right to vote. No person who obtains membership in this Association shall be permitted to retain such membership if their military service past or present, is other than honorable, or if that person is engaged in un-American activities.

Eligibility Requirements:

A. Active membership: Any officer or enlisted person, who has honorably served with the Americal Division, 23rd Infantry Division, Task Force 6814, Task Force Oregon, and any other unit of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, who was attached with or assigned to and served with the Americal Division shall be eligible for active membership upon submission of proper application and payment of appropriate fees and dues that may be established. Any officer or enlisted person who has served with or is now serving with the 182nd Infantry Regiment (separate) shall be eligible for active membership upon submission of proper application and payment of dues as established.

B. Honorary Life Membership: May be awarded to an individual who has served with distinction in the Americal Division or the ADVA. Life Membership shall be automatically awarded to Medal of Honor veterans of the Americal Division. Members receiving this award shall retain their right to vote. This award shall be made on the approval of the National Commander and the National Executive Council.

C. Any person not eligible for Active Membership may be recommended by an active member in good standing for an Associate Membership. Widow(er)s of deceased Active Members may be retained on the membership roll as Associate Members for a period of one year following the death of the Active Member. The widow(er) shall then be contacted to determine if she/he wants to continue as a dues paying Associate Member.

ADVA MEMBERSHIP 31 April 2015

World War II	404
Vietnam	2,508
Cold War	8
Associate Members:	214
Total Members	3,134

Americal Legacy Foundation Report By Roger Gilmore, Chairman Board of Directors

Americal Legacy Foundation Web Site

An initial draft for the Americal Legacy Foundation web site has been created by the web site designer. David Taylor, one of the ALF directors, contracted with a web design company for the work. ALF directors have done an initial review of the web design and contents and offered comments and suggestions for changes. Most suggested changes impact the web site content intended to convey our mission and goals to ADVA members and other parties interested in supporting foundation initiatives.

Director Taylor plans to have the Pay Pal feature included in the web site to provide capability for purchasing Americal Legacy themed items, such as books and memorabilia. Taylor will get the Pay Pal account set up in the coming weeks and have the web site designer set up the feature.

We expect to have the Americal Legacy Foundation web site up and running by mid-2015.

Americal Legacy Foundation 2015 Calendar

ADVA members' response to the calendar solicitations for foundation donations has been exceptional to date. Foundation bank deposits from calendar donations through April 2015 are right at \$18,000.00. We did pick up \$200.00 in donations during our trip to Cebu for the Americal Division monument dedication ceremony and we deeply appreciate those funds donated by VFW Post 12130 in Cebu. The foundation deeply appreciates this tremendous support, all of which will be directed to future monument projects.

The Foundation has a goal of reaching \$20,000.00 in donations from the 2015 Americal Legacy Calendar. If you have not mailed your donation yet or feel you can make an additional donation, please mail your donation, payable to Americal Legacy Foundation, to director Gary L. Noller. His mailing address is:

Mr. Gary L. Noller
P.O. Box 1268
Center Point, TX 78010

Americal Monument at Fort Sill, Oklahoma

In the last issue of the Americal Journal, I stated that our gifting letter for the Americal Division Artillery monument was ready to be presented to the Fort Sill Commanding General and the Secretary of Defense. This, according to the procedure I was given, is the final approval step prior to the start of actual construction.

Our POC at Fort Sill, the 1/14th Artillery CSM at Fort Sill, met with the Fort Sill Master Planning Department in late March and presented them with our gifting letter. The Master Planning Department reviewed the letter and submitted changes to the text and required monument specifications. I revised the gifting letter and forwarded an electronic version of the letter as well as a hard copy to the CSM acting as our POC in early April. We are now awaiting a second review of the gifting letter by the Fort Sill Master Planning Department.

The Fort Sill review and approval for this monument placement has been an agonizingly long process. ADVA member David Laukat has been most helpful in linking up with post personnel to help us set up a communication link with the post departments responsible for approving our project. I cannot say specifically what the impediments have been so far, but most likely is due to the layers of approval requirements embedded in the Fort Sill monument placement policy.

I am still optimistic that this project can be started in late 2015.

Americal Division Monuments WWII Monument in Cebu, Philippines

Directors of Americal Legacy Foundation and ADVA members traveled to Cebu, Philippines this past March for a ceremony to dedicate the recently completed Americal Division monument. The monument is at the site where the Japanese Army surrendered to the Americal Division forces in Cebu during August 1945. VFW Post 12130 of Cebu coordinated the monument design and construction and arranged the dedication ceremony.

Foundation directors making the trip to Cebu to attend the ceremony were Spencer Baba, Ronald Ellis, David Taylor, Gary Noller and Roger Gilmore. Also attending were ADVA members Verner Pike, David Eichhorn, Tony Commander and his wife Evelyn, as well as Americal Legacy Foundation Advisor David Colamaria.



Americal Legacy Foundation directors, ADVA members and VFW Post 12130 members at the monument dedication ceremony.

We were honored to meet Ms. Eusebia Ycot, the present land owner and then five year old daughter of the land owner where the surrender took place. Following the monument dedication ceremony, all attendees had a traditional Philippine meal, which included a whole roast pig.

The Americal Legacy Foundation and all Americal Division veterans truly appreciate the efforts of VFW Post 12130 member Terry Davenport and all post members for their efforts in getting this monument planned, funded and placed at the actual surrender site.

For a complete report on the Cebu trip and monument site history, please read WWII Historian David Taylor's article in this issue.

Tribute to Terry Duane Babler

By Gary L. Noller

In 1994 I assumed the duties of National Commander for the Americal Division Veterans Association. One of the first tasks I needed to address was the lack of a commander for the Great Lakes Region chapter. But it turned out to be an easy task to complete.

Shortly after creating the americal.org website in 1989 I became acquainted with Terry Babler. Terry used the locator service of the website to further his search for veterans of 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment. Terry entered the U.S. Army and served as a combat medic with this unit in Vietnam in 1970-1971.

It did not take Terry very much time to acquire a few hundred names of veterans that served with this well-known and distinguished unit. Using this as a start he founded the 1st/1st Cavalry Association and served as its presiding officer and champion for many years.

I called Terry and asked if he would take on the duties of commander of the Great Lakes Region. I thought he could use his organizational skills and high energy level to put the region back on track. He thought about it for a few moments and then asked, "What help will I get from the national organization?" I told him that I would see that he received a roster of members in the region and \$50 for postage. It must have sounded like a fair deal because Terry accepted the challenge and took off running. It was a great success.

In 1999 Terry discussed the idea of having an ADVA National Reunion in Washington, D.C. on Veterans Day 2002 weekend. This date corresponded with the 20th anniversary of the dedication of the Wall. I told Terry that the decision for the 2002 reunion would be made in 2000. But he was adamant on getting a start right away. A few weeks later at the 1999 reunion in St. Louis members gave Terry the green light for the Washington, D.C. reunion.

The 2002 reunion experienced the largest attendance of any ADVA reunion that I recall. About 1,000 Americal veterans overflowed the Doubletree Hotel in Crystal City. We were able to march in the anniversary parade and attend ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery. Terry arranged for Americal recipients of the Medal of Honor to attend and to sit alongside former division commanding generals. Again, it was a great success.



Over the years Terry, with the able help of his wife Judy, organized many veteran reunions at events such as Winterfest in New Glarus, Wisconsin and at annual meets at Melbourne, Florida and Kokomo, Indiana. They were always a lot of fun. Terry usually had the next event planned before the current one was over.

Part of the fun was the special emphasis that Terry and Judy paid to their close friend, PNC John (Dutch) DeGroot. The Bablers favored the Green Bay Packers while Dutch was loyal to the hometown Chicago Bears. There was always some sort of bet on the line and more often than not Dutch had to take a mild beating when the Packers had the best of the Bears. Most often this required Dutch to stand up in front of a large group of veterans and to suffer a slight humiliation of some sort dealt out by Judy and Dutch, "Next year it will be my turn," seemed to be all Dutch could manage in his own defense.

Terry always worked above and beyond what most people could accomplish. It seemed as if he worked with the idea that there was too little time and too much to accomplish. Many people can juggle two or three large tasks but Terry always had four or five things in progress all at the same time. In recent years he had to curtail his participation in events due to illness. Sadly, he passed away on April 28, 2015 at the William S. Middleton VA Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin. He was 65.

Dutch DeGroot represented the officers and members of the ADVA at Terry's funeral. Roger Gilmore, ADVA National Adjutant, remembered Terry by saying, "Terry was a core member of ADVA and a tireless worker for both ADVA and the 1/1 Cav Association. I made only one trip to the annual Kokomo, Indiana Vietnam Vets gathering and Terry was there to welcome me." PNC David W. Taylor presented Terry with the ADVA Lifetime Achievement Award at a Kokomo reunion several years ago.

Terry is survived by his spouse Judy along with two children and five grandchildren. His many Vietnam veteran buddies will miss him greatly.

I pray that Terry is now at Peace and that we draw inspiration from his achievements and zest for life. I am sure he wished to do a few more reunions. He will not be forgotten. He will always be remembered.



Scholarship Report

By Bill Bruinsma

The scholarship fund received 805 donations from individuals since July 1, 2014. I expect that to increase to 840 to 850 donations by July 1, 2015. That works out to a 28% response which to me is a great effort from ADVA members. If I remember correctly most operations asking for money get about a 5% response or less. Our members have been very generous in giving to the scholarship fund.

There are 42 applications for scholarships for the 2015 award year. This is six less than last year. I received the majority of the applications at or near the May 1 deadline.

As of May 1 we received close to \$22,000 in donations and that should be increased to about \$23,000.00 by July 1. Americal Legacy Foundation directors have decided to allow up to \$10,000 of reserve funds to be added to this year's donations. This will provide at least \$32,000.00 to distribute to 2015 scholarship awardees.

A small problem arises from time to time due to applicants receiving a scholarship award and then not attending the school. I just received a notice that a student had not attended the school. When I talked to the student they confirmed they had not gone to the university last year. Scholarship checks are made out in the name of the student and the school and sent directly to the school. The schools will return the scholarship to me if the student does not follow through with enrollment. Students who are not able to enroll or who wish to change schools should notify me as soon as they know of this development. They should also contact me if their award does not reach the school as intended.

Thank you to everyone who has made the Americal scholarship program such a great success. Any questions or additional information on how to donate or on scholarship application procedures should be directed to me. I may be reached at 269-795-5237 or wb3379@gmail.com.

Vietnam Historian Report

By Les Hines

M/Sgt (retired) Ray Bows new book, "In Honor And Memory" is a pretty special book!

The book records the honors bestowed on military servicemen by having a base or facility named after them due to their actions in Southeast Asia.

I have discovered things that I did not know about the Americal Division and Task Force Oregon naming of firebases. There are even some useful maps to help locate many of the places that were mentioned.

"In Honor and Memory"; A comprehensive record of over 800 named installations and 2,300 firebases. Facilities named in honor of fallen servicemen. Regular \$59.95, currently available at \$49.95 plus \$7.00 S&H. www.bowsmilitarybooks.com or www.in-honor-and-memory.com. Or contact Ray and Pia Bows, PO Box 1865, New Smyrna, FL 32170. Phone: 386-566-2089. E-mail: bowsbooks@hotmail.com.

I obtained the following request from a recent Vietnam Helicopter Pilot Association newsletter (January-February 2015). I encourage anyone who might remember this call to provide additional information.

"I'm a historian at DPMO (Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office). Can you help with a puzzling call sign from November 1968?"

"A chopper with the call sign 'Western Flex' participated in a search on 17 Nov 1968 for a USMC F-4 that went down about 25 miles south of Chu Lai. That chopper recovered one body from the F-4, but the pilot remains unaccounted for to this day. The identity of 'Western Flex' has always been a mystery to our office. There is no indication if the chopper was USMC or Army, but since western flex is a type of saddle, I would suppose that it was assigned to an air Cav unit.

"I'd be most appreciative of any insights about this mystery. If we can identify the unit that this bird came from, we're hoping that possibly its veterans, or records that may survive from it, could provide new clues for the recovery of the missing F-4 pilot."

Contact Niall Brannigan, Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office, Southeast Asia Division, Tel: 703-699-1229, E-mail: niall.r.brannigan.civ@mail.mil.

23rd Military Police Co. Reunion

The 23rd MP Company Chapter of the ADVA will have a reunion on 25-28 June 2015 at Fort Drum, NY. Arrival and check-in is set for the Comfort Inn & Suites, 110 Commerce Park Drive, Watertown, NY. Contact the hotel at 315-782-2700.

A draft itinerary has been prepared to include transportation to Ft. Drum on Friday and Saturday. Activities will include a Friday welcome and briefing by the 91st MP Battalion followed by a 23rd MP Company briefing and tour. A memorial service will be held at 1100 followed by a picnic lunch.

On Saturday the group will have breakfast with the 23rd MP NCOs followed by a tour of Ft. Drum. An evening social at The Commons will conclude the day.

Arrangements have been made by Vern Pike, Vice President. He says, "The MP organization at Fort Drum is world class; they are exceptionally well-led, their NCOs are some of the best I've ever seen; their soldiers display exceptional pride in unit and self-confidence, and they are the best equipped and armed MPs I've ever seen. The combat capability of this unit is amazing - their firepower exceeds that of an infantry company."

For more information contact Jim O'Brien at ions3@aol.com.

A Home To Go Home To

By Gary L. Noller

This is probably going to sound like a paid advertisement-but it is not. Paid, that is.

In February 2015 a small group of ADVA members paid a short visit to the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) in Gulfport, Mississippi. The previous day we were at Ft. Benning for the dedication of the name of Donald Sloat on the Medal of Honor pedestal at the Americal Division memorial at the National Infantry Museum. Gulfport is about six hours from Ft. Benning so we included it on our itinerary.

Our specific interest at the AFRH was to check on Al Cota and Bob Macy. Al served in a medical unit in the Americal Division in World War II. He also has the distinction of being the founding National Adjutant of the ADVA. His signature is on the charter that began the association. He is also happy to be known locally as "The Agitator".

When we arrived Al was in the process of providing additional training opportunities for the AFRH staff. But he soon warmed up to his usual snappy personality and joined us in the hobby room. Our group included Roger Gilmore, National Adjutant; PNC Ronald Ellis, Asst. National Finance Officer; PNC Ron Ward, board member; and myself. We stayed long enough to have an evening meal and when we asked about paying Al waved us off by saying, "You are our guests."

Al served in the Americal Division in WWII and after the war he relocated from his native Boston area to the warmer weather of Southern California. He joined the Navy reserves and retired about 30 years ago. While in California he became acquainted with Bob Macy. Al eventually took up residence in Gulfport at what was once called the Navy Home. A few years later Bob's wife passed and Bob joined his old friend in Gulfport. Bob is Al's constant companion and provides care and attention every day.

Al always wanted to be buried with all his parts but last year it was necessary to have part of one leg removed at the threat of death. While this slows Al and prevents him from getting out as often as he wishes it has not brought his to a complete halt. Al likes the back and forth with others and sometimes may seem ornery. But if you look closely he most often cannot contain a slight curl at the corners of his mouth to indicate that he is not as serious as may be indicated.

One thing that Al asked over and over was that I be sure to tell others of the opportunity to reside at the AFRH. The AFRH is a government agency and also operates the residence in Washington, DC that was once known as the Soldiers home. The facility in Gulfport was totally destroyed by Hurricane Katrina but was rebuilt to modern standards. It has everything that one would want in a retirement home. The AFRH describes its amenities to include the following: outdoor swimming pool (lap swimming and water aerobics), professionally equipped fitness center and physical fitness, programs, library (print, audio and video), individual work areas for arts and crafts and other hobbies, bike shop, bowling center, card game, and recreation rooms, computer center, fully equipped media room for movies and presentations, and a multi-purpose area for live entertainment and dances.

As is the case in many instances, veterans need to meet eligibility requirements to reside at the AFRH. Highest is priority are military retirees and 100% service connected disabled veterans. Other veterans may be eligible and can determine their eligibility by completing and returning an application form. The AFRH features independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing care. A medical facility is provided within the AFRH and additional medical care is nearby at DOD and VA facilities. Veterans pay a portion of their annual income and top at a very affordable monthly fees. The building is a high-rise located on the beach and is served by a local bus line. Veterans can have their own cars and come and go as they please.

The home has been established for a long time. The AFRH says, "The Naval Home was officially opened in 1834, and was known as the Naval Asylum until the name was changed to the Naval Home in 1880. Naval personnel who were "so injured or infirmed as to be unable to contribute materially to their own support" were allowed to live at the home and asked to labor as much as they were able toward the care of it. The Naval Home was initially funded by contributions from the active force. As early as 1799, contributions of 20 cents per month were taken from every active duty member for the relief of seamen in the service. This contribution was augmented by all fines imposed upon persons of the Navy and was the principal source of monies for the Naval Hospital Fund/Pension Fund. The Pension Fund also received all money accruing from the sale of prizes of war. For nearly 100 years, the Naval Home was funded by these monies. In 1934, the Pension Fund was abolished by Congress and the proceeds were deposited into the U.S. Treasury. From 1935 until 1991, the Naval Home was funded by Navy appropriations. Today, it is funded by monthly withholding from the active duty, fines and forfeitures, interest off the Trust Fund and resident fees." More information may be obtained at <https://www.afrh.gov/afrh/gulf/gulfcampus.htm>.

If you are in the area feel free to stop in and visit with Al and Bob. They are happy to show veterans the place and describe the benefits of residing at the AFRH.



Photo: Bob Macy and Al Cota seated. Ron Ellis, Gary Noller, and Ron Ward standing. Photo by Roger Gilmore



Dear editor,

The 164th Infantry Association of the United States of America 70th Annual Reunion will be held 9-11 October 2015 in Bismarck/Mandan, North Dakota. This "Victory Reunion" celebrates 70 Years since the end of World War II. For additional information on the event please telephone Mr. Ben Kemp at 701-400-6136 or send an e-mail to blkemp@bis.midco.net.

Shirley J. Olgeirson, Lt. Col. (ret)
Editor, The 164th Infantry News
P. O. Box 1111; Bismarck, ND 58502-1111
Editor164thInfantryNews@hotmail.com

Dear editor,

Apparently there is quite a bit of Americal stuff posted on YouTube from a variety of sources including someplace called the Film Archives. There are also many two or three minute videos posted by various persons. To find videos try a search on You Tube with keywords like Americal Vietnam and or the name of specific Americal units and you will find a lot of videos. Just a couple of longer videos that I found were one about the 198th Brigade in its early days and then another about a Americal Sniper School in 1971. Apparently, also, there is a company on the web called Critical Past that has acquired some Americal video and is now hawking it for a price. See links below.

Americal Sniper School:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-wsYPI2QCY>
Aerial view of Americal Division base at Chu Lai:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSKihqALZpw>

Activities of the 198th LIB

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dta2mCEPYXs>
Rick Olson
D 1/46th Oct 68--Oct 69

Dear editor,

Anthony (Tony) Conti was one of my two Italian RECON brothers. The other was Anthony (Tony) Mancuso who stepped on a mine and was killed on June 25, 1968. They were both from New York and could never be separated.

Tony Conti battled cancer for the past ten years. Two years ago Debbie and I flew to Connecticut and to visit Tony and it was the first time we had seen each other since 1969. We held on to each other and did not let go.

Tony and I spent the worst day of our lives in a rice paddy on July 8, 1968. I was point man that day. The NVA tossed three hand grenades into our 14 man group killing one and wounding another eight. Tony and I were next to each other on the rice paddy. Tony got schrapnel in his leg while I came out unharmed.

I stayed in touch with Tony by phone and we always ended our conversations by saying how much we loved each other. Several months ago Tony called me to say goodbye. He passed away on March 19, 2015.

I will never forget my RECON brothers. God bless my Italian brothers.

Kurt McFadden; kurtmc@sbcglobal.net
E/1/6/198 5/68-5/69



Tony Conti, July 1968, Dragon Valley

Dear editor,

I hope you can help me identify a member of the AMERICAL Division that served during the Vietnam War. I have an olive green fatigue jacket (dated 1969) that has the last name EARLEY on it and of course the subdued pattern of the Americal Division patch. I believe he was an officer, but unfortunately the branch of service and rank patches have been removed from the collar. I am grateful for any help you can provide.

Allen Hall; rahallub@aol.com

Dear editor,

I am trying to find any information about my father who was with the Americal division during World War II. His name is Anthony Karpilo. His records were lost with along with millions of others with the fire at the records retention center. He was at Guadalcanal.

Richard Karpilo
719-240-6940; Karp67@gmail.com

Dear editor,

I just got the first quarter 2015 edition of the Americal Journal. My wife surprised me by sending in the short story and picture on page 10 of me saluting the flag on the Fourth of July. Your two articles, the editor's comments about Joe and Esther Feeler and the one on Combat Correspondent, were excellent. I was excited to see my story of our platoon's tour in Nam has already gotten me responses from half of the guys. A few are ADVA members and I am working on the others to join too. The first guy I heard from was Pat Mullis who is working in Kuwait for a distribution company that supplies the troops in the Middle East. He retired from the Army after twenty plus years and has been in Kuwait for years. He says it reminds him of Nam as it's all sand and the heat is as intense. You would have thought he would have learned something from a tour in Nam.

Jim Gales; galesgemoll@aol.com
1001 W. Fairfield CT.
Glendale, WI. 53217 (414) 351-deer

Dear editor,

I just read your "Editor's Comments" in the first quarter 2015 edition of the Americal Journal and enjoyed your comments about Joe and Esther Feeler. I did not realize that you had lived in Albuquerque at one time -- when did you leave? I lived in Albuquerque from 1976-2006, moved to Texas in retirement to be near my wife's family, and moved back to Albuquerque in 2013 after losing my wife in Texas to breast cancer.

I joined ADVA in late 1993. In early 1995 I was called by Joe Feeler and invited to a breakfast at Golden Corral for local Albuquerque-area ADVA veterans. I completely agree with your description of Joe and Esther as two of the finest people one could know. They were so gracious to me and welcoming at the breakfast. There were about a dozen veterans at the breakfast, fairly evenly split between WWII and VN. I attended three or four of these breakfasts during 1995 and even

took two of my daughters to one of them to meet these wonderful veterans. I was so sad to open my paper in November of 1995 and see an obituary for Joe. Sadly, the breakfasts seemed to die with Joe. Thank you so much for your comments about this fine couple. And thank you for all your contributions to the ADVA and to the Americal Journal. It is such a fine, professional publication and is highly anticipated each quarter.

Doug Black; dougblack@aol.com
Albuquerque, NM; (505) 890-8529
Vietnam 69-70; A/1/46, 196th LIB

Dear editor,

I saw the photos in the Jan-Feb-Mar 2015 issue of the Americal Journal that was with the article "NCOs Honor Col. Tulley". One of the photos is of what appears to be a LRRP holding a red flag. Could that be of Sgt. Dane? He was one of our NCOs during that time. It sure looks like him from what I remember. If so I wondered why he would be there?

Bob Sedlmeyer; mgobob@comcast.net

Dear editor,

You and your staff did an EXCELLENT job with the Vietnam archive photographs in the first quarter 2015 Americal Journal. The cover and feature layout look great. I don't know how many extra copies you have run, but if possible, I would like to purchase five extra copies. Just let me know how much to make a check out for and I'll get it in the mail to you. Thanks so much,

Bob Spangler; bob.a.spangler@gmail.com

Dear editor,

The usual great job on the Americal Journal for the first quarter 2015. I particularly enjoyed the article about Bandmaster Whiting and the Americal Band. The presence of the CIB and crossed rifles grabbed my attention. I wager that very few bandsmen are certified combat infantrymen. You will probably get comments from others on the photo on page 17. He is wearing the mess dress uniform of a Major. In his (and My) day rank on the mess dress was signified by the number of loops in the sleeve braid. A lieutenant colonel would have four loops.

Keep up the good work. Without a doubt the quality and content of our Americal Journal exceeds that of any other military organizations' publication.

Bob Cudworth; DrRobert2@Comcast.Net



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. Recommend everyone book now 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 free 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



Return to Cebu A 70th Anniversary

By David Taylor

For five busy days from March 23rd to the 27th, eight ADVA Vietnam Veterans and one ADVA associate member honored the service of the Americal's Veterans in World War II by retracing their steps on the island of Cebu, the Philippines. This year, 2015, marks the 70th Anniversary of the Americal's landing on Cebu on March 26, 1945 and the defeat of the Japanese five months later on August 28.

This special search for history was arranged by Dr. Jobers Bersales of the University of San Carlos (Cebu City) with logistical help from the American VFW Post in Cebu City. Cebu is an island of 6.4 million Filipinos and Cebu City boasts a population of 2.2 million. During World War II Cebu City saw a population of 150,000 which quickly diminished once the Japanese invaded the island and many "Cebuano's" fled to the countryside to evade torture and privation and, for many, to join the resistance movement of regular and auxiliary guerillas.

Monday – March 23

Monday began with a tour of Museo Sugbo in Cebu City, an old Spanish Prison which is now a museum dedicated to Cebu's past and contains many items from the Japanese occupation of the island.

Hanging on a wall in the museum are two posters printed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Imperial Forces which are harsh examples of the complete dominance of the Japanese over their conquered foes. One, in English issues a warning to all Filipinos that (1) "Anyone who inflicts or attempts to inflict an injury upon Japanese soldiers or individuals will be shot to death" (2) "If the assailant or attempted assailant cannot be found, we will hold ten influential persons as hostages who live in and

about the streets or municipalities where the event happened" (3) "Officials and influential persons should tell this warning to your citizens and villagers as soon as possible and should prevent these crimes before they happen on your own responsibilities" and (4) "The Filipinos should understand our real intentions and should work together with us to maintain public peace and order in the Philippines".

Dr. Bersales noted that in many cases, groups of ten hostages were summarily executed in an attempt to coerce the citizens into absolute obedience. The Japanese surrounded the city with a bamboo fence with few gates, in an attempt to keep the cities citizens from fleeing to the hills. While many escaped, most important to the Japanese was retaining those Filipinos needed to run public utilities, banks and other administrative functions in the city.

Another poster from the Japanese High Command, written in the local dialect of Cebuano's, directs all citizens to seek written permission to obtain the basics staples of life such as rice, sugar, salt, cocoa, cooking oil, etc. Any Filipino caught with these goods without written permission from the Japanese High Command would be severely punished. The

only food stuffs not listed were tubular plants, or root crops, which grew wild and were difficult for the Japanese to control. With edicts such as these, the Japanese attempted to control every facet of life of the Filipino citizens.

After Museo Sugbo, the group proceeded to Fort San Pedro, a Spanish area fort that once served as the headquarters of the Philippine Constabulary before the war. Across the street from the fort was Independence Square, which held a War Memorial to all Filipinos who died during the occupation of the Japanese. Amazingly at the opposite end of the square stood a monument to the Japanese who died on Cebu, contributed by the Japanese people. Cebu, in its post-war effort to seek closer ties to Japan as a valuable trading partner, has reached accommodations for these Japanese remembrances, even though they suffered greatly under Japanese occupation.

Our next stop was the Cebu Normal University, the word "Normal" referring to its Liberal Arts orientation, although the university's focus on training teachers has now expanded to include a College of Arts & Sciences, with an emphasis on educating nurses as well as teachers.



In search of history at the Museo Sugbo (Left to right):

Terry Davenport (Cebu resident and member of the VFW Post in Cebu City), ADVA members Dave Eichhorn, Dave Taylor (ADVA WWII Historian), Gary Noller, Tony Commander, (Professor Bersales in red shirt), behind Bersales is Ron Ellis, Roger Gilmore, Vern Pike, Spencer Baba and, on far right, ADVA Associate Member (and Americal Legacy Foundation Historical Advisor) Dave Colamaria, whose grandfather fought with the Americal on Cebu with G Company, 182nd Regiment.



As in so much of what we saw during the week, this peaceful setting of education was in stark contrast to the wartime use of the building, as the Kempei-Tai Headquarters of the Japanese Secret Police. We walked through the building and were told the classrooms were former holding cells for prisoners. We entered the basement whose rooms served as torture chambers where pregnant women were raped. Few left the building alive. Outside in the courtyard renovations were being made. It was here that executions occurred and, during the dead of night bodies were secretly buried.

From Cebu City we traveled to the Buhisan Hill Dam, in the high ridges overlooking Cebu City. The dam was built in 1910-1911 and was the city's main source of potable water. When it became clear the Americal Division was to land to liberate Cebu, the Japanese High Command issued orders to destroy the dam and poison the water. It was the mission of part of the 182nd Regiment to secure the dam upon landing on Cebu but Philippine guerillas learned of the Japanese plan and attacked the Japanese guards on the dam to protect the water supply before the Americal arrived. The dam was

never destroyed.

From the dam we moved on narrow winding roads across dense ridges (Collectively called "Babag Ridge") in a rugged area marked by numerous Japanese tunnels and fighting positions. The Japanese used these positions to thwart the advance of the Americal soldiers in their drive to defeat the Japanese in their "last ditch stand" overlooking Cebu City. Heavy fighting occurred in mid to late April 1945 to dislodge the enemy from these positions. The Americal had to call on its 164th Regiment which was in 8th Army Reserve, to help dislodge the Japanese by coming from behind their positions on Babag Ridge.

Driving back from the caves & tunnels through the suburbs of Cebu, Dr. Bersales (Jobers) pointed out sites where Japanese gun emplacements once stood to impede the advance of the Americal, now the location of apartments. Our road rose slightly, as Jobers pointed out it was a hill during the Japanese defense of

the land overlooking the city. A Japanese tank was buried in a small river by the side of the road during the war...and now a building sits on top of the buried tank. Jobers explained that as construction expanded after the war with a burgeoning Cebu economy, homes were unknowingly built over previous Japanese tunnels and sometimes buildings collapsed. This condition still occurs today from time to time, a stark reminder of the enemy's wartime dominance on the island.

The day was concluded with a group dinner at the Chateau de Busay, an excellent restaurant with open air patios for dinning. The Chateau was also in the high ridges overlooking the city, just east of the Americal's main assault route on Babag Ridge. From the outdoor patios of the Chateau we had an excellent view of the city below and the top of the ridge where the Japanese made their final stand. ADVA members were able to observe two wedding receptions



Front entrance to Cebu Normal University and side entrance to basement rooms which are now used for the university's Campus Ministry but were used by the Japanese Secret Police for the torture of prisoners. Once the Americal Division secured the city of Cebu, the university became the headquarters of the Americal Division and was, according to the division historian in World War II, "the most elaborate arrangement for the division's headquarters yet encountered in the war."

at the Chateau while we looked out at the terrain that saw such heavy fighting. While much of the steep terrain is now heavily forested as a result of the governments reforestation program in the 1970's. During the war, the terrain was mostly bare, which left little cover and concealment for the Americal as it assaulted the ridgeline. The image of wedding receptions was not lost on us, the contrast of joy and celebration amidst the scene of where so much fighting and dying took place to secure freedom for the Filipinos.

Tuesday – March 24

Tuesday's travel took us across the island on a winding, mountainous road to Toledo City on the west coast, the location of the Japanese Army's initial landing to invade Cebu on April 10, 1942. The landing was a feint, in part, to divert and confuse any defensive measures by Philippine Army forces, for shortly after on the same day, the main Japanese forces landed on Talisay Beach, just south of Cebu City, the same location the Americal Division would land three years later.

On our way to Toledo, after passing through the Babag Ridge area, we had a clear view of the terrain the Japanese used to retreat to the northern part of the island. The Japanese passed through small farms and villages, raping and killing Filipino peasants as they retreated.



In the town of Toledo on the western coast of Cebu, we visited a hill where the city administration building now stands, but a hill with tactical significance during the landing of the Japanese because it overlooked the main road from the coast moving inland. Defensive positions were built on the military crest of the hill to thwart the advance of the Japanese after landing, but the Philippine forces were no match for the superior firepower of the invading Japanese Army. Nevertheless the Philippine forces defended their city with

heavy fighting for one day before being forced to withdraw inland.

The defending Filipinos also erected tank barriers up to one mile inland from the coast, to delay Japanese tanks from penetrating their lines of defense. The tank barriers were built from an American cement factory in the Toledo area, built in 1931 (cement from the factory was also used to help build the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco). Railroad tracks were also torn up to slow the advance of the Japanese.

A short distance from the hill-top which was the initial point of resistance for one day, Jobers led us to the tank barriers which remain today. Many were destroyed after the war due to the establishment of a mining company in the area. Today, these are the only WWII tank barriers which exist in the Philippine Islands, a monument to the determination of a free people to defend their homeland.

We returned to Cebu City and to Gochan Hill, the site of heavy fighting on March 28, two days after the Americal landed at Talisay Beach.



ADVA members gained a real appreciation for the heavy fighting of its World War II members to assault and conquer the heavily fortified Japanese positions on Babag Ridge overlooking Cebu City, in mid-to late April 1945. Once the Japanese were ejected from this strategic high ground (with heavy casualties) they withdrew to the northern portion of Cebu Island, never to maintain a dominant position again, until their surrender in late August 1945.



Shown is the terrain over which the Japanese retreated from Babag Ridge to the northern part of Cebu to make a final stand against the Americal Division.

The 182nd Infantry Regiment was ordered to secure the area north of the city, particularly the city's Lahug Airfield and other high points around it. The 182nd's 1st Battalion was tasked to attack Hill 30 and Gochan Hill, which dominated the airfield. Part of the 1st Battalion attacked Hill 30, but was turned back by the first determined resistance of the Japanese Army since the Americal landed two days prior. After several brutal and costly assaults the Americal was able to drive the Japanese off the hill.

On March 29 the 1st Battalion turned its attention to securing the heavily defended Gochan Hill supported by elements of Company B of the 716th Tank Battalion. Adding to the heavy Japanese defenses on the hill was a heavily mined area at the base of the hill. The battalion assaulted twice, on the right and north flanks of the hill but, even with tank support, were turned back from

accurate plunging enemy fire.

The 1st Battalion decided to withdraw all assault forces to smother the ground with a merciless artillery and aerial bombardment before renewing the assault. As they were withdrawing a pair of explosions shook the eastern spur of the hill, where Company A occupied newly won positions. The explosion virtually wiped out Company A and the unit was rendered ineffective. Surviving members who were not injured or killed were moved to other companies in the 1st Battalion.

The next day, March 30, a determined attack was made by the entire 182nd Regiment on Gochan Hill and surrounding high ground, including Hill 31 on the eastern flank of Gochan. The attack was supported by chemical mortars, flamethrowers, tanks and heavy artillery to include the 20mm anti-aircraft guns of the 478th Anti-Aircraft Automatic

Weapons Battalion. By the late morning of March 31 the hill was secured. In the two-day battle eighty-five Japanese pillboxes were reported destroyed and more than two hundred Japanese were listed as killed by body count.

The former Lahug Airfield is now a mass sprawl of office buildings, many of which are engaged in internet technology services and development, collectively called Asiatown I.T. Park. It is quite possible when you call a company to request its customer services; the answers will come from this IT Park! Our ADVA group chose a restaurant to have a great meal amongst this sprawling and very modern part of the city.

Wednesday – March 25

On Wednesday morning we departed up the coast 10 miles from Cebu City to Liloan, a coastal town which was a Japanese Naval Base during the occupation of Cebu. The site is still used for docking freighters for restoration or dismantling them. Liloan was also the site of the Americal Division headquarters which begun consolidating its forces there in mid-June 1945. By early July all of the Americal's forces were encamped in Liloan and much of the remaining fighting had been turned over to the Filipino guerilla forces, which were now configured back into their prewar



Philippine defensive bunkers on a hill overlooking the main road from the coast moving inland in the town of Toledo. Dr. Jobers Bersales stands by tank traps used to retard the movement of Japanese tanks as they invaded Cebu on April 10, 1942, the same day the infamous Bataan Death March began. They were breached by Japanese forces in a matter of hours. The Filipino defensive forces held out for one day in the Toledo area before being overwhelmed by Japanese forces.



Gochan Hill as it looks today viewed from the southwest. To the right of the picture on the opposite side of the hill is the area which erupted in an immense explosion, killing and injuring most of an infantry company. Today it is overgrown with brush and squatter homes. Esteban Gochan recalled as a child playing with his siblings on the hill, which has been owned by the Gochan family before WWII. He recalled finding many tunnels and holes (Japanese fighting positions) "and we never realized what had occurred there on that hill"

Army units. It was here, in Liloan that the Americal used the shoreline to begin training for the invasion of Japan.

From Liloan we returned to Cebu City and the Rizal Memorial Library. This building served as the main headquarters for the Japanese Imperial Forces on Cebu. One can just imagine the scene, Japanese guards standing up and down the ornate staircase outside this beautiful building, on careful alert. The public relations manager for the library told me that security guards at night talk of hearing many ghosts in the building.

From there we drove to the UP College of Cebu, another former facility of the Japanese Military Police. Walking inside we noticed many classrooms that were used for interrogations. We walked outside on a second floor balcony by the side of the building, overlooking a courtyard. Jobers told us it was

here that the Secret Police would look down at their prisoners in the courtyard and decide who would die on that particular day and who would die the next.

To the side of the courtyard was a basketball court where students were having an intermural basketball game that was hotly contested. Other



Ships ready to be retrofitted sit at the former Japanese naval base in Liloan. This is the same location that was the Americal Division headquarters in June 1945, before the Japanese surrender on the island in late August. The beach area was used by the division to train for the invasion of Japan. It was here that the division learned of the dropping of the atomic bombs and the subsequent surrender of Japan.

students cheered on their favorite team. I walked amongst the students and looked up at that balcony where so many were condemned to die by a ruthless empire. The students below were enjoying freedom and peace. And I wondered how many of them knew what horrible edicts of death had been pronounced from that balcony above them over 70 years ago? A sacrifice they would not have to bear because Filipino guerillas and American soldiers lost their lives for their freedom to get an education.

Thursday – March 26

On Thursday we journeyed south to Talisay City, the site of the Americal's landing 70 years ago on that same day - March 26. For many years the citizens of Cebu have held annual ceremonies on March 26 to commemorate the Americal's landing that would ultimately liberate them from tyranny. We were treated as guests of honor as were the Filipino veterans, particularly a small number of veterans who fought as guerillas before and during the Americal's presence on Cebu.

Present were numerous Cebu government dignitaries and military officers (to include a three-star Air Force General who was Commander of the Philippines Central Command located on Cebu). A representative of the Japanese government was present as well.

The night before, the great





grandson of the Americal commander on Cebu, Major General William H. Arnold had flown into Cebu City to join us. Sam Arnold was a welcomed addition to our group and he was with us for the Talisay ceremony as well as the dedication of our monument on Friday.

Numerous dignitaries spoke at the ceremony that precluded the beach landing reenactment that occurs every year by Philippine military forces. The Mayor spoke with passion about the sacrifice that was given for the freedom of all Cebuano's. The General of the Central Command spoke and I was particularly impressed with his speech about the Philippine military's dedication to preserving freedom and serving the Philippine people.

After the beach landing ceremony we were all invited to the City Hall one block from the beach for food and friendship. I presented the Mayor of Talisay an

Americal hat which he graciously accepted. We also spent time talking to the Filipino veterans, which for me was a high point of the day.

Following the ceremony and an early lunch we traveled back to Cebu City to the mayor's office. He was out-of-town so we were scheduled to meet with the Vice-Mayor but he too was tied-up because of speaking engagements at many school graduations. The mayor's office is very supportive of Jobers efforts to place markers in the city to point out the World War II historical significance of locations in and around the city. The vice-mayors brother (Supervisor of Public Information & Protocol) spent some time with us and we gave him an Americal hat to pass on to his brother.

Friday – March 27

Friday, our last day on Cebu, was a special day and the initial reason we made plans to come to Cebu. It was the dedication of the Japanese surrender site monument; at the exact spot the Japanese signed the surrender documents to Americal Commander General William Arnold. Americans who live on Cebu and are members of VFW Post 12130 initiated the effort to create a monument at the surrender site and the ADVA



Left: Rizal Memorial Library, former headquarters of the Japanese Imperial Forces on Cebu. Center photos are the UP College Cebu constructed in 1929. During WWII the building was used by Japanese troops as an internment camp for American and British civilians and later as a stockade for condemned prisoners. The balcony at the end of the building is where Japanese officers would proclaim to prisoners below who would die and who would live another day. Today it is a thriving university. Note the students cheering their basketball team with the infamous balcony behind them.

supported them with advice on the wording on the monument and monetary support to help make the monument a reality.

The day started with some brief showers which did not dampen the solemnity of those present who understood the historical implications of what was about to happen. A Catholic Priest opened the ceremony by reading the citation on the monument, blessing it with holy water and reading scripture. VFW Post 12130 Commander Alex Roese was the master of ceremonies. He thanked the many people that were involved to make the monument and the dedication a reality. The local mayor gave comments commemorating the occasion and VFW member Terry Davenport, the monument project coordinator, also spoke. Americal Legacy Foundation President Roger Gilmore spoke, thanking all those who were involved to make the day a special occasion.

Sam Arnold, the great grandson of General William





Pictured: ADVA WWII Historian Dave Taylor with Filipino Veterans, some who fought in WWII as guerillas on Cebu; Filipino Marines reenact the Americal's landing on Talisay Beach 70 years ago on the same day as the demonstration; (left) Sam Arnold, great grandson of Americal Commander General William Arnold and (right) Dave Colamaria, grandson of Americal Veteran Edward Monahan (G Company, 182nd Regiment, who died in 1991). Both are on Talisay Beach where their forefathers landed in WWII. Also Pictured is Dave Taylor with the Talisay Mayor after presenting him with an Americal hat as a sign of friendship.

Arnold also spoke, noting that we honored at that site not only his great grandfather's efforts but "all the service men and women who have fought for freedom in our nations wars".

Over one year prior, Sam had come to Cebu when he learned of the plans to create a monument and visited Mrs. Ycot, who owns the site which she deeded for the monument. Mrs. Ycot was a five-year-old child when the Japanese surrendered and witnessed the

surrender ceremony on her father's property (see the Jan-Feb-Mar 2015 article, "A Small Legacy on Cebu", pages 18-21).

Sam Arnold noted that his great grandfather was called "Duke" by his peers, "and it is evident that he was a highly intelligent and disciplined leader. Dukes strength of character, his discipline and tact all contributed to his ability to rise through the ranks, execute successful military operations and be an effective leader"



We all left the surrender site immensely proud and somewhat somber over the implications of what the monument stood for, for WWII vets who served in the Americal Division and the Filipino people. I found Mrs. Ycot to be a most generous, kind and spiritual person. When getting ready to leave, I gave her a gentle hug and said, "This is not 'goodbye', but, 'until we meet again'". She replied, "Come again. The door is open"

Reflections

It was a full week of history and emotions for those of us who traveled to Cebu to revisit the Americal's past. There are many reflections I came



away with and will share those with vignettes of the Americal's history on Cebu, in subsequent issues of the Americal Journal. I could

This monument, an eloquent oblation like hands reaching for heaven, soulful in supplication, stands for the noble living and the noble dead, whose dreams and hopes shall in the end hopefully find reward in an enduring freedom from all kinds of tyrannies, suppressions, fears and wants.



summarize my thoughts in many ways but will defer to the inscription on the Philippine War Memorial in Independence Park (shown above

the photo pictured above). To me it says everything that needs to be said.



A day to remember. Pictured: Mrs. Ycot's local Priest blesses the Americal monument; The Americal Monument is very visible to passing motorists. Having lunch...Sam Arnold on left and Mrs. Ycot on the right flank her two grandchildren. Her granddaughter is studying to be a school teacher in college, following the footsteps of her mother and grandmother. Also pictured is Roger Gilmore, Americal Legacy Foundation President, offering some works of thanks at the dedication. Seated next to Roger is Alex Roesse, Cebu City VFW Post Commander.

New Caledonia Photo Journal

These four pages are images of some of the many memories Americal soldiers experienced while stationed on New Caledonia, the division's "birthplace" in World War II, prior to their deployment to the fighting on Guadalcanal. Photos are courtesy of Donald Wright, whose wartime memoir was published in the 3rd Quarter, 2014 issue of the Americal Journal.



Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 132nd Regiment with French family near Noumea



Rugged interior of New Caledonia



Small store for local goods

PLAINE DES GAIACS

TONTOUTA

DUMBEA



NOUMEA

PAITA

LA FOA



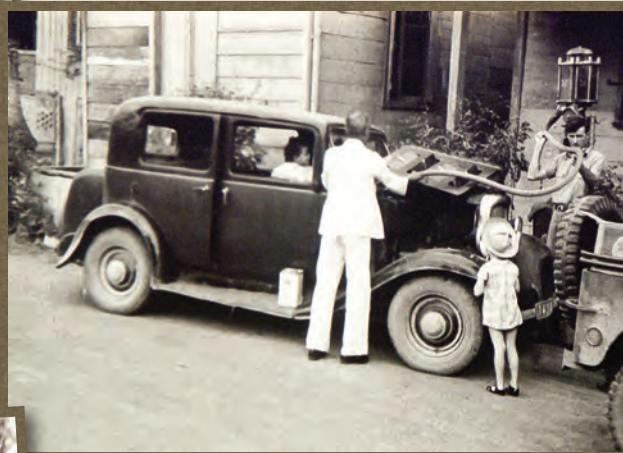
Training in the interior

OUA TOM

NICKEL DOCKS



Native houses near Bourail



Frenchman fueling his car

**B
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Soldiers slaughtering cow, fresh beef for G Company, 2nd Battalion, 132nd Infantry Regiment.

**K
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C**



Native children of New Caledonia

A black and white photograph showing two men in a wooded area. They are sitting on a log, sheltered by a dark tarp. The man on the left is wearing a hat and holding a book or map. The man on the right is also wearing a hat and holding a book or map. They appear to be resting or waiting.

A black and white photograph of a group of people, including men and women, sitting in the back of a truck. They are wearing hats and light-colored clothing, suggesting a warm climate. The truck is driving on a dirt road, and the background shows a hilly, wooded landscape.

A black and white photograph showing a group of soldiers in a jungle environment, moving along a path towards a large mountain in the background. The soldiers are seen from behind, wearing helmets and carrying gear. The path is narrow and surrounded by dense vegetation. The mountain in the background is large and rugged, with some smoke or mist rising from its base.

24



Nickel mine, one of many, on New Caledonia



Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 132nd Regiment with weapons to arm the local French citizens as militia.



Chow time for soldiers stationed at Koumac



Some of the children on New Caledonia, who, because of the American's presence, were spared the ravages of war.



Above are postcards picked up in New Calendonia by our soldiers as souvenirs.

Missile Defense Agency Gives Posthumous Bronze Star to Americal WWII Vet

By Leah Garton, MDA Public Affairs

The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) paid special tribute to the service of Americal Army Pvt. Henry Leon Brown during a posthumous award ceremony of the Bronze Star Medal on Friday, August 29, 2014 at the Von Braun Complex on Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. The Bronze Star Medal was presented to family members in recognition of his contributions during combat operations in the South Pacific Theater in World War II.

Pvt. Henry Leon Brown was born on November 12, 1923, in rural DeKalb County, Alabama. He graduated from Geraldine High School, and immediately enlisted in the U.S. Army to join the war effort.

Pvt. Brown was inducted into the Army on June 2, 1943, at Fort McClellan, Ala. He departed for the Pacific Theater of World War II on March 8, 1944, and was assigned to the famed Americal Division, serving with Company D of the 182nd Infantry Regiment as a section leader for heavy machine guns. He participated in combat operations in the northern Solomon Islands, where he received the Combat Infantry Badge on Bougainville Island, and in the southern Philippine Islands, where he participated in the amphibious landing and subsequent ground combat on Cebu Island.

Pvt. Brown received the Purple Heart for wounds sustained in combat operations. His unit received a Presidential Unit Citation for combat action while taking a fortified enemy position in the hills above the city of Cebu. When the war ended, Pvt. Brown went on to duty with U.S. occupation forces in Japan. He eventually returned to the United States on November 29, 1945, and left the Army at the rank of staff sergeant at Camp Shelby, Miss., on December 13, 1945.

Today, he is remembered by his family members as a husband, father, brother, grandfather, uncle, cousin, friend and soldier of the greatest generation.

Several of Pvt. Brown's family members and friends attended the Bronze Star ceremony held in his honor. The ceremony was hosted by Major General Heidi V. Brown, MDA Director for Test. Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jesse Brown, Sr., Ret., brother of Pvt. Brown, was in attendance and received the posthumous Bronze Star Medal on behalf of the family alongside Dr. Chris Brown, MDA employee and grandson of Pvt. Brown.

Also in attendance were The Honorable Mo Brooks, U.S. Representative for Alabama's 5th Congressional District, Lt. Col. Ron Green, Ret., representing the Americal Division Veterans Association, Chaplain Odri Hastings, representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5162, and Mr. Richard Reyes, President of the North Alabama Veterans and Fraternal Organizations Coalition.

"In our technology-obsessed, fast-paced driven world, I'm a firm believer that we often need to be reminded more than we need to be instructed about the great sacrifices made by soldiers like Pvt. Henry Brown," said Major General Brown. "Unfortunately the great victories and

turning points of World War II are now becoming footnotes in history."

The Bronze Star is the fourth highest military combat award for bravery. President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized the medal by Executive Order 9419 on February 4, 1944. This decoration could be awarded to any military member who, serving within or together with the Army of the United States after December 6, 1941, by distinguishing him or herself by heroic or meritorious deeds during a military operation against an armed enemy.

In 1947, the award criteria were expanded. The medal could now be awarded to any member of the United States Army that was mentioned in orders after December 6, 1941, or who had received a certificate for exceptional service in ground combat against an armed enemy between December 7, 1941, and September 2, 1945, or whose merit could be proven by documents dated before July 1, 1947. These expanded criteria made it possible to award the Bronze Star to any person who had received the Combat Infantryman Badge or the Combat Medical Badge. The Bronze Star can also be obtained by veterans or next of kin.

"Surely this passing generation of ordinary people who did extraordinary things deserves our gratitude and recognition, that their achievements are not just a footnote in history," said MG Brown.

"We recognize the contributions of Pvt. Henry Brown. His generation built the America that you and I know and benefit from every day," she said. "They very much are, as Tom Brokaw calls them, 'The greatest generation any society has ever produced.'"

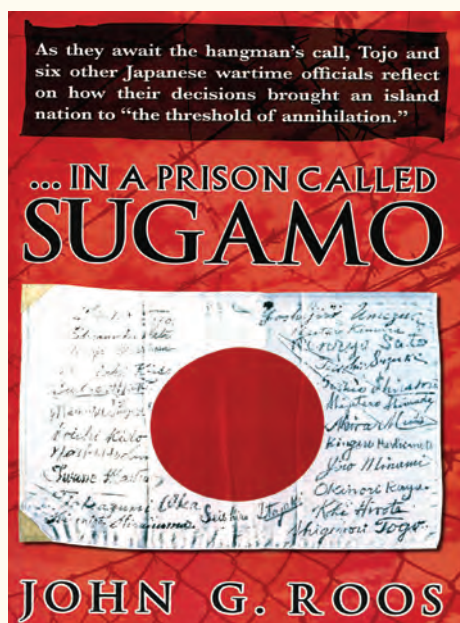
At the conclusion of the ceremony taps was played and a moment of silence was held in honor of Pvt. Brown as well as in honor of all members of the United States Armed Forces who are no longer with us.



On August 29, 2014, Major General Heidi V. Brown, MDA Director for Test, presents the Bronze Star Medal to Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jesse Brown, Sr., Ret., brother of Pvt. Henry Leon Brown, in recognition of Pvt. Brown's contributions during combat operations in the South Pacific Theater in World War II. (Photo: US Army Missile Defense Agency)

Remembering Our Enemy's Brutality in the Pacific War

Book Reviews by Dave Taylor – ADVA WWII Historian



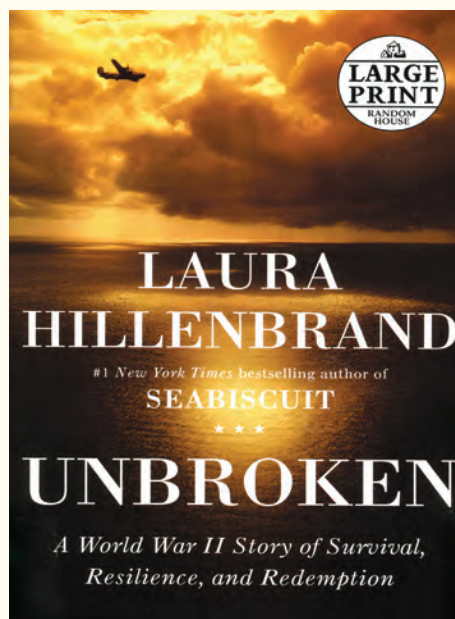
Author John Roos is the former editor of The Armed Forces Journal and a Military Police officer in the Vietnam War. Roos book is about the so-called "Class A" criminals detained in Sugamo Prison in Tokyo (along with many other Japanese War criminals) during the American occupation. Many prisoners would end up being hanged or sentenced to many years of hard labor and by 1946 the Sugamo Prison population grew to more than 600 after fugitives were found hiding in Japan. But Roos focuses on the initial seven prisoners, starting with General Hideki Tojo the supreme military commander who reported to Emperor Hirohito.

The focus of Roos book is on how and why these top seven war criminals were selected, their interrogations by U.S. military appointed attorney's to build their cases for execution, and the records of the Buddhist priest who ministered to the spiritual needs of these war criminals, all of whom knew they would be eventually hung.

Roos takes a very clinical approach in describing the process of interviewing these war criminals, some of whom were responsible for the many pre-war and wartime acts of massacre on the Chinese mainland. To be sure, post-war trails

were also conducted throughout Asia, in the Philippines, Singapore, etc. for many other Japanese military leaders whose conduct resulted in death by hanging. But the Tokyo Class A prisoners are especially interesting.

What struck me the most was the rationalization and denial that came from many of these high-ranking war criminals, some of whom passed the buck to others and some whose only regret was that, if circumstances been different, they would have prevailed. In the end, these "Class A" war criminals were the first of many to be hung in a secluded part of the prison, in the dead of night, standing on a wood platform over trap doors that, when pulled would guarantee instant death with broken necks. This was a more human death than they gave to hundreds of thousands of Asian captives and allied prisoners. Their bodies were cremated and buried in unmarked graves...secret locations that remain secret to this day.



When you read the book "Unbroken" or if you saw the movie, you can understand the feelings many of our Americal Vets held about their enemy after many post-war years. While the story "Unbroken" is about an American bombardier who became

a POW, the description of Japanese barbarity speaks to the kind of enemy the Americal soldiers faced up close and personal.

To quote from the book, "In its rampage over East Asia Japan had brought atrocity and death on a scale that staggers the imagination. Japan held some 132,000 POWs from America, Britain, Canada, New Zealand, Holland and Australia. Of those, 36,000 died, more than one in four. And Americans fared particularly badly; of the 34,648 Americans held by Japan, 12,935 – more than 37 percent – died. In World War II only 1 percent of Americans held by the Nazi's and Italians died.

As it dawned on Japan that they would lose the war, a "Kill-All" policy was put into place that would leave no POWs alive when defeat was inevitable on a Japanese controlled island. The Japanese massacred all 5,000 Korean captives on Tinian and all POWs on Ballale, Wake and Tarawa islands when it became apparent they would lose control of those possessions. It was equally true that all American prisoners held captive in Japan would be put to death once the Americans began the invasion of the Japanese home islands. As is amply described in the book, Japanese prison guards began practicing herding their prisoners into nearby forests and other isolated areas, to see how much time it would take to move a camp of prisoners and eliminate them. This included civilian internees. When the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused the Japanese Empire to come crashing down, the horrific nature of what America could do to the Japanese Homeland (the Japanese did not know America only had two nuclear weapons), was enough for Emperor Hirohito to surrender and cancel the "Kill-All" policy, lest the homeland be totally annihilated.

I recommend this book to the children and grandchildren of Americal Vets. Ask them to ponder these questions as they read the book, "What is your life about?", "Do you recognize good and evil exists in the world?"

My Tour in Vietnam; August 1971–July 1972

By James Gales

Part 2

Morale was already very low because of the monsoon season. It rains every day, all day, and it rains so hard you can't see four feet in front of you. You never stay dry which means you are always cold. You are always walking in mud as it is everywhere and you track it in every time you come inside.

It was a few days after the incident at the beach that disaster struck me again. It was just after we had eaten our C-rations for lunch and were playing a game of spades when a gunshot rang out from the hootch next to ours. I rushed out the door and ran over to the next hootch. Upon entering I saw one guy directly across from me standing in the opposite screen door. He was in shock and half out of his mind on scag, a form of heroin. To my left was a guy sitting up on his cot leaning on the screen and wall. I could see blood coming out of his head in two spots.

I yelled for someone to call a medevac chopper and to get a medic. At the same time I yanked on the bandage I carried in the band on my steel pot. I saw blood was spurting out the back of the guy's head. I put the bandage on this wound and applied pressure with my other hand to over the entry hole in the side of his head. It looked like he shot himself in the left side of his head and the bullet came out the back of his head. It seemed like a long time but the chopper finally landed and the medics took over. They put him on a stretcher and he rose up and waved and died as the chopper lifted off.

I went back to my hootch and sat down to resume the card game. I then realized I was covered in blood and the smell and sight of it made me run out the door and up-chuck. I showered a few times and the blood still seemed to reappear on my hands over and over. Rumor control had it that the two guys were high on scag, had something to drink, and were playing Russian roulette with a .38 cal



Author shoulders heavy weapon

pistol they purchased on the black market.

Then Typhoon Hester hit the base. The wind blew roofs off buildings. This even happened with layers of sandbags on the roofs. It was raining so hard it came down in buckets and it never let up. In fact, it kept getting worse. We were finally told to head to the bunkers. These were special bunkers built for withstanding a typhoon. They were long and narrow and had even more layers of sandbags on them. We just sat there and watched the whole compound blow by. It was scary and every person there pretty much stayed to themselves and prayed to God, Buddha, and every other higher being they could summon.

After what seemed like a whole day the worst part blew past. We took a walk around and accessed the damage. It was devastating. We started to rebuild our hootch right away. It was still the monsoon season and we needed doors on the hootch so we could keep the rats out. By the time for night guard duty we had the doors back on. It took work details every day to get enough buildings put back together to house everyone. We also worked on the orderly rooms and the mess hall. Surprisingly, no one died in the typhoon. Welcome to the Nam.

After that I went out to another firebase and was soon given a difficult task. I went to the chopper pad to pick up the gear of some grunts from a line platoon. They walked into a booby trap that exploded and several were casualties. I picked up a pair of boots and a foot was still in one of the boots. By now I guess I had become hardened to the carnage as I just took the stuff up and dropped it off at the command center. Welcome to the Nam!

During my time in Nam I was at Hill 151, Firebase Maude, Firebase Linda, Firebase Judy, the ridge line around DaNang, Chu Lai, and OP 56, which was as far up north as one could get. These are all the places I can remember plus the time we rotated to Tam Ky to pull security at the compound that housed the LORAN guidance towers.

The LORAN site was used to guide the B-52s on their bombing runs. The North Vietnamese wanted to blow it up and they tried often. We had to keep our eyes open all day, 24/7, to make sure people walking by weren't taking pictures or stopping to study the compound. What difference did that make? I can guarantee that the civilian employees who were allowed to work on the base gave detailed maps to the enemy. The enemy had spies everywhere and knew where everything was located.

One of the things I strongly objected to was going out on three man LPs (listening post/ambush) from any of our bases- but particularly the remote ones. There was only one way out of the wire as we had claymores, trip flairs, and booby traps all around the place. Three guys left the hill at the same time, the same way every night. We knew that doing things like that would get us killed. Many times guys fell asleep and they were found the next

day with their throats slit or in some rare case captured or killed and never found.

When I went out I led the way and I never sat in the same spot twice. When we were out we had to call in our location and make a situation report every hour. This let command know we were awake and everything was okay. I had a talk with Lt. Colonel Mitchell and he let us change the policy so that the squad leader determined where we sat and that we had the choice to go out before or after dark. After dark it was a little more dangerous in one aspect, but safer in another as the enemy could not see where we were.

I got to be awfully good using a machete, not just to cut trail in the heavy brush, but to open the canisters that the 81mm mortar rounds came in. They were cardboard tubes with wax inside to keep the powder bags dry and metal caps at the ends for shipping protection. I took the wax from inside the shipping tube and twisted it tight and made candles. The candles were used to light up the inside of our hootch so we could read and write at night. The candles were not that bright that the light could show through the cover over the door.

Every day we had to hump new cases of 81mm mortar rounds up from the chopper pad. The choppers could not land closer to us as the prop wash from the choppers blew loose items all over the place. It was bad enough dropping them on the chopper pad as the choppers blew dirt and debris every time they landed. Sometimes when Chinooks would land we had to hold on to our helmets and anything else that was light so they wouldn't blow all over the place.

Humping mortar rounds, water, oil, gas, and other supplies up from the chopper pad caused my body to change. I noticed my pants were loose and my neck and arms and shoulders were growing daily. I came to Nam weighing 174 pounds and was five feet, nine inches tall. I left Nam at five feet, nine inches and at 154 pounds. There was no body fat on me. Even my cheeks had muscles on them.

I looked forward to firing the mortar tube at every chance. It gave me such an adrenalin rush, a high not duplicated by drugs, and it was addicting. The adrenalin rush I had as a gunner in Vietnam has not been duplicated by anything else ever again. At night we might be kept busy with fire missions into the jungle or firing illumination rounds for someone who heard noises in front of their bunker. When we were not busy doing this we fired on defensive targets (DTs). These were predetermined targets that were thought to be places the enemy may try to use to sneak up on us.

One night while firing DTs, we got a call that radar had picked up a large group of enemy soldiers - at least 150. When we heard this we had the ammo people start getting rounds out and ready to fire. We had the range and knew what charge to use. In the next hour the fire mission started and in the first hour I fired over 300 rounds. We used up all of the light LSA oil to keep the mortar tube cool. We then went to the heavy LSA oil and then borrowed oil from



Infantry squad readies for action

anyone who had some. We still burned up one barrel. We changed the barrel in less than thirty seconds and kept on firing. They shut down all of the other 81mm mortar pits and brought every available man to bring rounds from the ammo dumps. It was organized chaos, but we put out an impressive amount of fire.

We worked the area over from left to right, right to left, top to bottom and at random to keep the enemy running in circles. They did not know where to run as the whole area was being blown up. Even after the radar stopped picking up movement we kept up the rate of fire. We finally tapered it off, but still kept randomly dropping rounds in the enemy area to catch wounded trying to flee or others that we knew would come to haul away the dead and wounded.

Our last tube glowed red hot and a round we dropped in it did not fire. I yelled "dud round" and everyone fled the gun pit on the run. The round could explode from the heat of the tube at any time. The standard procedure called for the squad leader and the gunner to stay in the pit and to get the round out of the tube. The gunner turns the barrel slightly to unhook it from being secure to the base and tips the barrel slowly and the squad leader catches the round as it slides out the tube.

I didn't have time to be scared. We had to move fast. Bob Hemmis was the unlucky squad leader and we relied on him to catch the round. Once it was out of the tube it could be removed from the gun pit and made safe. If the round cooked off in the pit the result would be that Bob and I would no longer be around. The only thing I had to use as gloves was a couple of empty sandbags. I used them but they did not protect my hands from the heat and I got burned pretty badly. But at least we didn't get blown up. We got the round out safely and everyone came back and kept firing.

Shortly thereafter the fire mission ended, guys went back to their own places, and our squad members all came into the pit. It then hit all of us that we just played a game of death with the grim reaper and we won. Bob and I looked at each other and said to each other almost simultaneously, "We could have been blown to pieces." Welcome to the Nam!

If you stay in the Nam long enough shit will happen



Entertainment stage in rear area

and you will have brushes with death one way or another. I was about halfway through my tour and I already had enough bad memories to last a lifetime. Then I got a letter from my aunt telling me my mom had a baby, but it died. I put my M-16 to a captain's head and told him that if he did not sign my emergency leave papers his brains would be on the paper. When I chambered a round he signed the papers and I went home for thirty days. I didn't take the whole thirty day leave, but got stuck in Ft. Lewis trying to get a flight back to Nam. When I got back the guys were out on Firebase Maude.

My return to Nam and to Firebase Maude brought the next disaster that happened to me during my year's tour. It was shortly after New Year's Day 1972. I was in the pit cleaning the gun and practicing some DTs. I saw a Navy admiral who was brought to the base by chopper. They took him to the command center instantly. I then saw a first sergeant (TOP) come out of the command center with a red starlight cluster flare in his hands. When a red starlight flare was fired, everyone had permission to start firing. And that means everyone and every gun on the hill fired until told to stop. I saw him walk out and I already had the cover off the tube. I flipped on the aiming stake lights and grabbed a handful of rounds and

laid them next to me on the ground.

Behind TOP were all of the big wigs. Then TOP set off the flare. That meant we were under attack and I had the gun set to a predetermined target and fired off a round, leveled the gun, and fired another. I moved the gun to the next DT. Meanwhile everyone ran to their spots and opened fire for a mad minute. Everyone fired as fast as they could for a full minute. This was to gain fire superiority. My squad mates came into the pit and we all went about doing our jobs. At one point officers were in between my aiming stakes and my scope so I yelled, "line of sight mother fuckers." My platoon and squad leaders dropped their jaws as you don't swear at officers, but there is a little known rule, if someone is in your line of sight, you can yell at them in any way possible to get them out of the line of sight. They not only moved, but they yelled "sorry" and hustled to get out of the way.

It seemed like we were firing for few minutes when an explosion rang out on one of the bunkers behind our pit. A cease fire was yelled and it echoed around the hill and people yelled for a medic and for someone to call for a medevac chopper. We stood around waiting for more information when a lifer came by and said to leave the pit as it was, not to let anyone in, and to put an armed guard on the

pit and gun. The same was told to all pits and all big guns. A medevac chopper was said to be on the way. We heard two guys were wounded but not seriously. But one guy was hurt pretty bad. His whole stomach was blow open. He died just as the chopper was in-bound. The medics did all they could to save his life, but the wound was too big.

We were told the CID (Criminal Investigation Division) would send out a team to inspect the whole hill and see what caused the explosion. What they did know was that the explosion was caused by an 81mm mortar round. Apparently a round was a short round, meaning it went up and landed a distance short of where it should have landed.

It really hit me and everyone on the hill very hard since two guys were wounded and one guy was dead and we were not under attack when it happened. I was a wreck inside as I wondered if it was me or our crew that screwed up. Later that day the CID showed up and determined that a mortar crew from another company did not rotate their rounds by using old rounds first, and as a result they either had a wet charge or the powder in a charge settled and got hard. The necessity of rotating rounds was something all crew members should have known. The squad leader and platoon sergeant were responsible to keep a check on that. We had a routine to always keep our rounds rotated and that was checked every day.

This incident was a tragic result of a demonstration. The lifers bought out an admiral whose ships fired rounds from the South China Sea in support of our hill and the surrounding area. They wanted to show him where his rounds were going and how this fire base operated. The accident only made everyone pissed off. The damage was done, two guys wounded and one KIA. It was all to impress some lifer. To make it seem like a real attack they did not tell anyone that it was only a demonstration. Everyone did exactly

as they should have done. Guys were so mad and the morale was at an all-time low.

There was talk, rumor control again that some guys thought certain lifers should be fragged. It was not a new concept. Officers had been the target of frags from their own soldiers because they were bad leaders. But to frag someone was just as bad. We were there to kill the enemy, not each other. I could see punching an officer in the nose and take the punishment, but there is no an eye for an eye in this situation. I never knew the names of the wounded guys and did not find out the name of the dead soldier until almost 35 years later. I answered an article printed in the Americal Journal asking if anyone remembered the incident on Maude. The dead man was Raoule LaSoya, a sergeant. His name will be on the wall. But I would like to see what his captain wrote to his family. He died in the line of duty. Welcome to the Nam!

There were other bad days ahead. One of our assignments was guard duty around the ridgeline of mountains around Da Nang. It was the middle of the day and I had bunker guard. The guard towers were tall and each had a garbage can at the bottom to collect garbage and it was picked up by truck every so often. The garbage truck had just left my tower a few minutes earlier and I was on the ground while two other guys were up in the tower. I looked out to the front and saw a VC with a gun slung over his shoulder counting the paces from one bunker to the next. The sad thing is this was not a free fire zone so we had to call in for permission to shoot this guy.

I yelled up for the guys to call the captain and to call each bunker on both sides of us to let them know of the VC. Both saw him and also called in. I was going to shoot him but a sergeant drove up and said not to fire as they were waiting for the village chief to give us the okay. Excuse me, we are in a war zone, the enemy is in front of me and I have to ask

permission to shoot him? I told the next bunker if we didn't get the okay to just shoot him. Meanwhile the VC saw a lot of vehicles drive up and ran off into the woods. That night there were some mortar rounds launched at the towers and one guy was killed. I vowed to never ask permission to fire ever again. I should have dropped the VC on the spot. Lesson learned. It was so obvious, he had a black top, black shorts, a conical hat and a new AK 47 slung over his shoulder. This was another of the bullshit things that took place all over Nam.

Another time we were on Firebase Linda when we heard a whistle from a rocket going over our heads. It landed just outside the wire behind us. We all looked to the woods in the distance and saw a flash of a second rocket being fired. We all yelled "incoming" and we heard the second whistle. We watched as the round hit in front of us just outside the wire. After seeing this flash we started firing in the direction of the flash and adjusted our next rounds as needed. We heard another whistle and the round hit to our side on the top of the hill. Thankfully it didn't hit near anything or anyone to cause injury. Now we knew they had us bracketed and we figured the next round would land on the hill and we could start praying to God or bend over and kiss our ass's good bye. The next rocket

never came. Either we hit the gun or they ran out of rounds.

Often the VC got rounds delivered down the Ho Chi Minh trail and usually the porters carried one to two rounds, depending on the size. They carried them and met the gun crew and dropped off their rounds and went back to get more. The VC knew the whole hill so we just got lucky. It was possible they did not have a complete gun and maybe it was a crude gun, but we were thankful for whatever the reason their fire was off target.

Things got awfully quiet for a while. We started to think the war was winding down and rumor control had it that we would be all be going home soon. Don't hold your breath. The quiet was short lived as the North Vietnamese had started months before to move thousands of troops all along the border of Nam. Some enemy units infiltrated further into South Vietnam and across the demilitarized zone (DMZ). Rumors said there were thousands of enemy tanks with 10,000 new hard-core North Vietnamese soldiers ready to take their best shot at the US troops. This usually happened during the Tet holiday. But this was later in the year at Easter. So the big enemy action was called the "Eastertide Offensive".

We were sent from Da Nang to the Phu Bai and Quang Tri areas. These



Phu Bai Main Exchange

locations were in the far northern part of South Vietnam. We were close to the DMZ. We had lots of fire missions up in those areas- it was pure hell and in the middle of gook country. We rotated between two or three bases. We had the biggest guns that could be taken down and moved in just a few minutes. We rode on Huey slicks with no doors on them. Our asses were on the edge of the floor and our feet hanging over the edge. This was by far the worst area we encountered in the whole tour.

Eventually we saw less and less fighting. Then one day we were out on OP 56 and they said to pack up in the morning as we were going back to Da Nang and we would be going home. We all yelled "short" and held up two fingers horizontal and a tad apart to signal we had very little time left in Nam. SHORT!

We flew back to Da Nang and started to party. TOP had cold beer and soda waiting for us and even a truck to take us from the chopper pad to our company area. We got clean clothes and hot showers as soon as we reached the company area- a first for us. Later in the day the line platoons came in from the field and the big party started. There were the usual guys getting drunk and the tossing of tear gas grenades in each other's hootches. To do this we stationed guys at each door, one person threw in a CS (tear gas) grenade in the hootch, and the other held the door shut until all guys inside were affected by the gas. They guys inside can lie down on the floor and avoid the irritating gas for a short time, but it gets to them soon enough. Their eyes water and burn and they begin coughing. All the time the rest were outside laughing our asses off.

The grunts made a giant mud hole and threw everyone in it. This included all the officers even if they weren't part of our company. What are they going to do, send us to Nam? I think everyone stayed awake all night and we took tons of pictures with various people holding up the short sign.

The sad part was we had a few guys who came to us late in our tour and they would not go home when we did. They were sent instead to the last infantry company

left in Vietnam. Among those that I remember staying behind was Patrick Mullis. He reenlisted and went to pull security with another unit before he got shipped to his next station. Also staying were Sgt. Clint Vogel, Dennis McGuire, a guy named Sharp, and Sal Lombardo.

The next day we cleaned all our weapons and turned in all our gear except our personal belongings. We went to the storage room and got our duffle bags that we used to haul all our things in. We had no more guard duty or any more details. In two days we flew to Saigon and the next day we flew back to the world.

The last thing we did as a company was stand in formation and let Captain McBane say his last words and shake everyone's hand. When he came to me he said I got high praise from Lt. Colonel Mitchell. Because of the great job our squads did we got sent home before the rest of our company. It was a reward for being the best mortar team in Nam. Lt. Colonel Mitchell had offered to send me to West Point while we were up at Phu Bai. He gave me overnight to decide and I turned it down because I could not be an officer like I saw in Nam. I would want to be on the ground with my men and lead by example and work alongside of them and play and party with them too. That is not what officers do and I didn't want to owe the Army six more years.

I got a thirty day leave and we flew out of Saigon to Travis Air Force Base, California. We took a cab to San Francisco International Airport to catch a plane home to Milwaukee. They flew us in very early in the morning to avoid the war protesters and told us to change out of our military uniform and put on civilian clothes so we did not stand out. Right. We all were very darkly tanned, looked like we had been in combat too long, and had super short hair. Plus we were all proud of what we did and where we were and we were looking forward to greeting the protesters with the biggest ass-kicking they ever got. Hell, we were still in combat mode and some of us stayed that way all our lives. I know I did and still do.

After Nam I was sent to Ft. Riley, Kansas and spent a few months playing on every sports team I could get on in order to not have to play Army games.

When I got back I found out I didn't fit into society like I did before I went to Nam. I tried to get sent back there but they were not sending infantry guys there anymore. I then checked into being a mercenary, which is something I actively pursued for two years after Nam.

Nam wasn't all bad, there were many pluses. The main one the friends you made were ones as close to you as your own brothers and I will always feel that way about them. I will try and keep in touch with them and if any of them call and say they need my help for anything, I'll be on the first plane to help them out. I would risk or give up my life for any of them at any time. Some of the friendships were made in just a couple of months and they were and are stronger than the ones of the friends I grew up with. That is one reason I was not big into high school stuff. I knew I was going to Nam from the mid-



Short timers



Get ready for the Freedom Bird

sixties on and I was the only one who I knew that felt that way.

I always enjoyed the three to five day stand downs in Nam. We were out in the bush or on some remote fire base for 45-60 days or longer. Living in conditions not fit for rats and then we got a three to five day R&R, (rest and refit/recuperate). When we got back to the chopper pad, if we had a good TOP, he had trucks waiting so we didn't have to lug all the gear the long walk back to the company area. There were hot showers and clean clothes as soon as we turned in your frags and claymores. There were horse watering troughs filled with ice and all the beer and soda you could drink. If it was a three day or a five day R&R, we had to stop drinking beer one day before going back out. TOP always arranged for a very good meal to be cooked in the mess hall at night. If he was real good he had a barbeque waiting for us. There was a movie every night and a few floor shows a week. We had bands that played popular music. If they had a female singer or two a hat was passed and the money given to them with a request for them to take off their tops. Welcome to the Nam!

There were trips to the PX where we could buy cameras, TVs, stereos, reel to reel tape players, and just about everything that was hot in the USA- but at ridiculously low prices. I sent home a stereo for my family which

my mom wouldn't open until the day I got home. I sent it for the younger sibs, but my mom just wanted to wait for me to open it. I did have a girl friend of six years when I left and sent her the best stereo system and speakers there were.

I missed the tossing of CS gas grenades in the grunts hutches because they always called us mortar men REMFs- Rear Echelon Mother Fuckers. Let them come out and work as hard as we did and be a sitting duck on every outpost. The reason we were there was to try and get the enemy to attack us so we could call

in fire power and blow the gooks to never-never land.

To this day I go places and certain smells put me right back in the Nam and when I am having a bad time dealing with people or society, I go out in the woods and stay for a while. I feel safe out there, I can carry a weapon and I can live off the land. It also relaxes me as there is peace and quiet in the woods when the woods aren't in a war zone. Plus there are no VC and no booby traps.

After I got out of the Army I started to write down my memories of my tour in Nam so one day I could dig them out and sit down and write a book. It is something I always wanted to do and now I had the story. This story is a condensed version of one 81 mm mortar gunner's experiences in the Vietnam War. But there is so much more to it that needs to be added. This story is what I use to show schools and send to certain people to let them know some of what it was like.

Editor's note — James W. Gales served in Bravo Company 2/1st Inf., 196th Lt. Inf. Bde. as an 81mm mortar gunner from August 1971 through July 1972.



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