



FOUNDED 1945

# AMERICAL NEWSLETTER

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

Editor-in-Chief: James C. Buckle  
Vietnam Editor: Gary L. Noller

JULY - AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2001

THE AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION – 82 PHYLLIS DRIVE – SOUTH YARMOUTH, MA 02664



Together Again!  
ANNUAL REUNION 2001  
Cleveland, Ohio  
June 21-24, 2001  
(REUNION REVIEW INSIDE)



"I Cannot Tell You the Good This Has Done For My Mind and Spirit"

## AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION 2001 DIRECTORY

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**Chaplain**  
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Peabody, MA 01960

**Chapter Commander**  
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Cameron F. Baird

Stonewall, TX 78671

**Chapter Commander**  
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John L Mathews

Verona, WI 53593

**Chapter Commander**  
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R. S. Margarita, CA 92688

**Chapter Commander**  
East Region  
David D. Eichhom

Fleming, OH 45729-9643

## AMERICAL NEWSLETTER

## ADJUTANT'S NOTES

### TAPS TAPS TAPS

182 INFANTRY - MED DET

Edgar J. Amirault  
Melrose, MA  
July 19, 2001

AMERICAL DIV HQ

Raymond G. Chesley  
Wakefield, MA  
April 27, 2001

182 INFANTRY

James L. Filler  
Broomfield, CO  
April 22, 2001

16 ARTY HQ/3/16

Robert L. Frankhouser  
Princeton, WV  
July 9, 2001

39 MILITARY POLICE

Arthur G. Guarante  
East Dennis, MA  
May 2, 2001

18 ARTY A/3

Robert W. Hornlein  
Stamford, CT  
March 15, 2001

MEDIC AMER DIV

Carl F. Johnson  
Manchester, GA  
May 28, 2001

101 MEDICAL REGIMENT

Franklin W. MacDonald  
Walpole, MA  
July 16, 2001

182 INFANTRY I CO.

Peter Nazzaro Jr.  
Auburndale, MA  
May 27, 2001

21 RECON

Donald F. Southwell  
Grand Rapids, MI  
May 13, 2001

AMERICAL DIVISION

\*\*\*\*\*  
REINSTATED MEMBERS

Mr. Albert M. Debrino  
11 LIB Recon 3/1 Inf  
Hillsboro Beach, FL  
#R. Castronova

Mr. George Karsiladze  
11 LIB Hq/B/11 Arty  
Binghamton, NY  
#R. Castronova

Mr. Larry L. Meynardie  
1 Cav E Troop  
Virginia Beach, VA  
#Membership Committee

123 AVN BN B CO.

John H. Camerota  
Stillwater, NY  
June 30, 2001

182 INFANTRY

Perry W. Doyle  
Phoenix, AZ  
April 10, 2001

247 FIELD ARTILLERY

John P. Folmer  
Lake Worth, FL  
April 24, 2001

182 INFANTRY D CO.

Oliver E. Gagne  
Manchester, NH  
March 23, 2000

754 TANK BN.

Thomas S. Hanson  
Sioux Falls, SD  
February 1, 2001

182 INFANTRY F CO.

Silve Iannetti  
Waltham, MA  
May 21, 2001

164 INFANTRY AT

Clinton P. Kraft  
Overland Park, KS  
April 24, 2001

182 INFANTRY B CO.

Raymond Michaud  
Georgetown, MA  
February 2001

245 FIELD ARTILLERY

Harold A. Sheldon  
St. Petersburg, FL  
May 26, 2001

AMERICAL DIVISION

Thomas Stanton  
Miramar, FL  
June 4, 2001

## NEW MEMBERS

Mr. Alan Allen  
198 LIB A/1/6 Inf  
Austin, TX  
Dave Taylor & Larry

Mr. Danny J. Armstrong  
11 LIB E/3/1 Inf  
Gaston, IN  
Bill Allen

Mr. Dennis W. Baum  
196 LIB E/1/46 Inf  
Melbourne, FL  
#Bob Kapp

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23 Military Police  
Brighton, MI  
Paul Stiff

Mr. Carlos D Boone  
523 Sig Bn A Co.  
Brooksville, FL  
Don Ballou

Mr. Allan W. Bornkamp  
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Gary Noller - paul Stiff

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36 Sig A Co.  
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David Taylor

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Brigham City, UT  
#John Sikorsey

Ms. Patricia Elliot-Dona  
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Jim Buckle

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11 LIB 31 PIO HHC  
Schaumburg, IL  
Self

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182 Infantry E Co.  
Gallatin, TN  
#Self

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523 Military Police  
Mt. Jackson, VA  
Jerry 'Doc' Anderson

Mr. Carbone C. Iosue  
11 LIB D/1/20 Inf  
Sun Lakes, AZ  
Bill Bacon

Mr. Michael L. Jeffirs  
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#Bob Kapp

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196 LIB C/4/31 Inf  
Pompano Beach, FL  
#Bob Kapp

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23 Military Police  
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#Paul Stiff

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196 LIB 4/31 Inf  
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Ronald Scales

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11 LIB C/4/3 Inf  
Palm Bay, FL  
#Lon Hansen

Mr. Richard A. Blowers  
11 LIB A/4/3 Inf  
Moiro, NY  
#David Taylor

Mr. John F. Booth  
11 LIB B/4/21 Inf  
Grove City, OH  
Richard Scales

Mr. Tom E. Bradbury  
198 LIB D/E/1/6 Inf  
Ivy, VA  
PNC Gary L. Noller

Mr. Emory E. Carico  
198 LIB Hdq 23 M.P.  
Bristol, TN  
Paul Stiff

Mr. E. Bowles Dean Jr.  
11 LIB C/4/3 Inf  
Greenwood, SC  
#Foxtadt

Mr. Randy S. Edge  
11 LIB C/3/1 Inf  
Lavonia, GA  
#Bill Allen

Mr. Gene Emigh  
198 LIB C/1/6 Inf  
Tyrone, PA  
Michael McNelis

Mr. Michael D. Frans  
52 Inf 1/52 Recon  
Wales, WI  
Dan Young

Mr. Danny L. Jordan  
196 LIB B/82 Arty  
Mims, FL  
#Bob Kapp

Mr. Carlton E. Lambert  
26 Engineers D Co.  
Kathleen, FL  
#John W. Anderson

Mr. John L. MacPherson J  
23 Military Police  
Lompoc, CA  
#Rich Merlin

Mr. Bob Moore  
23 Military Police  
Chanhassen, MN  
#Paul Stiff

Mr. Martin Reyna  
198 LIB C/1/52 Inf  
Columbus, GA  
#Internet

Mr. Donald E. Smith  
16 Supply 3 Bn  
Farmdale, OH  
#Richard Scales

Mr. Ralph M. Stiles  
23 Military Police  
National Park, NJ  
#Dutch DeGroot

Mr. William (Bud) R. Ter  
198 LIB HHC  
Glasgow, KY  
#Bill Bacon

Mr. Daniel Vigna  
Division Artillery  
Westminster, CA  
#Ed Smith

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Mr. James M. Blaylock  
82 Field Artillery  
Sparta, TN  
#Elbert R. Horton

Mr. Dennis P. Gerner  
23 Military Police  
Schaumburg, IL  
#PNC Gary L. Noller

Mr. Gerald L. Knowles  
23 Military Police CID  
Addison, NY  
#Richard Scales

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL

William A. McMurray

SICK CALL

Hey Guys--how about a card for your National  
Adjutant:

Adi. Bernard Chase

South Yarmouth, MA 02664

SFC Michael Kratochvil (196 LIB B/1/46 Inf  
Melbourne, FL  
#Bob Kapp

Mr. Stephen R. Lewis  
1 Sig Bde 337 Sig Co  
Algonac, MI  
#PNC Gary L. Noller

Mr. Edward F. Miller  
163 Aviation Bn  
Gore, OK  
#Maj. Gen Daries (Ret)

Mr. Glenn Myers  
198 LIB C/1/6 Inf  
Cocoa, FL  
#PNC Gary L. Noller

Mr. Joseph J. Slaby  
82 Artillery 1/82  
Brule, WI  
#Ron Davis

Mr. John M. Spahn  
? ?  
Highspire, PA  
#Bob Kapp

Mr. Charles N. Summers  
11 LIB A/3/1 Inf  
London, OH  
#Richard Scales

Mr. David Tuchek  
198 LIB E/1/46 Inf  
Tucson, AZ  
#Don Ballou

Mr. John R. Young  
196 LIB A/4/31 Inf  
Troy, NY  
#Don Ballou

MEMORIAL DAY 2001

America veterans paid homage to the memory of the America's fallen heroes on Monday May 28, 2001 at the Vietnam Wall, at the Korean War Memorial and also in Arlington National Cemetery.

Led by Ed Marsh and Jon Hansen the America veterans took part in a formal cemetery at the Vietnam Wall by laying a large wreath at the Wall. Thanks to a special intervention by Ed Marsh, the America's participation was highlighted by a special introduction by the Master of Ceremonies, Jan Shruggs, who was and continues to be a major supporter of the Vietnam Memorial. In introducing the America's wreath laying group, Jan paid a special tribute to those who served "Under the Southern Cross." It was a hot but beautiful day and the ceremonies were well attended by America veterans and by other civilian and military personal.

At the Vietnam Wall there was an invocation, remarks by speakers, presentation of memorial wreaths, honors and taps. The America's Memorial Wreath was laid with pride and a deep feeling of gratitude for those America veterans who gave their lives in Vietnam.



ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

Wreaths were also laid at the Korean War Memorial and at the America's Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery. At the Arlington Memorial Jon Hansen, Ed Marsh and John Insani addressed the group of America veterans and tourists by recalling the history of the America in World War II and in Vietnam and the bitter battles, mines and booby traps that the "men in the bush" endured.

The above picture was taken by Richard Williams

John L. Insani

MORE NEW MEMBERS

Mr. Vernon L. Allen  
21 Recon Troop  
Tallahassee, FL  
#Self

Mr. John B. Cooper  
23 Military Police  
Germantown, MD  
#Paul Stiff

Mr. Jay E. Hixenbaugh  
198 LIB B/452 Infantry  
Lima, OH  
#Richard Scales

Mr. Harris G Louque Jr.  
198 LIB B/Hq/46  
Gramercy, LA  
#Ralph Brown

Mr. Vincent M. McMenamy  
196 LIB 4/31 Infantry  
Henderson, NV  
#Ron Davis

Mr. John R. Pullen Jr.  
23 Military Police CED  
Moreno Valley, CA  
#Rich Merlin

Mr. James L. Sistar  
182 Infantry Hdq Co.  
Waycross, GA  
#Jim Buckle

Mr. Francis M. Bromagen  
17 Arm Cav H Troop  
Union City, IN  
#Bernie Chase

Mr. Matthew Czubacki  
97 Field Artillery A  
Inglis, FL  
#Robert Miller

Mr. Thomas R. Lippard II  
23 Military Police  
Williamsville, NY  
#David Taylor

Mr. Clarence L. Marrs  
198 LIB B/1/14 Arty  
Porterville, CA  
#Self

Mr. Thomas J. Platts  
23 Military Police  
McClaren Vale, SA  
#Rick Merlin

Mr. Thomas J. Reggina  
26 Engineers E Co.  
Valhalla, NV  
#PNC Gary L. Noller

Mr. James J. Zemito  
198 LIB B/Hq/5/46 Inf  
Cleveland, OH  
#Ralph E. Brown

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

B. Leonard Angus  
182 Infantry A Co.  
Castro Valley, CA.  
#Joel Jennings

TAPS TAPS TAPS

132 INFANTRY B CO.

Eugene Koeppe  
Lisle, IL  
April 25, 2001

26 ENGINEERS HHC

Doyle Mason  
Kilgore, TX  
April 21, 2001

REUNIONS REUNIONSFAR WEST REGIONAL CHAPTER

The Far West Chapter invites all ADVA members and their guests to Reunion 2001 to be held at:

Edgewater Hotel and Casino  
Laughlin, Nevada  
September 30, 2001 thru October 3, 2001

Rooms must be reserved by September 1, 2001 and my be reserved by calling [REDACTED]. Refer to Group code 'WADVA' to obtain the \$17.00 (plus tax) room rate.

For banquet reservations and menu contact:

Gene McGrath

Puhrump, NV 89048

164th INFANTRY REGIMENT

Raddison Inn - Bismarck, North Dakota  
September 12, 22, 23, 2991

Contact:

Mr. Frank Eide  
P.O. Box 1111  
Bismarck, ND 58504-1111

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COMPANY E - 1ST BATTALION - 20TH INFANTRY - 11 LIB

Pidgeon Forge, Tennessee  
April 26-27-28, 2002

CONTACT

Cliff Barger  
[REDACTED]  
Acworth, GA 30102  
Tel: [REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*  
COMPANY L - 182nd REGIMENT

September 15, 2001

Contact:

Robert Doucette  
[REDACTED]  
Lynn, MA 01904  
Tel: [REDACTED]

All America veterans welcome!!

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19th ANNUAL VIETNAM VETERANS REUNION

Kokomo, Indiana  
September 13-14-15-16, 2001

One of the oldest and largest Vietnam veterans Reunions. Featuring live music, speakers, unit reunions, issues tent, military displays, vendors, Gulf War info, Huey rides, Camping Area.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Telephone: [REDACTED]  
Fax: [REDACTED]  
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Schedule for the America: Thursday Sept. 13 - Hospitality area in the camping area near Terry Babler/Ron Lewis campsites all weekend. Everyone should sign up here as this is a good "Locator" for finding old buddies. Group pictures of America vets will be at 3:00 P.M. at the main FLAG.

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If you know of a member that is sick or has passed away, please notify:

Adi. Bernard Chase  
[REDACTED]  
South Yarmouth, MA 02664  
Or Call: [REDACTED]

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## CHAPTER NEWS

SOUTH MID WEST REGIONAL CHAPTER

COMMANDER Cameron Baird  
 VICE COMMANDER Bill Bacon  
 Stonewall, TX 78671 78624 San Antonio, TX 78250

Alfred (Bruce) Mobley - Sergeant-at-Arms  
 Rev. Perry M. Woerner - Chaplain

The Chapter meeting held on April 1st in Henderson, Texas was a mixed blessing. Despite a mass mailing of over three hundred notices to every known Americal veteran in the region, only seven members were able to attend. We did have a very good time, and enjoyed Ron Ellis' gracious hospitality and some great East Texas barbecue. I hope to have another meeting there sometime next year (OK Ron?), so keep it in mind for a nice gathering in a special part of Texas. All newsletter and communiques in the world can't compare to the camaraderie of talking face to face with a brother; reward yourself and enrich someone else's life by participating in your association. Notices of future Chapter meetings will only be sent to members in good standing, so if you haven't paid your \$5.00 annual dues, please do so now.

We were all saddened to learn of the news that Doyle Mason (26th Combat Engineers) lost his life in an on the job accident the morning of the meeting. Doyle was a great asset to the Chapter and a regular participant in our activities. A group of us had a visitation to convey our last respects, and on the way home, Bill Bacon remarked: "Doyle and Ernie (Carlson) are in Heaven drinking beer together." I pictured the scene in my mind, and I saw them: they had slightly bemused smiles on their faces, for their struggles were over, and they were in a special place. It was the corner of Heaven that is reserved for those special people who served their country well in time of war, and who served their brothers well in time of peace. We will miss Doyle, and our prayers and condolences are extended to his wife, Brenda, his children and family.

## CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

July 4th Parade entry, Fredericksburg, Texas. We will field a float in cooperation with the local VFW. Show your colors and ride on the float to celebrate independence with a small town flavor.

September 22nd: Chapter meeting in Arlington, Texas, to be held at the La Quinta Conference Center. Details forthcoming.

January 18-20, 2002: All American Veterans Stand down, South Padre Island, Texas. Mark your calendar NOW for his event. Open to honorably discharged veterans of all branches. Details forthcoming.

Hug Somebody!  
 Cameron Baird  
 Chapter Commander

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## NOW HEAR THIS!

Any dues that are requested by a Chapter are above your National dues. It is necessary for Chapters to charge dues in order to pay for postage and other office expense.

GREAT LAKES REGIONAL CHAPTER  
 IL, IN, MI, MN, WI

COMMANDER John Mathews  
 ADJ/FIN OFF Terry Babler  
 Verona, WI 53593 New Glarus, WI 53574

The Great Lakes Chapter is please to announce that we will be hosting the Americal Division National Reunion in Washington, DC on November 8-12, 2002 on Veterans Day weekend. This is also the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Activities also at the World War II Memorial (not finished yet but ceremony will be held there) Korean Memorial, Woman's Memorial and more events are planned. All these ceremonies will be held on Veterans Day. The 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry, which was in the Americal in Vietnam, will also be having their Reunion with the Americal on Veterans Day weekend.

The host hotel will be the Double Tree Hotel in Crystal City. Tours, banquets, hospitality parties, dances, vendors and a night cruise are being planned--and MORE!

AMERICAL NATIONAL REUNION  
 WASHINGTON, D.C. -NOVEMBER 8-12, 2002

Double Tree, 300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, VA  
 Reservations call: 1-800-222-8733  
 Ask for: OPERATION LZ/DC 02

Room rates are \$99.00 - Single or Double  
 Rates good for two days either way.  
 Reservations accepted beginning November 11, 2001

Our Great Lakes gathering will be in Kokomo, IN for the 19th Reunion which attracts thousands of veterans every year. We will again be set-up in the Big Tent and hospitality area in the tent area. Sign in your name and unit with the Locator for the Americal. This is to help Americal vets locate their buddies.

Bill Allen, Michigan, is planning a Great Lakes Chapter get-together for the 4th of July 2002 in Grand Rapids. More info later.

We will again bring everyone together for the Winterfest R & R all Veterans Festival and Reunion on January 17-18-19-20, 2002 in New Glarus, Wisconsin in the middle of winter. We had an estimated 80 people connected with the Americal along with another 300 that attended last year.

Our Chapter dues are \$5.00 a year. There are two Newsletters per year, one in May and one in November. Send your check to:

Terry Babler Adj.  
 New Glarus, WI 53574

We extend a welcome to all Americal veterans as well as other veterans and their families to join us in our activities.

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## DO YOU BELONG TO A CHAPTER

If not, why not? Write to the National Adjutant for information on your local Chapter and the name and address of your Chapter Commander.

## SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

## REPORT ON ADVA SCHOLARSHIP FUND 2001

On June 23rd, the Trustees of the Americal Division Scholarship Fund held their annual meeting and announced the following winners of our Scholarship Awards for 2001.

1st place award went to Melissa Camp of Plymouth, MA. She was sponsored by her grandfather, Conrad Krueger, who served in World War II with the 164th Infantry. She will attend Northwestern College in St. Paul, MN. Her award is \$3000.00

2nd place award went to Brittany Young of Mayville, ND. She was sponsored by her father, Larry Young, who served in Vietnam with the 4/3 Infantry. She will attend Valley City State University in Valley City, ND. Her award is \$2000.00.

3rd place award went to Courtney Smith of Spartanburg, SC. She was sponsored by her father, Dantzler Smith, who served in Vietnam with the 1/1 Cavalry. She will attend Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC. Her award is \$1000.00.

4th place award went to Courtney Stankey of Belleville, IL. She was sponsored by her father, Art Stankey, who served with the 555th and 26th Engineers in Vietnam. She is attending Loyola University in Chicago, IL. Her award is \$1000.00.

5th place award went to Nicole Robinson of Valparaiso, IN. She was sponsored by her father, Dan Robinson, who served in Vietnam with the 23rd Military Police Company. She will attend the University of Southern Indiana. Her award is \$1000.00.

There were 23 applicants for the competition this year. Our by-laws permitted us to award a total of \$8000.00 in 2001. Next year, I expect that amount to increase approximately 100%. The current assets of the Fund stand at \$91,695.00, which is invested in a combination of mutual funds, CD's, checking and savings accounts. By-laws state that when the Fund reaches \$100,000 we can give out whatever we take in that year. The annual raffle brought in approximately \$16,000 this year. If we do as well next year, we will be able to award that entire amount. Until the fund reaches \$100,000 we may award only 1/2 of what we take in each year.

A new Chairman of the Fund was appointed by National Commander, Ron Ellis. The new Chairman is:

Bob Short  
 Kalamazoo, MI 48009  
 Tel. [REDACTED]

All future correspondence related to the Scholarship Fund should be directed to him.

The term of Fund Trustee, Jay Roth, has expired. At the Reunion business meeting, National Commander Ron Ellis, announced the appointment of Richard Smith to replace Roth. Richard Smith, a Vietnam veteran with the 23rd MP's, will serve for four years as Trustee.

At the Reunion banquet, we pulled the winning stub for our Scholarship raffle. Bob Brenner of Ocean City, Maryland was the lucky guy and he was mailed a check for \$250.00.

It has been an honor to serve as Chairman of the Fund since its inception. Currently our Fund is doing very well and I'm sure that under the

leadership of the new Chairman, Bob Short, it will continue to prosper. The only part of the job I didn't like was breaking the news to the unsuccessful applicants. Every one of these students was deserving of our assistance and I wish we could have helped every one of them financially. I urge our members to continue to their generous support and God bless you all.

Sincerely,  
 Ron Ward

\*\*\*\*\*  
 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Ellen and Jim Doherty  
 in memory of  
 Al Barbieri

Dola and John R. McKown Jr.  
 in memory of  
 Sgt. Randy Less  
 Sgt. Gil Maestas  
 Specialist Jimmy Long  
 Specialist Gary Cooper

We are making this gift in the names of the four men listed above who did not make it home. They were young men at the time of their deaths and we feel the best way to honor their memory is to help some other young person have a better life. They were all members of A/1/20 Infantry, 11 LIB.

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Dear Americal Committee Members:

It is with great sincerity that I thank you for the award. To once again be the recipient is a true honor.

Thanks to help from your organization, I will graduate from a private university at a fraction of the cost and throughout the last four years I have used the essays to learn more about what a respectable and historic institution that is the Americal Division.

Sincerely,  
 Courtney A. Stankey

Ed Note: Miss Stankey was the winner of the 2nd place award in 1998, the 1st place award in 1999 and fourth place in 2001. She will graduate from Loyola University in May of next year.

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 ATTENTION ATTENTION ATTENTION

In the next issue of the Americal Newsletter there will be pictures and letters from the other winners of awards for 2001.

If one of your children, or grandchildren, is eligible to participate in the Americal Scholarship Awards, do not forget to write to the Chairman and ask for an application for the coming year. His address:

Robert Short  
 Kalamazoo, MI 48009  
 Tel. [REDACTED]

Also, the Scholarship Fund Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank all members for the support of the raffle that is used to fund this program and also to thank the many other members for their generous support.

## AN INVASION NOT FOUND IN HISTORY BOOKS

Deep in the recesses of the national archives in Washington, D.C., hidden for nearly four decades, lie thousands of pages of dusty, yellowing documents stamped "TOP SECRET". These documents, now declassified, are the plans for Operation Downfall, the invasion of the Japanese home islands. Even fewer today are aware of the defenses the Japanese had prepared to counter the invasion had it been launched.

Operation Downfall was finalized during the spring and summer of 1945. It called for two massive military undertakings to be carried out in succession and aimed at the heart of the Japanese Empire.

In the first invasion-code named Operation Olympic-American combat troops would land on Japan by amphibious assault during early morning hours of November 1945. Fourteen combat divisions of soldiers and Marines would land on the heavily fortified Kyushu, the southern most of the Japanese home islands after an unprecedented naval and aerial bombardment.

The second invasion March 1, 1946-code names Operation Coronet-would send at least 22 combat divisions against one million Japanese defenders on the main island of Honshu and the Tokyo plain. Its goal: the unconditional surrender of Japan.

With the exception of a part of the British Pacific Fleet, Operation downfall was to be strictly American operation. It called for using the entire Marine Corps, the entire Pacific Navy, and elements of the Seventh Army Air Force, the Eighth Air Force (recently deployed from Europe), the 20th Air Force and the American Far Eastern Air Force.

More than 1.5 million combat soldiers, with three million more in support--more than 40 percent of all servicemen still in uniform in 1945--would be directly involved in the two amphibious assaults.

Casualties were expected to extremely heavy.

Admiral William Leahy estimated that there would be 250,000 Americans killed or wounded on Kyushu alone. Gen. Charles Willoughby, chief of intelligence for Gen. Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Southwest Pacific, estimated American casualties from the entire operation would be one million men by the fall of 1946. Willoughby's own intelligence staff considered this to be a conservative estimate.

During the summer of 1945, America had little time to prepare for such an endeavor, but top military leaders were in almost unanimous agreement that an invasion was necessary.

While naval blockades and strategic bombing of Japan was considered to be useful, MacArthur, for instance, did not believe a blockade would bring about an unconditional surrender. The advocates for invasion agreed that while a naval blockade chokes, it does not kill; and though strategic bombing might destroy cities, it leaves whole armies intact.

So on May 25, 1945, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, after extensive deliberation issued to MacArthur Admiral Nimitz and Army Air Force Gen. Henry "Hap" Arnold, the top secret directive to proceed with the invasion of Kyushu.

The target date was set for after the typhoon season.

President Truman approved the plans for the invasion July 24, 1945. Two days later the United Nations issued the Potsdam Proclamation, which called upon Japan to surrender unconditionally or face total destruction.

Three days later, the Japanese government news agency broadcast to the worlds that Japan would ignore the proclamation and would refuse to surrender.

During this same period it was learned via monitoring Japanese radio broadcasts that Japan had closed all schools and mobilized its school children and was arming its civilian population and was fortifying caves and building underground defenses.

Operation Olympic called for a four-pronged assault on Kyushu. Its purpose was to seize control of the southern one third of the island and establish naval and air bases, to tighten the naval blockade of the home islands, to destroy units of the main Japanese army and to support the later invasion of the Tokyo plain.

The preliminary invasion would begin October 27 when the 40th Infantry Division would land on a series of small islands west and southwest of Kyushu. At the same time, the 158th Regimental Combat Team would invade and occupy a small island 28 miles south of Kyushu.

On these islands, seaplane bases would be established and radar would be set up to provide advance air warning for the invasion fleet, to serve as a fighter direction centers for the carrier based aircraft and to provide an emergency anchorage for the invasion fleet, should things not go well on the day of the invasion.

As the invasion grew imminent, the massive power of the Navy, the Third and Fifth fleets, would approach Japan.

The Third Fleet, under Admiral William "Bill" Halsey, with its big guns and naval aircraft, would provide strategic support for the operation against Honshu and Hokkaido.

Halsey's fleet would be composed of battleships, heavy cruisers, destroyers, dozens of support ships and three fast carrier task groups. From these carriers hundreds of Navy fighters, dive bombers and torpedo planes would hit targets all over the island of Honshu. The 3,000-ship Fifth Fleet, under Admiral Raymond Spruance, would carry the invasion troops.

Several days before the invasion, the battleships, heavy cruisers and destroyers would pour thousands of tons of high explosives into the target areas. They would not cease the bombardment until after the landing forces had been launched.

During the early morning hours of Nov. 1, the invasion would begin. Thousands of soldiers and Marines would pour ashore on beaches all along the eastern, southeastern, southern and western coasts of Kyushu.

Waves of Helldivers, Dauntless dive bombers, Avengers, Corsairs and Hellcats from 66 aircraft carriers would bomb, rocket and strafe enemy defenses, gun emplacements and troop concentrations along the beaches.

What the military leaders did not know was that by the end of July, the Japanese had been saving all aircraft, fuel and pilots in reserve and had been feverishly building new planes for the decisive battle for their homeland.

As part of Ketsu-Go, the name for the plan to defend Japan, the Japanese were building 20 suicide take-off strips in southern Kyushu with underground hangers. They also had 35 camouflaged airfields and nine seaplane bases.

On the night before the unexpected invasion, 50 Japanese seaplane bombers, 10 former carrier aircraft and 50 land based army planes were to be launched in a suicide attack on the fleet. The Japanese had 58 more airfields on Korea, western Honshu and Shikoku, which also were used for massive suicide attacks.

Allied intelligence had established that the Japanese had no more than 2,500 aircraft of which they guessed 300 would be deployed in suicide attacks. In August 1944, however, unknown to Allied Intelligence, the Japanese still had 5,651 army and 7,074 navy aircraft, for a total of 12,725 planes of all types

Every village had some type of aircraft manufacturing activity. Hidden in mines, railway tunnels, under viaducts and in basements of department stores, work was being done to construct new planes.

Additionally, the Japanese were building newer and more effective models of the Okka--a rocket-propelled bomb much like the German V-1, but flown by a suicide pilot.

When the invasion became imminent, Ketsu-Go called for a four-fold aerial plan of attack to destroy up to 800 Allied ships.

While Allied ships were approaching Japan, but still in the open seas, an initial force of 2,000 army and navy fighters were to fight to the death to control the skies over Kyushu. A second force of 330 navy combat pilots were to attack the main body of the task force to keep it from using its fire support and air cover to protect the troop carrying transports.

While these two forces engaged, a third force of 825 suicide planes was to hit the American transports. As the invasion convoys approached their anchorages, another 2,000 suicide planes were to be launched in waves of 200 to 300, to be used in hour-to-hour attacks.

American troops would be arriving in about 180 lightly armed transports and 70 cargo vessels.

By mid-morning of the first day of the invasion, most of the American land based aircraft would be forced to return to their bases, leaving the defense against the suicide planes to the carrier pilots and the shipboard gunners.

Carrier pilots, crippled by fatigue would have to land time and time again, to re-arm and refuel. Guns would malfunction from the heat of continuous firing and ammunition would become scarce. Gun crews would be exhausted by nightfall, but still the waves of Kamikazes would continue. With the fleet hovering off the beaches, all remaining Japanese aircraft would be committed to non-stop suicide attacks, which the Japanese hoped could be sustained for 10 days.

The Japanese planned to co-ordinate their air strikes with attacks from the 40 remaining submarines from the Imperial Navy--some armed with Long Lance torpedoes, with a range of 20 miles--when the invasion fleet was 180 miles off Kyushu.

The Imperial Navy had 23 destroyers and 2 cruisers which were operational. These ships were used to counter-attack the American invasion. A number of the destroyers were to be beached at the last minute to be used as anti-invasion gun platforms.

Once off shore the invasion fleet would be forced to defend not only against the attacks from the air but would also be confronted with suicide attacks from sea. Japan had established a suicidal naval attack unit of midget submarines, human torpedoes and exploding motor boats.

The goal of the Japanese was to shatter the invasion before the landing. The Japanese were convinced the Americans would back off or become so de-moralized that they would then accept a less-than-unconditional surrender and a more honorable and face-saving end for the Japanese.

But as horrible as the battle of Japan would be off the beaches, it would be on Japanese soil that the American forces would face the most rugged and fanatical defense encountered during the war.

Throughout the island-hopping Pacific campaign, Allied troops had always out-numbered the Japanese two to one and sometimes three to one. In Japan it would be different. By virtue of a combination of cunning guesswork and brilliant military leaders, the Japanese were able to deduce, not only when but where the Americans would land its first invasion forces.

Facing the 14 American Divisions landing at Kyushu would be 14 Japanese Divisions, seven independent Brigades, three tank Brigades and thousands of naval troops. On Kyushu the odds would be three to two in favor of the Japanese. 790,000 enemy defenders against 550,000 Americans.

This time the bulk of the Japanese defenders would not be poorly trained and ill-equipped labor battalions, that the Americans had faced in the earlier campaigns.

The Japanese defenders would be the hard-core of the home army. These troops were well fed and well equipped. They were familiar with the terrain, had stockpiles of arms and ammunition, and had developed an effective system of transportation and supply, almost invisible by air. Many of these Japanese troops were the elite of the army and they were swollen with a fanatical fighting spirit.

Japan's network of beach defenses consisted of offshore mines, thousands of suicide divers attacking land craft, and mines planted on the beaches. Coming ashore, the American eastern amphibious assault forces at Miyazaki would face three Japanese Divisions and two others poised for a counter attack.

Awaiting the southeastern attack force at Ariake Bay was an entire division and at least one mixed infantry brigade.

On the western shores of Kyushu, the Marines would face the most brutal opposition. Along the invasion beaches would be three Japanese Divisions, a tank Brigade, a mixed infantry Brigade and an artillery command. Components of

two Divisions would be poised to launch a counter attacks.

If not needed to re-inforce the primary landing beaches, the American Reserve Force would be landed at the base of Kagoshima Bay on Nov. 4th, where they would be confronted by two mixed infantry Brigades, parts of two infantry Divisions and thousands of the naval troops.

All along the invasion beaches, American Troops would face coastal batteries, anti-landing obstacles and a network of heavily fortified pill-boxes, bunker and underground fortresses.

As Americans waded ashore, they would face intense artillery and mortar fire as they worked their way through concrete rubble and barbed-wire entanglement arranged to funnel them into the muzzles of these Japanese guns.

On the beach and beyond would be hundreds of Japanese machine gun positions, beach mines, booby traps, trip-wire mines and "sniper holes" would engage the troops as they passed nearby.

In the heat of battle, Japanese infiltration units would be sent to reap havoc in the American lines by cutting phone and communication lines. Some of the troops would be in American uniforms. English speaking Japanese officers were assigned to break in on American radio traffic to call off artillery fire, to order retreats and to further confuse the troops.

Other infiltrators, with demolition charges strapped on their chests or back, would attempt to blow up American tanks, artillery pieces and ammunition stores as they were unloaded ashore. Beyond the beaches were large artillery pieces situated to bring down a curtain of fire on the beach. Some of these large guns were mounted on rail road tracks running in and out of caves protected by concrete and steel.

The battle for Japan would be won by what Simon Bolivar Buckner, (a Lieutenant General in the Confederate Army during the Civil War) had called, "Prairie dog warfare." This type of fighting was almost unknown to the ground troops in Europe and the Mediterranean. It was peculiar only to the soldiers and Marines who fought the Japanese on islands all over the Pacific; at Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

Prairie dog warfare was a battle for yards, feet and sometimes inches. It was a brutal, deadly and dangerous form of combat, aimed at an underground, heavily fortified, non-retreating enemy.

In the mountains behind the Japanese beaches were underground networks of caves, bunkers, command posts and hospitals connected by miles of tunnels with dozens of entrances and exits. Some of these complexes could hold up to 1,000 troops.

Japan had mobilized its citizenry. The Japanese civilian population, inflamed by a national slogan--"One hundred million will die for the Emperor and nation," was prepared to fight to death.

Twenty-eight million Japanese had become part of the National Volunteer Combat Force. They were armed with ancient rifles, lunge mines, satchel charge Molotov cocktails and one-shot black powder mortars. Others were armed with swords, long bows, axes and bamboo spears. The civilian units were to be used in night time attacks, hit-and-run

maneuvers, delaying actions and massive suicide charges at the weaker American positions. At the early stage of the invasion, 1,000 Japanese and American soldiers would be dying every hour.

The invasion of Japan never became a reality because on August 6, 1945, an Atomic bomb was exploded over Hiroshima. Three days later, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Within days, the war with Japan was at a close. Had these bombs not been dropped and had the invasion been launched as scheduled, combat casualties in Japan would have been, at a minimum, in the tens of thousands. Every foot of Japanese soil would have been paid for by Japanese and American lives. One can only guess at how many civilians would have committed suicide in their homes or in futile mass military attacks. In retrospect, one million American men who were to be casualties of an invasion, were instead lucky enough to survive the war.

Intelligence studies and military estimates, made more than 40 years ago, and not latter-day speculation, clearly indicate that the battle for Japan might well have resulted in the biggest blood bath in the history of modern warfare. Far worse would be what might have happened to Japan as a nation and as a culture.

When the invasion came, it would have come after several months of fire bombing all of the remaining Japanese cities. The cost of human life that resulted from the two Atomic blasts would be small in comparison to the total number of Japanese lives that would have been lost by this aerial devastation.

With American forces locked in combat in the south of Japan, little could have prevented the Soviet Union from marching into the northern half of the Japanese home islands. Japan, today, could be divided much like Korea.

The World was spared the cost of Operation Downfall however, because Japan surrendered Sept. 2, 1945 and World War II was over. The aircraft carriers, cruisers and transport ships scheduled to carry the invasion troops to Japan ferried home American troops in a gigantic operation called Magic Carpet.

Following the surrender, the classified documents, maps, diagrams and plan for Operation Downfall were packed away in boxes and eventually stored at the National Archives.

These plans that called for the invasion of Japan paint a vivid description of what might have been one of the most horrible campaigns in the history of man.

The fact that the story of the invasion of Japan is locked up in the National Archives and is not told in our history books is something for which all Americans can be thankful.

(Sent in by James Davis)

FROM YOUR EDITOR  
The preceding letter is quite long but worth reading--especially if you were on Cebu awaiting the order to invade Japan. I feel this is a fitting article to confront all the critics of United States for using the A Bomb.

Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945. Take note of how the news media will ignore this fact on the anniversary date this year.

#### "PEARL HARBOR"

Revised for use in Japan and Germany

Disney is cutting dialogue from its World War II epic "Pearl Harbor" for fear of offending Japanese and German audiences, according to the New York World News.

Why? Studio execs are said to be worried that America's former enemies won't like a cocky victory speech by "Pearl Harbor" star Kate Beckinsale.

Although the changes are said to be minor, Disney apparently doesn't want to endanger box-office returns from the important foreign markets. The Japanese and German trailers for the flick are said to be focused on the romance rather than the blood, gore and U.S. triumphs.

Disney reps did not return calls for comment, but producer Jerry Bruckheimer told Reuters that "we made a couple of adjustments to the final print that will go around the world." One of those changes was taking out a scene in which Major James Doolittle says that, if his plane is crippled over Japan, he would aim it so that it would kill Japanese civilians.

The studio certainly had all PR hands on deck Monday night at the premiere of the \$140 million film, on board the aircraft John C. Stennis at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.

The ship's flight deck was turned into an open air theater for about 2000 guests, including survivors of the real Japanese attack.

Ben Affleck, who stars in the drama was doing a PC thing, all right. "I think the message," he said, "is not one about the United States or Japan or the Second World War, right or wrong."

(Sent in by Leonard Owczarzak)

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#### IT JUST DOESN'T ADD UP!

Here are some statistics to consider:

The USS Utah, 58 dead: USS West Virginia, 70 dead: USS Oklahoma, 595 dead: USS California, 98 dead: USS Arizona, 1103 dead and still entombed in her hull. The total was 2335 military and 68 civilians murdered on the morning of December 7, 1941.

The Japanese never gave an apology. Emperor Hirohito never gave a moment of silence or shed a tear. The Japanese deny their actions in their history books.

I ask President Bush to stop this absurdity and get his priorities in order. To Cmdr Scott Waddle and the crew of the USS Greenville--Godspeed.

Michael Beaghan

(Sent in by Leonard Owczarzak)

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#### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

There has been a great deal of controversy over the sinking of a Japanese training ship that was training would be fishermen.

## WHY TRUMAN DROPPED THE BOMB

President Harry Truman's January 12, 1953, letter to Professor James L. Cate, a history professor at the University of Chicago, explains succinctly why he authorized the use of the Atomic Bomb in August 1945.

My dear Professor Cate:

Your letter of December 6, 1952, has just been delivered to me.

When the message came to Potsdam that a successful atomic explosion had taken place in New Mexico, there was much excitement and conversation about the effect on the war then in progress with Japan.

The next day I told the prime minister of Great Britain and Generalissimo Stalin that the explosion had been a success. The British prime minister understood and appreciated what I had told him. Premier Stalin smiled and thanked me for reporting the explosion to him, but I am sure he did not understand its significance.

I called a meeting of the secretary of state, Mr. Byrne; the secretary of war, Mr. Stimson; Admiral Leahy, General Marshall, General Eisenhower, Admiral King and some others, to discuss what should be done with this awful weapon.

I asked General Marshall what it would cost in lives to land on the Tokio (sic) plain and other places in Japan. It was his opinion that such an invasion would cost at a minimum one quarter of a million casualties, and might cost as much as a million, on the American side alone, with an equal number of enemy. The other military and naval men present agreed.

I asked Secretary Stimson which cities in Japan were devoted exclusively to war production. He promptly named Hiroshima and Nagasaki, among others.

We sent an ultimatum to Japan. It was rejected.

I ordered atomic bombs dropped on the two cities named on the way back from Potsdam, when we were in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

In your letter, you raise the fact that the directive to General Spaatz to prepare for delivering the bomb is dated July 25. It was, of course, necessary to set the military wheels in motion, as these orders did, but the final decision was in my hands, and was not made until we were returning from Potsdam.

Dropping the bombs ended the war, saved lives, and gave the free nations a chance to face facts.

When it looked as if Japan would quit, Russia hurried into the fray less than a week before the surrender, so as to be in at the settlement. No military contribution was made by the Russians toward victory over Japan. Prisoners were surrendered and Manchuria occupied by the Soviets, as was Korea, north of the 38th parallel.

Harry Truman  
The White House,  
Washington, D.C.

(This article was taken from the VFW magazine)

PENETRATING THE  
"THE GREAT NORTHERN SHIELD"

The rocky and barren Kurile Islands extend northeast of Japan's homeland, and in WWII provided the empires "Great Northern Shield". After driving the Japanese off of the Aleutians in August 1943, the U.S. began bombing the Kuriles, a campaign that lasted until World War II ended.

Here are the highlights of that campaign:

Sep 11, 1943-the 11th Air Force suffers the loss of seven B-25's and two B-24's, the worst in its history.

Dec. 20, 1943-Navy planes fly their first bombing over the Kuriles.

Feb. 4, 1944-Navy ships shell Paramushiro, first surface bombardment of the Japanese homeland.

April 15, 1944-Operation Wedlock begins. A fictitious plan, it misleads the enemy regarding U.S. troop and ship movements.

June 19, 1945-A B-24 of the 404th Bombardment Squadron flies the longest mission in the North Pacific--15 1/2 hours covering 2500 miles round trip from Shemya to Ureppu Island.

Aug. 14, 1945-USS Concord fires the last naval shots of WWII at Shasukotan Island.

By the time Japan surrendered:

The 404th Bombardment Squadron had flown 699 missions, dropped 1,262,100 pounds of bombs and conducted 39 shipping sweeps, while losing 42 men.

The Navy's Fleet Air Wing Four lost 49 men while flying 113 attack missions.

242 U.S. airmen were imprisoned in the Soviet Union after crash landing on Kamchatka Peninsula.

Task Force 94 & 92 bombarded the Kuriles 12 times and conducted six sweeps of the sea of Okhotsk.

U.S. submarines crews lost 615 men, or 83% of all casualties in the campaign. The subs conducted a total of 72 missions, sank 24,000 tons of shipping and tallied 88 victories in the North Pacific.

Brian Garfield, author of "The Thousand Mile War" concluded, "The Kurile campaign was of far greater value than the bored Aleutian servicemen imagined." It tied down 500 Japanese planes and 41,000 ground troops.

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## VITAL FOOTNOTE TO HISTORY

One final note for those who were there, and for future historians.

On August 28, 1945, the USS Missouri sailed triumphantly into Tokyo Bay to prepare to accept the Japanese surrender. Not far away, last-ditch "kamikaze" pilots began taxiing into position on the runway, determined to sink the American battleship.

Fighter pilots were in cockpits waiting to take off to strafe the waters as the big ship went down in the hope of killing General Douglas MacArthur and Admiral Chester Nimitz and anybody else who happened in the line of machine gun and cannon fire.

Only a last minute appeal by Prince Takamatsu, the emperor's younger brother, grounded the fanatics who could have started the whole thing over again.

(By Herbert M. Mason Jr. in the VFW Magazine)

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## F COMPANY - 182nd INFANTRY

On Wednesday May 2, 2001, WWII veterans of F Company, 182nd Infantry held their annual luncheon Reunion at the Chateau Restaurant in Waltham, MA.

Attending were members of the Americal Division Veterans Association that included J. McCarthy Co. A, John Groppi H Co., Frank LaVallee Hdq/2nd Bn., Joe Chin M Co., Joe Kelly and Jim Buckle E Co., all from the 182nd Infantry Regiment and also members of the Massachusetts National Guard Veterans Unit #14.

Company F men attending were Ernest Costa, Anthony DiPorro, William Lambert, Paul Miele, Joseph Papa, Ducky Rallo, Joseph Rando, Frank Rourke, William Vinci and Salvatore Vincuillo.

The Welcoming address was given by Chairman Frank Rourke. Letters of regards were received from Al Hartwell, Robert Mitchell and Vincent LeBlanc.

Since our last Reunion in April 2000, three members have passed away: William Zaremba, Donald Pray and Maurice Daniels. On the sick list-Buddy Lorenz and Si Iannetti.

Of the forty people in attendance, there were nine wives and three daughters of Company F veterans. With the laughter and chatter of the female contingency, the luncheon was reminiscent of a High School Reunion. A welcome contrast to the somber meetings associated with the men's only meeting of our present age and time. But certainly not of our youth.



Wives and Daughters

Back Row L-R: Barbara Chin, Mrs. Frank Rourke, Mrs. Joe Papa, Mrs. Ducky Rallo, Mrs. Mary Miele, Maria Calandrello. Front row I-R: Mrs. Joe Rando, Mrs. T DiPirro, Gerri Oliviera, daughter of Costa, and Mrs. Frank LaVallee.

Company F Committee member Joseph Papa touched upon Company F's involvements since our last Reunion of April 2000. The first was a sad affair with a group of Company F men lead by Major Vincuillo attending Captain Donald Pray's funeral, at the First Congregational Church in Reading, MA.

On March 24, 2001 the Massachusetts National Guard Unit #14 sponsored a Silver Star luncheon for Major Salvatore Vincuillo and 1/Sgt. Paul Miele, on Patriots Day. (See article in the April-May-June 2001 Americal Newsletter).

On May 16, 2001 Company F held the dedication of a plaque in honor of Lawrence J. Murphy who was killed on Guadalcanal on November 21, 1942. This plaque is located at the corner of College Farm and Lexington Streets, Waltham, MA, next to Larry's home. (See article in above listed Newsletter).

How fortunate we are that fifty six (56) after V.J., we are still having Company F Reunions!!

Hopefully we will see you next year!

Joseph Papa  
Co. F 182nd Infantry  
Committee

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## 754th TANK BATTALION - C COMPANY

I am looking for anyone that served with my uncle, Sgt. Joseph Pezzulo, who was a Tank Commander with Company C, 754 Tank Battalion, on Bougainville and Luzon during World War II.

I am interested in hearing from anyone willing to write of their experiences and give me some insight as to what he went through. My uncle passed away in 1971.

## CONTACT

Valeriu Covino  
[REDACTED]  
Bridgeville, PA 15017  
email: [REDACTED]

## \*\*\*\*\*

## 164th INFANTRY REGIMENT

I am trying to find information on my father, Raymond F. McGee. I know that he was a Lieutenant in the 164th Infantry Regiment and that he was in the Pacific Theatre and also that he was awarded the Bronze Star.

I would like to hear from any of the men in his unit.

## CONTACT

Sarah McClure  
[REDACTED]  
Edmond, OK 73013

Ed Note: Sarah, the 164th Infantry Regiment has an organization and puts out a Newsletter. Write to them at:

The 164th Infantry News  
[REDACTED]  
Bismarck, ND 58502-1111

## \*\*\*\*\*

## DO YOU KNOW THIS MAN?

I am looking for anyone that knew my father, Robert Merrill, who served in the 1st Battalion of the 182nd Infantry. If you knew him or knew of him please contact:

Sara Nelson  
[REDACTED]  
Sierra Vista, AZ 85650

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## COMPANY D - 164th INFANTRY

Welford Man Set Up Education Center on Southwest Pacific Isle

With The Americal Infantry Division Somewhere in the Southwest Pacific - (Delayed)

Sgt. Eugene A. Hill, Welford, ND has made a name for himself by building an information and education tent out of practically nothing in this jungle combat zone. In the tent are displayed, and kept up to date, are maps of all the war fronts.

Sgt. Hill constructed the tent from salvaged canvas, odd pieces of lumber and with the help of a little ingenuity. In addition to the maps, a pin pong table and a small library can be found in the tent.



Sgt. Hill on the right - Bougainville

Overseas for 33 months in the Pacific Sgt. Hill is the reconnaissance sergeant for a heavy weapons company. Added duties are assistant to the information and education officer, company news reporter and company photographer.

For his exemplary conduct in action on Guadalcanal and Bougainville, Sgt. Hill has been awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge. In addition, he is entitled to wear the Asiatic-Pacific campaign ribbon with two battle stars, the Presidential Unit Citation (Navy) ribbon for showing gallantry on Guadalcanal and the Good Conduct Medal.

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## CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene A. Hill were married on October 1, 1945.



Above is a picture taken on the 50th wedding anniversary. On October 1, 2001 they will be celebrating their 56th wedding anniversary.

## CONGRATULATIONS

John and Mary Rose Trauger, Lancaster, PA celebrated their fifty fifth (55) wedding anniversary at a family dinner held Sunday May 6, 2001 at Kegel's Seafood Restaurant.

They were married May 8, 1946 at Sacred Hearts Church and have been blessed with six children - John, Ellen, Rebecca, Pat, Joan and Kathy. They have nine grandchildren and one great grandchild.

John served as a Lieutenant in F Company, 182nd Infantry and his wife Mary, served in the Army Nurse Corps in World War II.

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## HISTORICAL MARKER - HIDALGO COUNTY

## 1st North Dakota Infantry

Erected 7 April 1960 in recognition of the 1007 officers and enlisted men of the 1st North Dakota Infantry, North Dakota National Guard which occupied this area as a camp site in 1916-1917.

## History

Organized as 1st Dakota Infantry 1883  
Redesignated 1st North Dakota Infantry 1885

## Federal Service:

Spain-American War and War of Insurrection 1889-99  
Mexican Border Service 1916-1917  
Redesignated the 164th Infantry

World War I-AEF-France  
World War II-Pacific Theater of Operations 1941-45  
Korean Conflict-Camp Rucker, Alabama 1951-1953  
This Regiment, as part of the Americal Division, was the first U.S. Army component to take the offensive in World War II - Guadalcanal, 10 October 1942.

Converted to 16th Engineer Group North Dakota National Guard 1955.

This Historical Marker is located at the corner of South Ohio and 10th Street in Mercedes, Texas.

Thanks to Celerino Castillo Jr. for sending in this article. He served with F Company, 182nd Infantry and saw action on Leyte and Cebu. He was returned home from Cebu after being wounded.

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## L COMPANY - 182nd INFANTRY

On March 24, 2001, the Americal, L Company, 182nd Infantry get-together was held at Bob Doucette's home in Lynn, MA.

The following men from L Company attended: John Patterson, Dick Pratt, Jim Standish, Israel Rosenzweig, Bob Contant, Al Greer, Ted Milgroom, Jim McCarthy and Tom Walsh.

It was the 23rd Reunion for them.

Members from A, E, M and I Company also attended. They were Doug Surrette, Jim Buckle, Fred Wonson, Ted Mathey, Vin Tringale, Harry Mohla, Joe Chin, Mario Binder and Michael Imbrascio.

After the lunch many stories and much camaraderie followed. Some of the fellows brought their wives and a good time was had by all. Next meeting will be September 15, 2001.

Bob Doucette

## FIGHTING ON GUADALCANAL

I'll try to start at the beginning. I was in a unit called the Americal Division. It was made up of many misfits. Men who had gone AWOL and were always in some kind of trouble. Also, the Army wanted to get rid of them if they could. Some of the soldiers in the Division came from the 258th Field Artillery and the 187th Field Artillery, that were stationed in Burlington, Vermont. We left the States from Fort Dix, NJ and went out through Brooklyn, NY. As we left we saw Coney Island.

I left on one of the former Grace Line ships named the Santa Lucia, one of the four ships in the convoy. We went through the Panama Canal. There were a lot of Blimps in the air so as to give us cover from the enemy. Without them the enemy could see the locks and bomb them.

On our ship we met some of our friends from the 187th Field Artillery that had left our outfit before us and they were manning the ship's guns.

After leaving Panama we sailed to an island called Bora Bora. Upon seeing such a beautiful island we had to go and visit it. I put on my life jacket and went over the side of the ship. My friend Smitty was such a good swimmer that he dove off the mast of the ship--about ninety (90) feet. (He is the same guy that jumped from the Brooklyn Bridge on a bet). As we were swimming for shore a motor boat appeared and yelled at us to return to our ship, as there were lots of sharks in the water.

While crossing Pacific, our ship was the last ship in the convoy. All of a sudden there were five blasts from the ship's whistle. A destroyer in the middle of the convoy turned around and passed us. It dropped depth charges, then circled the area, satisfied it had done its job. It then stayed behind us for a while. I don't know if it true or not, but it was said that six subs were sunk by our escorts while on the way to Australia.

Whenever there was a sub alert we were told to go below decks and back to our quarters. All doors were locked making each compartment water-tight. If that part of the ship was torpedoed all the men in that compartment were in danger of being sacrificed in order to save the ship.

Water was being rationed aboard ship. We were allowed one canteen of fresh water per person per day. We would take a drink of water and then spare a little to wash and shave. To wash our clothes, we would tie them to a rope and throw them over the side of the ship. Showers had to be taken with salt water.

The food on board was so bad, it could not be eaten. The chickens they took out of the refrigerator looked so moldy that I would not eat them. The men that ate the food got the GI's and were very sick. I lived on hard boiled eggs and coffee.

My hammock was next to the kitchen. I would ask a soldier on KP for a piece of bread. The white soldiers refused me, but the black soldiers would give me some.

Many of my shipmates and I, were from Brooklyn, so we mingled with the black soldiers. But, we were told by a southern Sergeant to stay away from the blacks. We complained to our Captain about this situation and he told the Sergeant to "butt-out".

This Sergeant was a boxer and one time he beat a soldier so badly that a doctor pressed charges against him and he was transferred to our outfit. At one point later, on New Caledonia, we had two 1/Sgts and this Sergeant was put in charge because he was Regular Army. We had six soldiers in our tent and we made a pact that if he went for one of us we would all gang up on him.

One day while cleaning our rifles, some bullets got mixed in with papers that were on the table. I picked up everything, and forgetting about the bullets, threw everything into the fire, and the bullets exploded. The sergeant came up and wanted to know who was responsible for the shooting. I tried to explain but he did not believe me. He came towards me and my five buddies closed in around him. He stopped short and said, "Make sure it doesn't happen again".

Two of these men, Smitty and Nick Cirillo, and I, had formed a friendship on board ship and this friendship lasted even after the war.

One day later on, while Smitty was on guard duty, he fired a shot through the 1/Sgt's tent--over his head.

From there we went to Australia. Here we set up a camp on a race track called Escot. No passes were given out so I went AWOL by walking under the sewer system and coming up to one of the streets. A woman from the town saw us and told us to go through her house and out through her backyard. She said there were M.P.'s around.

The next day we were put on a train, moved to another port and boarded another ship. By that time I was ready to desert again but couldn't--and we were on our way to New Caledonia.

The Vichy French wanted control of the island and so the Army put the island under martial law.

When we first landed on New Caledonia we were attached to a Southern outfit and they tried to give us all the dirty work. On a rainy day I found some lumber and was putting it on the floor of my pup tent to sleep on when one of the sergeants sent me on a detail. Upon my return I found the lumber gone. When I told the sergeant that I wanted it back he said it wasn't mine--"that it belonged to the U.S. Army". Since there was nothing I could do about it I let it go. I was writing all that was happening to me in my letters back home. I knew that it would be censored, but I got my point across.

Another time when I was on KP, my Lieutenant came over to me and told me that the Colonel had been watching me and was admiring the way that I worked.

Another day, after policing the area, they again lined up all the soldiers and told them to pick up everything that did not grow. This also meant that all cans had to be smashed and put into a sump hole. I got blamed for not smashing the large one gallon cans. I was told, by the sergeant, to go down into the sump hole and bring them out. I tried to explain that I had not done it--that it may have been one of the other men cleaning up. He insisted but I refused to obey. I hooked up a wire and pulled out the empty cans, kicking them away so that they would not fall into the hole again. The Sergeant told me to stop kicking the cans and he pushed me, so I hit him.

That did it. He marched me into the Captain and said that he wanted me courts-martialed. The Captain heard both sides of the story and said that I had not disobeyed the order, but instead, would give me two extra days of KP. Our Lieutenant heard about it and wanted to know what happened, so I explained the problem to him. He must have gone to the Captain because the next thing I knew I was taken off KP.

I then told the Captain that I wanted to be transferred from this stinking outfit. As long as I was in this outfit there would be hard feelings. There was a new outfit being formed called the 247th Field Artillery and that is where I was sent.

While on New Caledonia, if you wanted to go to church, you took your rifle and ammo with you

Then off to Guadalcanal:

On Guadalcanal, some Japs knew our rifles only held five rounds and the had to be reloaded. You could put one round in the chamber making a total of six. Knowing this the Japs would charge before we could reload. Then I had a bright idea! A BAR rifle clip hold 20 rounds but were only issued to infantry platoons. I found an old rifle and fitted the BAR clip into this 30.06 rifle. Then I went to an Ordnance unit to have it spot welded. The officer there wanted to courts-martial me for destroying my gun. I told him that I had found the rifle and it didn't belong to me. Then I had to show him my gun.

Also, while we were at Henderson Field, we had to worry about bombs, since the Jap bombers were trying to knock out our planes. When we were closer to the front we had to worry the anti-aircraft shells. The bursting shells could spray an area below with shrapnel. Many soldiers were hit by this shrapnel.

When the fighting was over we got the job of cleaning up all the Jap ammo. Going out on one of these details, my Sergeant was talking to someone for a long time. (I later found out he was talking to General Sebree.) The General was pointing out, while demonstrating, that as much as a thin piece of hair could detonate the shell. I told him to put the f--- thing down. He just laughed at me.

I then decide to go looking for souvenirs and since the fighting was over, I didn't take a rifle with me. I was looking for a Jap officer's grave to dig up for I had heard that they bury their sword with them. I heard a strange noise that sounded like one Jap giving another Jap a signal. I decide not to go back to the open field but instead to go deeper into the jungle, picking up a rusted Jap rifle and some ammo on the way. My Sergeant noticed that I had been gone for a long time so he sent two men to look for me. I met them on my way back. The very next day two sailors were shot in that exact spot where I had been.

I still have the rifle.

Jack Masucci  
247th F.A.

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VET GETS PURPLE HEART 58 YEARS LATE

"Better late than never" will take on special meaning for Frank Taillon this Memorial Day.

A bullet from the gun of a Japanese sniper tore

through his left thigh on a January morning in 1943 while he was serving on the Pacific battlefield of Guadalcanal.

The bullet and shrapnel wounds sent Taillon to a Georgia hospital, where he was later discharged from the U.S. Army due to combat injuries.

Those injuries should have earned Taillon a Purple Heart. But in 58 years since, the veteran, who now lives in St. Petersburg, hasn't heard one word about his award from the government.

That will change today. U.S. Senator Bill Nelson will present Taillon, 82, his long over-due Purple Heart, the medal given to America's wounded war veterans, today.

Nelson's office learned of the government's error when Taillon's daughter and son-in-law started asking the Department of Veterans Affairs what steps needed to be taken to obtain the honor.

"I am privileged--58 years after his injury--to have this opportunity to make up for this oversight," Nelson said.

"I never felt angry or put out because I didn't get the Purple Heart," Taillon said.

Taillon served in the Army starting in January 1941.

He was sent to Guadalcanal with Company A, 182nd Infantry Regiment and fought in this battle of the Solomon Islands.

This article appeared in a Knight Ridder newspaper on May 5, 2001 and was sent in by Jerry Martel.

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#### COMMAND PERFORMANCE



The above picture is of the 101st Medical Regiment Band performer on board a Dutch cruiser in Noumea Harbor. Band was under the direction of CWO Leon J. O'Neil.

Photo sent in by Dom Pantaleo, and he states that Dutch beer was like GOLD!

## TOGETHER AGAIN! ...



Signing in!



POW Frank Anton related his experiences during his 5 years as a prisoner, to a standing-room only audience.



Cleveland's VA Hospital offered a free wellness check.



ADVA Sr. Vice-Commander Richard Scales made sure he didn't go thirsty!



(Left to right) Reunion Co-Chairs Larry Watson and Dave Taylor are all smiles. They know their only preparation for the 2002 reunion will be to pack their bags!

## DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN? ...



Favorite locations for reminiscing were the large open courtyard (left) with Gazebo and running stream and the large and ornate hotel lobby (right). The hotels "Tower Club" was the site for the hospitality room, another popular spot, which overlooked the courtyard.



The Divisions 23<sup>rd</sup> MP Company (Vietnam) proved to be the largest contingent of Americal vet's (over 80), who came together for the first time since the Vietnam war.

Many company-size groups met to renew old acquaintances and remember how things used to be. Pictured above is Bravo Company, 2<sup>nd</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battalion, 196<sup>th</sup> L.I.B.

## DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY ...



The Singing Angels inspired our audience and brought tears to many eyes during their performance Friday night. Included were stirring renditions of The Battle Hymn of the Republic and God Bless America.



(Left to Right) Col. John Insani and LTC Bill Honjiyo presented the Silver Star to Tom Waterbury (Co E, 1<sup>st</sup>/20<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> L.I.B.). Tom's wife Anita shares the special moment with her husband.



(Above) The first ADVA Lifetime Achievement Awards presented by Ron Ellis to Jim Buckle and Joe Chin (pictured) and Bernie Chase.

(Left) The Soldiers of History gave a moving performance Saturday night dedicated to the sacrifices of the American soldier throughout our history.





(Above) The reunion committee held a small prayer service Thursday morning at the Canton, Ohio graveside of Americal nurse 1LT Sharon Lane, killed by rocket attack on June 8, 1969. National Commander Ron Ellis presented an honorary membership in the ADVA to 1Lt Lanes mother, Mary Kay Lane. (Below left to right) 23rd MP Company's Dale Meisel leads his group in a memorial service honoring the 13 MP's killed in action in Vietnam. Friday night's dinner began with setting a table for the divisions POW-MIA's. Committee members Bernie Borowski (HQ, Americal G-5, Vietnam) and Clint Zimlich (57th Engineers, WWII) carry the wreaths for the divisions annual memorial service, at the Coast Guard's District Headquarters, by Lake Erie, Cleveland.



KEEP THOSE MEMORIES ALIVE!



## 2001 REUNION MEMORY BOOK

Our 2001 Reunion is history but the memories will last us a lifetime! To help with the memories, and to offer those who could not be there, a glimpse of who attended and all the activities that took place, a Reunion Memory Book will be available. It will have page after page of pictures of your buddies having a great time in Cleveland, plus pictures of special presentations at the dinners and the many sights seen around the hotel that weekend.

The Memory book, created in conjunction with Classic Reunions, will be in black and white and offered at the rock bottom price of \$11 per book, which includes postage!

To order, please send check or money order made-out to the order of:  
AMERICAL REUNION 2001  
Send payment (no cash) to:

David W. Taylor  
[REDACTED]  
Medina, OH 44256

(Inquiries: [REDACTED] or [REDACTED])

Send your order no later than September 28th. We expect to publish the book shortly after. This book will only be published once, so don't miss this opportunity.

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## FAR WEST REGIONAL CHAPTER

The Far West Chapter invites all ADVA members and their guests to Reunion 2001 to be held at:

Edgewater Hotel and Casino  
Laughlin, Nevada  
September 30, 2001 thru October 3, 2001

Rooms must be reserved by September 1, 2001 and may be reserved by calling [REDACTED]. Refer to Group code 'WADVA' to obtain the \$17.00 (plus tax) room rate.

For banquet reservations and menu contact:

Gene McGrath  
[REDACTED]  
Pahrump, NV 89048

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ARE YOUR DUES PAID?

164th INFANTRY REGIMENT

Raddison Inn - Bismarck, North Dakota  
September 12, 22, 23, 2001

Contact:

Mr. Frank Eide  
[REDACTED]  
Bismarck, ND 58504-1111

\*\*\*\*\*

COMPANY L - 182nd REGIMENT

September 15, 2001

Contact:

Robert Doucette  
[REDACTED]  
Lynn, MA 01904  
Tel: [REDACTED]

All Americal veterans welcome!!

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COMPANY E - 1ST BATTALION - 20TH INFANTRY - 11 LIB

Pidgeon Forge, Tennessee  
April 26-27-28, 2002

CONTACT

Cliff Barger  
[REDACTED]  
Acworth, GA 30102  
Tel: [REDACTED]

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19TH ANNUAL VIETNAM VETERANS REUNION

Kokomo, Indiana  
September 13-14-15-16, 2001

One of the oldest and largest Vietnam veterans Reunions. Featuring live music, speakers, unit reunions, issues tent, military displays, vendors, Gulf war info, Huey rides, Camping Area,

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Telephone: [REDACTED]  
Fax: [REDACTED]  
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Schedule for the Americal: Thursday Sept. 13 - Hospitality area in the camping area near Terry Babler/Ron Lewis campsites all weekend. Everyone should sign up here as this is a good "Locator" for finding old buddies. Group pictures of Americal vets will be at 3:00 P.M. at the main FLAG.

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AMERICAL NATIONAL REUNION

Washington, DC  
November 8 - 9 - 10 - 11 - 13, 2002

Doubletree Hotel - Arlington, Virginia  
Room Rates \$99 - Rate good two days either way  
Reservation call 1-800-222-8733  
You may make reservation after November 11, 2001

MAKE THIS A MUST!!

**My Brother Paul**

By Karen Parmentier

For as long as I can remember, Paul was always there. We laughed together, cried together, worked and played together. He taught me how to ride my bike, how to hunt and fish, play baseball and football. He taught me how to swim and how to dance. I was like his shadow until he went to college. Paul was my brother, my blood, my protector. Paul was my Hero!

He was born in 1948. I was born in 1950. Warren was born in 1952. Our oldest siblings, Carl and Donna lived in Colorado with their mother and stepfather. The distance between states made it impossible to grow up together. Then there was brother Raymond. He was born in 1946 but passed away less than two years later due to asthma.

**Paul and Karen Sheer in their high school photos.**

So for Paul and I, grade school would begin in Jerome, Idaho. After brother John was born in 1958, we moved to Oregon. Warren would start school that year, as Dad's road construction business took us to Sprague River and Sweet Home. From there we went to Crater Lake, Diamond Lake, Blue River and finally Lakeview. In 1961 when sister Linda was born, the folks sold the mobile home and bought the home they live in yet today. Our lives became stationary.

The years growing up in Lakeview carry cherished memories of Paul. One such time he pulled up to the curb in his '59 Pontiac as I was walking the four blocks from high school to home. The windows were all down and the pipes were purring. He leans toward the passenger window and asks me, "Would you like a ride?" I said, "Sure!" Just as I reach for the door handle, off he drives with the pipes rattling their chuckle at me. "Hope you find one." A few minutes later I walk in the front door. He's in the chair waiting with that big grin. "What took you so long?" After a few words back and forth, he said, "Come on, let's go get a coke." All was forgiven and off we went.

Sometimes if the folks were out for the evening, Paul and I would have friends in. One of our best was New Years Eve with Grandfather. The wind couldn't whistle through the house because of all the people. By the time the folks returned, the house was in order and everyone was asleep. Next morning, Grandfather said that was the best party he had ever been to! There was, also, the time my boyfriend and Paul's girlfriend went off and got married. We were both devastated. Finally, we had a good laugh. Paul said we were destined to share everything, some good, some not so good.

During those years, I was home with John and Linda. It was my job to help my mother, Gladys. Paul and Warren would go with our father, Art. He would teach them both to be excellent heavy equipment operators. Paul began this role when he learned to tie his shoes. By the time he graduated from high school in 1966, Paul was one of Art's best operators.

To further his education, Paul went on to college graduating June 1970 from Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls with an Engineering Degree. The following month, he went to Ft. Lewis, Washington and joined the Army. By this time, I had married and lived in Portland. On two occasions, Paul came for the weekend. The Army wanted him to go to Officers Training Camp. He turned them down. He wanted to serve his time and get back home. Plans were set for his future in the construction business. On his way home for leave in December, Paul spent a couple days with me. He showed me the trophy he had received for his marksmanship. I was impressed and proud. Then he told me he was headed to Vietnam right after Christmas.

We didn't talk about it much. We didn't have to. What we did talk about was Christmas. Paul and I loved it as much as the folks, Warren, John and Linda. So Paul headed to Lakeview to prepare for Santa. My husband and I would join him on Christmas Eve.

With the family together, we hugged, we laughed, we enjoyed. Paul's gift to Warren, John and Linda was new skies. He was an excellent snow skier, himself, and Warren was right behind him, with John and Linda just beginning. Paul wanted it to be special for each of them. It surely was.

Christmas Night was one of the last celebrations Paul had with many of his family and friends. It was a heart filled evening, one reminiscing by many even today. The next morning, I had to say good-bye and return to Portland. Paul was to stop and see me before returning to Ft. Lewis. So our words were few. A quick hug and I was gone. However, because of weather, Paul's plans were changed. We would never see each other again.....

**PFC Paul Sheer, U.S. Army**

Paul left for Vietnam on January 2, 1971. The following week my husband and I moved to Grants Pass. Friends who moved there at the same time had a son, John, who was already in Vietnam. I wrote to Paul and told him about John. I wrote to John and told him about Paul. I told them both, "If you happen to meet each other, have a beer on me!"

Paul's letters included stories about his comrades. He would explain he felt like the old man at 23. Most of the soldiers were 19 or 20. He had taken pictures of some of the men. The film was sent to the states, developed and sent to mother. Gladys put them in an album according to the order received. The pictures tell a story, a story we've never been able to put names to.

Paul was with the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry until late March. At that time, while at Chu Lai, his last letter explained his unit had been shipped home. He was waiting for new orders. March 26<sup>th</sup> Paul was flown to Firebase Mary Ann as a new member of the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 46<sup>th</sup> Inf. He was

killed along with 29 other men that fateful early morning, March 28<sup>th</sup>, in the Massacre of Firebase Mary Ann.

I received word about Paul March 31<sup>st</sup>. Immediately, I went to Lakeview. Paul had always been the strong hold of the family. How would I ever fill his shoes?

The telegrams would come. I answered them with the needed information to bring Paul home. How would we know it was Paul? Would we be able to identify him? Would there be a body? Maybe he wasn't really killed. We tried to color the picture with no information other than he was killed in action.

**Home for Christmas. Paul with his mother, Gladys**

In the meantime, three family members were administering the medication sent for mother. Immediately, I took control of all medicine. Then dad was having a few discomforts. I had him checked. He was having a mild heart attack but refused to be hospitalized. So I got him the needed help.

Warren was not doing well either. He had broken his leg skiing February 13<sup>th</sup>, Paul's 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday. He was a senior in high school with a cast from the hip to the ankle; and he had just lost his best friend. Then there was John and Linda. They were only 9 and 12. It was all so confusing for them. Still, they tried to be strong little troopers.

Our community of about 2,000 people joined together. Paul was the third man they had lost to Vietnam. They were just as numb with disbelief as we were. This was something you read in the newspaper or a book. My God! How? Why? The cards, the phone calls, the food, the people just kept coming. Everyone was so supportive and so caring while we waited.

A little more than two weeks later, our wait would end. The mortician called and said Paul had just been escorted in. I asked if the body would be visible for all family members. He assured me Paul could be viewed, and yes, we could all come see him. There was calmness with quiet tears for each of us that night. Yes, it was Paul...

Going back to a normal routine was difficult. Dad went to his construction work, Warren, John and Linda went to school and I returned to work at the CPA firm. As for mother, she sat in the rocking chair and rocked. We didn't talk about our loss. We each tried to handle our own sorrow. To mention anything, upset her so. It was easier just to be silent. Later, mother would get a job at one of the local dress shops. That would help.

Six or eight months after Paul was killed, my friend John was home. He called me and asked if I could talk about Vietnam. I said sure. John was with the unit of men flown in on the morning of March 28, 1971 to Firebase Mary Ann. He would help clean up the base, bag up the bodies and help with the investigation that had to be done. John knew Paul was my brother. He knew Paul was one of the casualties of that terrible night. We talked for hours. He told me his entire story

and answered any questions I had. It was a tragic story for all, but a story that did help me to know what had happened. John soon moved on. We have never seen each other since.

Thirty years have passed. I became a mother, an aunt and a grandmother. I have lost other loved ones including aunts, uncles, a granddaughter, several dear friends, in-laws and my dear husband, Lance.

**Art and Paul Sheer, father and son**

Warren and John along with my brother-in-law, Kevin joined my father, Art, in the construction business that continues today. John is now dispatcher due to the fact he was in an accident and became a quadriplegic. Warren and Kevin do everything else with the exception of crusher operator. Art is in charge of that. At 86, he goes with them every day. He has his chair and says he can push those buttons. Linda worked in my accounting office for several years until my two nephews came. She is now busy raising them and trying to keep up with their sports. Gladys retired from the dress shop and is battling osteoporosis; and I began my battle with cancer.

December of last year, I received word about a dear friend passing away. My grieving, especially for Paul and Lance, seemed to encase me. Somehow I needed to keep my mind busy and maintain my physical progress. I began to read my books on Vietnam again. I did research on the Internet. Part of that research helped me find my friend John and reunited our friendship that means so much to both of us. We have since talked on the phone, shared pictures and email messages. John and his wife are coming to see me in July. I am truly looking forward to that day.

Still, my obsession of Vietnam continued. I visited web sites like The Virtual Wall and posted remembrances. I shared email with Robert George of the Boston Publishing Co. who put together the book series, "The Vietnam Experience". I located a book and ordered it called "Sappers in the Wire, the Life and Death of Firebase Mary Ann". When it arrived, I went to the back index to see if there was an entry for Paul Sheer. There it was. Oh My God! They hadn't forgot him. I read the entire book and re-read many entries.

In January I found the reunion notice for Firebase Mary Ann. I called. It was a tough conversation. We both cried. Before we hung up, Bill, the reunion organizer, took my address and said he would send the information. Two months later I flew to Ft. Knox, Kentucky to represent Paul. The experience was heart warming, more than ever expected. When I first arrived, I discovered I left my reunion information and directions at home. The next morning as I was leaving the motel I said out loud, "Lord, I'm headed to Ft. Knox. Show me what You want me to see."

Ft. Knox, next right. I hadn't driven very far until I saw a soldier in uniform walking on the sidewalk. Tears came to my eyes. My heart smiled with pride just as it had the day Paul showed me his trophy. For a country girl, Ft. Knox is large...huge in fact. I drove. I looked. I stopped and took pictures of soldiers in training.

Finally, I stopped and asked for information. I was guided to the headquarters of the "Professionals". I obtained details regarding the Torch Light Ceremony for that evening. However, the soldier indicated he had no further information. As I was leaving the lobby, about ten men were coming in. I stopped and asked, "Are you with the reunion of Firebase Mary Ann?" They all walked up to me. Before answering one of them asked, "Are you Karen?"....

After talking with Bill in January, I sent a card to him and the men expressing my appreciation and said I would try my best to be at their reunion. Bill had brought the card. They read it and were hoping I would come. As we visited in the lobby, another man walked up to me and said, "My name is Tom. I knew your brother Paul."

All of them were at the headquarters for a class. Another Bill gave me directions to Camp Carlson. Everyone else with the reunion would be there. At Camp Carlson, I parked the car and walked toward the building. There was a group of about four men off to my right. One of them noticed me and headed my way. I asked if he was with the reunion of Firebase Mary Ann? Before answering, he asked, "Are you Karen?"....

His name was Lanny. He told me Bill was anxious for my arrival. You would have thought Bill and I were long lost friends. In a way, I guess we were. He gave me a big hug, and I was welcomed to their reunion. I brought an autograph book and asked each of the men to share their address. I got to visit with most all of them during the two days I was there. I took more pictures. They signed my book and shared incredible stories. When I returned to the motel in the evening, I would add notes to my book I hadn't had time to write during the day.

I attended three ceremonies: the dedication of the training facility in the name of Captain Kern Dunagan, The Torch Light Ceremony and the Memorial Ceremony of Firebase Mary Ann. I ate at the mess hall. I met a World War II Veteran by the name of William Nipper. I got to see a slide show of Firebase Mary Ann by Captain Dave Siry. I met LtC. Mark Armstrong the Battalion Commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 46<sup>th</sup> and I met Colonel (Retired) R. F. Carvell.

Lanny gave me my 1<sup>st</sup> of the 46<sup>th</sup> coin. Gary gave me an autographed copy of the "Sappers in the Wire". Ed or Pop to most, he gave me his blue cap. Bill gave me the reunion T-shirts, one like the men's and one like women's. Each item is very dear to me.

My toughest moments came when it was time to say good-bye. I returned home with more than 30 new brothers and sisters. My heart holds a special place for each of them. I do believe the Good Lord showed what I was to see..... The ache in my heart is no longer as extreme. I carry my 1<sup>st</sup> of the 46<sup>th</sup> coin in my pocket every day. Each time I touch it, which is often, my heart smiles for Paul and all the men I have met. My plans are to return to the reunion of Firebase Mary Ann in 2002. If that is not possible, I am sure there will be another family member there to represent Paul.

As for my new brothers and sisters, I hear from many of them by mail and email. If you are a vet, a friend or family member of a vet or lost soldier and have never attended a reunion, I strongly suggest you do. My words can never describe what you will encounter. However, I can truly say you will never regret the experience.

For as long as I can remember, Paul was always there. We laughed together, cried together, worked and played together. Paul is my brother, my blood, my protector. And just like all the other men and women who went to Vietnam for my friends, my family and me... Paul is my Hero!

## Families and veterans: a shared loss

The preceding pages tell the heartbreaking story of one family's loss of a son and brother. This story is just one of tens of thousands that can be told from the Vietnam War. But it is the same for all wars. The sacrifices, the pain, the tragedy; it is all the same.

I was one of the veterans who met Karen Parmentier at the headquarters of 1/46<sup>th</sup> Infantry at Ft. Knox. A group of us had gone to the 1/46<sup>th</sup> to participate in a Professional Development Course for the current officers and NCOs. Our meeting with Karen was strictly by chance. She had been directed there for more information on the memorial service to be held later in the day.

I remember her introducing herself by saying that she was Paul Sheer's sister. I immediately knew that Paul was one of the KIAs from FSB Mary Ann. I shied away. Others immediately embraced her.

A few hours later we assembled at the lodge at Camp Carlson. I saw Karen talking with my friend Nolan Bingham. Nolan and I went to Vietnam together; he was injured in the attack on Mary Ann. I sat down beside him and joined the conversation.

Karen asked us many questions about Vietnam. She wanted to know what it was like for her brother. She wanted to know what we were like. She was searching for Paul. She was looking for him in us.

She told us about Paul and the other members of her family. It was obvious that she had a powerful love for her brother. Even though it must have been difficult for her to be in our midst she remained upbeat and cheerful. She was happy to find contact with those of us who saw her brother last.

I have talked to other families about their loss to the war. It is never easy to do. But it must be done. We have something in common. We have something to share. We share the loss of a loved one. The families have years of involvement with their loved one. The veterans sometimes only days or weeks. Veterans are the last ones to see the family member alive. They are the only ones who can help close the circle. No matter the pain, we must do it. We must do it for those we could not bring home with us.

Karen has fulfilled much of what she set to do. She hopes to be at Ft. Knox for the memorial service again next year. Other members of her family may also attend. They will be welcome. But other families have yet to make the connection. They, like Karen, wish to contact veterans who knew their loved ones in Vietnam.

### Roger Whirlow, 3/16<sup>th</sup> Artillery

Roger Whirlow was another of those killed on FSB Mary Ann. He left a widow and a yet unborn son. Nola Whirlow is searching for anyone who knew her husband in Vietnam. Roger was an artilleryman assigned to the 3/16<sup>th</sup> Artillery. He wrote home about friends named Michael Hardy and Alan Coughtry.

Nola attended the ADVA reunion in San Antonio several years ago. I had the opportunity to visit with her at that time. While her story has something in common with Karen's it is still unique. It is very personal and it is very powerful.

If you can provide information about Roger Whirlow please contact Nola by writing to [REDACTED], San Angelo, TX, 76905. Send e-mail to [REDACTED]

### Closing thoughts

I knew a few soldiers that were killed on Mary Ann. I often wonder if I should seek out their families and see if I can be of assistance. It is one of the things that I promise I will do someday.

Kyle Hamilton was a medic with only a few days left in Vietnam. He tended to me when I was afflicted with several painful boils. He was patient and gentle. Richard Knight was the commander of Co. C. He had spent a few days with the CP of Co. B before he went to Co. C. I remember sitting in night laagers conversing with him. He was inspiring. Kyle and Richard should have made it back to their families. I am sure they are dearly missed.

-GLN-

The president of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918, has awarded the SILVER STAR to WARREN T. WATERBURY (THEN FIRST LIEUTENANT, INFANTRY, UNITED STATES ARMY) for gallantry in action against an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam. First lieutenant Waterbury distinguished himself by intrepid actions on 21 April 1970 while serving as a platoon leader of the Reconnaissance Platoon of Company E, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry. On that date, elements of his platoon were part of a joint operation and in extremely heavy contact with a large enemy force near Mo Duc. Reacting to the urgency of the situation, Lieutenant Waterbury elected to move forward using two squads in a fire and maneuver tactics until they were completely pinned down and with one casualty. Although he was subject to intense volumes of hostile fire, he unhesitatingly exposed himself to enemy rounds in order to assess the tactical situation. After determining the critical situation his platoon was in, Lieutenant Waterbury with complete disregard for his personal safety, rushed forward and single handedly assaulted the enemy flank in the tree line killing two Viet Cong, wounding an unknown number and rallying his troops in following him, thereby routing the enemy from their firing positions and into the blocking forces ambush resulting in 20 Viet Cong Killed In Action and fifty weapons captured. Through his timely and courageous actions, Lieutenant Waterbury contributed significantly to the defeat of his enemy and served as an inspiration to his entire battalion. His personal heroism, professional competence, and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 23rd Infantry Division, and the United States Army.

## In Memory of Paul Spilberg, 1/46th Inf.

On June 12, 2001, Paul Spilberg, a combat veteran of the 5th Special Forces and the 1/46 Infantry died of cancer at his home in Winston-Salem, NC. Paul joined the 1/46th on FSB Mary Ann in September of 1970 and served as commander of Co. A and held other important positions in the battalion and the 196th LIB. During his two tours of combat he was awarded the Silver Star and the Bronze Star for heroism and received several purple hearts and other awards. In combat, he was a stalwart leader. He understood the nature of the battle, was revered by his troops and respected by all. Paul was just as proud of his family as they were of him. It was a family of much mutual respect, imbued with devotion, loyalty and love. He left this earth, peacefully, having trust and faith in the living God.

A memorial service was held for Paul at Winston-Salem on June 14. I was able to attend and present a brief eulogy on behalf of his 1/46th Infantry comrades. The burial service was held at Arlington National Cemetery on July 3rd. Approximately thirty of our comrades attended the service. The ceremony was professional and impressive.

On behalf of the Spilberg family and the others who knew Paul, I would like to express particular appreciation to our 1/46 comrades and friends who were able to attend either the Memorial Service at Winston-Salem or the Burial Service at Arlington, and to all who expressed their loving concern and support. Such a showing of friendship exemplifies the enduring unity, esprit, and close camaraderie of our unit. An extra special thanks to Scott Bell who spent several days at Paul's side before he passed on.

The support shown was deeply appreciated by the Spilberg family. It was an honorable way to bid farewell to a fellow patriot. May he rest peacefully and his family be strengthened, knowing that we care.

Colonel (Ret.) Dick Carvell

## Historian receives list of Vietnam casualties sorted by company

Les Hines, ADVA Vietnam Historian, has recently obtained a much sought after addition to his database of records about the division in Vietnam. He has received a listing of those who died in Vietnam broken down by company. The previously available lists only broke the casualties down to the brigade level. The new information will prove valuable to those seeking more detailed facts about casualties.

The data was provided by Mr. Richard Coffelt. Coffelt served in the U.S. Army from February, 1953 to January, 1955. Although he was trained as an infantryman and most of his basic training company went to Korea, Coffelt was sent to Ft. Benjamin Harrison, IN to be a Personnel Management Specialist. He spent his 23 months of service on stateside duty.

Coffelt tells of his interest in collecting information on Vietnam War casualties. "My Vietnam work began when my wife and I went to Washington D.C. in 1986 for a vacation and to the Wall to pay respects to dead from our county. At that time I had wanted to know more about our war dead, but as usual, the United States government will take great pains to tell you what you already know, and little else. I began to go to the libraries available in our community and to use inter-library loan. I was making use of the now closed library at Ft. Leavenworth, KS and many others.

"In those days the internet was not here and I had no one to talk to if I had a problem. In short, I had to figure it out myself. By 1994 the internet was getting established and one by one unit home pages began to emerge. One of the first, and still one of the best, was the 174th Aviation Company website. As I had, by then, fragmentary lists of KIAs from these outfits, I began offering them to company and battalion historians who, for the most part, had nothing. In short, an incomplete list looks really good when it is better than yours.

"From this I have built up a wealth of contacts. The following is a partial list of units I have worked with: Wolfhound Alumnae, 27th Infantry, 25th Infantry Div.; 1st Bn 14th Infantry, 25th/4th Infantry Div.; 7th Cavalry; 9th Infantry Div.; 506th Infantry, 101st Infantry Division; 1/35th Inf, 25/4th Divisions; 4/9th Infantry; 2/60th Infantry; 1/5th Mech. Infantry; 2/22nd Infantry 25th Infantry Division.

"Having said that, the material furnished you is good, but not by any means perfect. It should be in excess of 98% accurate to the battalion level and in excess of 90% accurate to the company level. Please invite your membership to add to, as it is incomplete, and/or correct as needed. I am doing ongoing casualty work and my lists are in continual change and frequent addition. It is gathered from literally hundreds of sources. In the last year or so, I have leaned heavily on DD Form 1300s and DA Form 2496s attached to copies of letters of condolence. However, this is a one by one process and time consuming work. Some cost is involved which I have handled myself. Other sources are lists, like yours of 1970, guestbooks, websites, and my contacts with historians across the spectrum."

As Coffelt states, the information is not complete and it does contain errors. It is, however, a great start on composing the list of Vietnam casualties for the Americal Division. The files will be made available electronically on a computer CD that can be obtained from Les Hines. Veterans and families will be asked to check the lists and submit corrections and additions.

As time permits the list will be posted to the ADVA website. The brigade lists are available at [www.americal.org/history.shtml](http://www.americal.org/history.shtml). Another good internet resource for casualty data is provided by No Quarter at [www.no-quarter.org](http://www.no-quarter.org).

The ADVA wishes to extend its sincere gratitude to Richard Coffelt for undertaking this immense effort and sharing it with unit historians. His work will be appreciated by veterans and family members for many years to come.

## COL Lynn Rolf, Americal veteran, retires after 31 years of active duty

On July 26, 2001 Colonel Lynn W. Rolf II retired from the U. S. Army after completing a career of active duty spanning 31 years. 1LT Lynn W. Rolf served as rifle platoon leader in Co. B, 1/46th Inf. and later as the Recon Platoon Leader in Co. E, 1/46th Inf. He was with the Americal Division from August, 1971 to April, 1972.



COL Thomas N. Bedient, Gary L. Noller, and COL Lynn Rolf III

Rolf was educated at West Point and is an Armor officer. In Vietnam he elected to stay in the "bush" and conduct missions around DaNang for his entire tour. He also assimilated most of the Divisional 75th Ranger Company into the ranks of his Recon platoon. He credits SFC McKissic, SSG Teel, 1SG/PSG Smith, and SSG Larry Ousley as being his combat mentors.

He entered the Army on June 3, 1970. He has been assigned to Ft. Leavenworth, KS as Director of Education Technology since June, 1998. After retirement he will continue his duties as a civilian DA employee. He enjoys hunting, raising dogs, and acquiring antiques.

Rolf's four sons attended the retirement ceremony: CPT Lynn Rolf III is currently in the advanced M.P. course at Ft. Leonard Wood, MO, and will be assigned to Ft. Riley, KS; Nick resides at home with COL Rolf; Zachary is a senior in the ROTC program at the University of Kansas; and Ryan is a junior at the University of Kansas studying computer science.

Also attending the retirement ceremony were COL Thomas Bedient, a former Americal Division platoon leader in Vietnam, and Gary L. Noller, Americal Newsletter Vietnam Editor.

## Collins receives second star

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld has announced that the President has nominated Army Reserve Brig. Gen. James P. Collins for appointment to the grade of major general. Collins is currently serving as the commander, 96th Regional Support Command, Fort Douglas, Utah. He is a veteran of the 26th Engineer Battalion, Americal Division and is a member of the ADVA. The ADVA congratulates MG Collins on his new appointment.

## National POW/MIA Recognition Day

September 21, 2001

Hey, guys.

Brace yourselves, 'cause I'm about to get serious on you. About a year and a half ago, I was thinking for some reason about infantry guys like we were, and how our war was different than that experienced by others. No offense to our non-combat friends, or the sailors, airmen, and even the other Army or Marine troops, many of whom were brave and also risked their lives--but the infantry is unique. We weren't always the best-looking, the most glamorous, or even the best-trained--but we were among the few that knew combat face-to-face--truly among the few, because only about one in ten uniformed people ever carry a rifle in combat. (Of course, I include in our select group those of you who humped the bush and fought with us as FOs, medics and other in other MOSs.)

Anyway, the thought popped into my mind that, unlike most other soldiers, we often slept in the rain, because that's part of what being an infantryman is about--in other words, being miserable and learning to deal with it. That phrase--"the soldiers that slept in the rain"--kept coming back to me. Although it may sound like a silly little line, to me it seemed like a good line for a poem. Sometime last year I began to write such a poem, one that, I hoped, would express what the infantry is all about. So that silly little phrase about sleeping in the rain eventually became the poem that I only recently finished. It's not great poetry, I know, but I humbly dedicate it to all of you, and to all our buddies from Charlie Company, 5/46--those who are with us and those who didn't make it back. I hope you enjoy the poem, and I hope, above all, that you can sense in it my deep affection for all of you. And I hope it reminds you and others of what it means to be an infantry soldier.

## Melbourne reunion re-cap

By Jon Hansen

The weekend of the 27th-29th of April brought beautiful weather and lots of veterans out to Wickham Park in Melbourne, Florida. It was the 14th year for the Florida Vietnam Veterans Reunion and it was a great weekend for all who attended. The camp sites were filled to overflowing and plenty of people were staying in area motels. Many people from around Florida just drove in for the day on Saturday. Bob Kapp, as he does each year, set up a shade tent in campground 'A' and we passed out word to get all Americal vets there on Saturday for a group picture.

Out of about 40 to 50 Americal Veterans, 21 of us were able to get together at 2:00 PM on Saturday. Everyone I talked to was having a great time taking it all in. There was a "Moving Wall", plenty of exhibits including a PBR, a Loach, a Huey Med-Evac and a three-holer without the cutoff 55 gallon drums. There were plenty of food vendors selling everything from hot dogs to "Road Kill" (they named it not me.) Merchandise vendors were selling everything from T-shirts and hats to flagpoles and ladders. They had some great entertainment throughout the weekend including Michael J. Martin, the Reverend John Steers, The Vettz Band, The Last Patrol and the Marine Corps Silent Drill Team. It made for a great weekend and I hated to see it end. I'm already looking forward to next year. I hope to see all of you that were in Melbourne again and maybe some of you that haven't been there before will come down and join us. It's a real good time.

I want to thank Bob Kapp for setting up the tent and for being there year after year. Also Jerry Anderson, who filmed our little get-together and interviewed everyone individually. Those gathered for the picture included Steve Howe, William Andrescavage, David Lowery, Shortround, Richard Ketcham, Danny Jordan, Mike Wells, Mike Kratochvil, Bob Kapp, Jon Hansen, Al Taylor, Joe Gillis, Lyle Mosier, Ed Bergmann, Bill Bergman, Alex Jones, Denny Baum, Tom Hutchek, Bob Derma, Paul Commer, and Jerry Anderson

## The soldiers that slept in the rain

By Andy Ladak

We were the soldiers that slept in the rain, and froze in the wind-driven snow. Silent, we prowled in hostile terrain in search and in fear of our foe. Longing to light up just one cigarette, we shivered like dogs through the night. Hungry and wet, exhausted, and yet we rose and moved out at first light.

We were the troopers who humped up the hills and crept through the valleys of death. With eighty-pound rucks straining bodies and wills, we sweated and struggled for breath. Moving in darkness through swamps foul and deep, we burned off the leeches at dawn. In hellholes and jungles that still haunt our sleep, we shook ourselves off and drove on.

We were the few, barely one out of ten, who carried the tools of our trade, who took our objectives again and again with bayonet, gun and grenade. Crawling and climbing, we broke through the lines and did what our calling demands: We killed without quarter, with rifles and mines, and sometimes we killed with our hands.

We were the infantry, haggard and gray, too brave for our good and too loyal, charging the beaches and hills far away and bleeding on alien soil. We were your children, your brothers and sons, sent to be baptized by fire. We were the ones who were manning the guns when your enemy came through the wire.

We were all colors, but only one race, with none but each other to trust. We watched our buddies stare death in the face, and we wept as they died in the dust. Some say we battled for freedom and God, and some think we fought for a flag, but mostly we fought for the guys in our squad and the boys that came home in a bag.

We weren't your finest, the cream of your crop, and we didn't parade very well. But we were the boys who went over the top and carried your flag into hell. We were the infantry, foolish and bold, and now just our stories remain? The bastards who fought in the heat and the cold, who bled and who died in the rain.

## Book Notes

## The Things They Carried

By Tim O'Brien  
Houghton Mifflin/Seymour Lawrence 1990  
Penguin Books, 1991  
ISBN 0 14 01 4773 X

The following clip arrived via the internet:

*They carried P-38 can openers and heat tabs, watches and dog tags, insect repellent, gum, cigarettes, Zippo lighters, salt tablets, compress bandages, ponchos, Kool-Aid, two or three canteens of water, iodine tablets, sterno, LRRP- rations, and C-rations stuffed in socks.*

*They carried standard fatigues, jungle boots, bush hats, flak jackets and steel pots.*

*They carried the M-16 assault rifle.*

*They carried trip flares and Claymore mines, M-60 machine-guns, the M-70 grenade launcher, M-14's, CAR-15's, Stoners, Swedish K's, 66mm Laws, shotguns, .45 caliber pistols, silencers, the sound of bullets, rockets, and choppers, and sometimes the sound of silence.*

*They carried C-4 plastic explosives, an assortment of hand grenades, PRC-25 radios, knives and machetes. Some carried napalm, CBU's and large bombs; some risked their lives to rescue others. Some escaped the fear, but dealt with the death and damage. Some made very hard decisions, and some just tried to survive.*

*They carried malaria, dysentery, ringworm's and leeches. They carried the land itself as it hardened on their boots. They carried stationery, pencils, and pictures of their loved ones - real and imagined. They carried love for people in the real world and love for one another. And sometimes they disguised that love: "Don't mean nothin'!" They carried memories for the most part, they carried themselves with poise and a kind of dignity.*

*Now and then, there were times when panic set in, and people squealed or wanted to, but couldn't; when they twitched and made moaning sounds and covered their heads and said "Dear God" and hugged the earth and fired their weapons blindly and cringed and begged for the noise to stop and went wild and made stupid promises to themselves and God and their parents, hoping not to die.*

*They carried the traditions of the United States military, and memories and images of those who served before them.*

*They carried grief, terror, longing and their reputations. They carried the soldier's greatest fear: the embarrassment of dishonor. They crawled into tunnels, walked point, and advanced under fire, so as not to die of embarrassment. They were afraid of dying, but too afraid to show it. They carried the emotional baggage of men and women who might die at any moment.*

*They carried the weight of the world.*

## THEY CARRIED EACH OTHER.

[Tim O'Brien served as with Co. A, 5/46th Inf., 198th LIB, Americal Division, in 1969 and 1970. O'Brien was grew up in Worthington, MN. He graduated from Macalester College in 1968 with a BA in political Science. He soon received a draft notice. After returning from Vietnam he attended Harvard and then became a newspaper reporter. He soon turned his attention to full time writing and is known for his memoir titled *If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Send Me Home*. Other works include *Northern Lights* and *In the Lake of the Woods*. He has written several stories for Esquire Magazine. He won a National Book Award for *Going After Cacciato* which may soon be made into a movie. His most recent work is called *Tomcat in Love*.] O'Brien is a visiting professor at Southwest Texas State University.

## A personal story about Sharon Lane

Dear Editor,

I would like to add a footnote to the article you wrote about 1LT Sharon Lane. First of all I think it is befitting that the military library at Ft. Carson is dedicated to her. Secondly, I have a first hand account of her in Veitnam, 1969.

I was at the 312th Evacuation Hospital with malaria. I had been out for several days, in a coma, burning up with fever. On the day the fever broke and I regained consciousness she was there at my bedside. She called my name in a low, soft voice.

The other GIs on the ward told me that she had been coming by for days checking on me and others. She was doing her part to get us back from the edge of death.

When I looked at her I thought she was an angel. She was so pretty. She said a few kind words then departed. That was the last I saw of her. The next day I was on a transport headed to the 6th CON-V center at Cam Ranh Bay.

I never forgot her all these years and how great she was. I never knew she had been killed until I read about it in a 1998 issue of the Americal Newsletter. I have been torn in half ever since I found out about it.

Never was there a more sweet, kind, caring person to ever live. And then to die in a hell hole like Vietnam. I think the Vietnamese ought to erect a monument to her on the spot where the 312th used to stand.

All this I say in sincerity.

William A. McMartry Co. B, 1/6th Inf., 198th LIB, 68-69  
Knippa, TX

## Larry Nelson, PGA Champion &amp; Americal Veteran

Larry Nelson won the PGA Championship in 1981 and 1987. He is now part of the Senior PGA Tour and still golfing in his championship style. Nelson, a draftee, served for three months in Vietnam with the 196th Light Infantry Brigade, Americal Division.

On May 9, 2001 he was interviewed by Michael Arkush for PGATOUR.COM weekly Q&A series. The following is a brief clip of the interview relating to Nelson's military service.

Arkush: What are your thoughts on Memorial Day?

Nelson: The whole military experience and some of the friends I lost over there. I was so young that it almost seems like a dream even though it was a vivid part of my life.

Arkush: Are you proud of your service?

Nelson: Definitely. I was fortunate. I think everybody should serve in the military for two years. It builds character. In our country, we have lost respect for authority, for our parents, for older people. That's one thing that the military teaches you, and it's not a bad way for a person to be raised.

Arkush: Were you ever angry at this country for how you and your fellow Vietnam veterans were treated when you returned home?

Nelson: I wasn't angry at the country. I was angry at those people who did not respect the fact that we were doing what we were supposed to be doing. I didn't agree with the war. To this day, I still don't agree with it. But the people who went over there were following orders, doing their duty. That's what bothers me more than anything else. The people who went over to Desert Storm were given a hero's welcome. The people who went to Vietnam were spit on.

Arkush: Has your experience there made you deal easier with the pressure of tournament golf?

Nelson: It probably helped me to not be so down when I'm not playing well because I'm just fortunate to be here. Everything after Vietnam was a bonus.

## From the Vietnam Historian

I received the following letter from the sister of 1LT Lawrence Martin, Co. B, 26th Engineer Battalion, KIA on June 17, 1969.

Dear Les,

I wanted to let you know that I received the video, CDs, etc., on the Americal Division. It appears to me that you sent even more than I ordered, and went out of your way to research my brother's company in Chu Lai and Quang Ngai Province. I know you bent the rules a little to send me what you did. I'm not sure that I sent you enough money for all that you did. I would be more than happy to send more to cover your time and expenses.

I don't know how other relatives of men killed in Vietnam feel, but I believe I honor my brother by learning every thing I can about what he did over there. Larry and I were extremely close. (He was my only sibling.) I will never forget him, but I want my children and grandchildren to know about him as well. In addition to searching for information about my brother, I have been researching other ancestors. I had two great grandfathers, one great-great grandfather, and two great uncles in the Confederate army during the Civil War. I have been searching for information about them, and have fortunately found quite a lot of information. Maybe years from now, my descendants will want to know about Larry in the same way that I have been researching Civil War history.

When I located Larry's commanding officer, Captain Warren Sullivan, he told me there was to be a reunion of the Americal Division held in Washington, DC in 2002. If possible I would like to attend.

I have a copy of the Americal Quarterly Magazine, Volume II, Number 2, dated May 1969. It was with Larry's property that was sent home. If you don't have this one, I could copy it for you. He also sent a lot of pictures home, but they are at my mother's home. I am going to visit her in April, and ask her if I can have the pictures. I will look to see if any might be of interest to you.

I know that Larry did a lot of mine sweeps and eradication of tunnels. He also oversaw the construction of a refugee camp which was apparently the temporary home of the civilians who were evacuated from the Batangun Peninsula during the Russell Beach Operation. Captain Sullivan also told me that Larry designed, engineered, and oversaw construction of a 5000 sq. ft. building at their base of operation. He told me the building was named after Larry following his death.

Captain Sullivan and Larry shared living quarters, and apparently became pretty close friends. He told me that he was afraid he assigned too much responsibility to my brother, because Larry was the best Lieutenant he had. He said that one time he assigned Larry a task, and Larry's response was, "Captain Sullivan, you're going to get me killed over here." Larry then laughed and went on to do the job. My brother wasn't bigger than life, he was just an ordinary young man who was given a job to do, and he did it well as did many others. I will always be proud of him.

Thank you again. The things you sent me mean more to me than you will probably ever know.

Sharon Martin Orr

Dear Mr. Noller,

Thank you for your response. Thank you also for your comments about my interest in Vietnam veterans and Americal Division veterans.

I am basically a non-veteran supporter of veterans. My lifelong disabilities meant that no military would ever have me. I first read about the Americal Division in Keith William Nolan's book *The Magnificent Bastards*. I recognised the Americal Division patch in a military surplus store in Montreal. I first saw the patch on the colours

of my friend, Americal vet, Sergeant Don "Rat" Luker, when he drove all the way up from New Jersey to attend Cross Border Run. I knew that a military surplus store was no place to leave a patch which represented the brave men who had made enormous sacrifices in the Pacific ETO and in Vietnam. So, I bought the patch, and I repatriated it to the ADVA.

I also knew that the patch meant something to at least three Canadians who served in Vietnam. Howard Walker of the 1/6th Infantry, 198th LIB, Kenneth H. Lewis of the 11th Brigade LRRPs and the 196th LIB, and Fidele Joseph Bastarache of the 1/6th Infantry, 198th LIB, who was killed 27, May 1968, less than a month before he would have DEROSED home.

At the July 1999 re-dedication of the North Wall, the Canadian Vietnam veterans Memorial in Windsor, Ontario, I met a kind, courteous, caring gentleman, who I later found out was then ADVA National Commander Ed "Top Gun" Marsh. There was also an M-60 gunner from the 1/46th who marched in the Veteran's parade that day.

By the way, Howard Walker is coming up in a couple of weeks. If we do get together, I'll try to get you some photos. My best wishes to you and your family on this Fourth of July.

Joe Fernandez, Montreal, Canada

[Editor's note: In the last issue of the Americal Newsletter Mr. Fernandez was incorrectly identified as being a Vietnam veteran. He wishes the record to be correct. He has our best regards.]

Dear editor,

I am trying to locate someone who may have been with my brother, Richard T. Arthur, when he was killed near Da Nang on March 9, 1968. He was in Co. C, 1/6th Infantry, 198th LIB and had been in Vietnam just six weeks. His cause of death is listed as DNB. We were given three different causes of death from the Department of the Army. Further research revealed that his death was non-hostile and due to some type of accident on the ground. Thank you for any help you can give.

Dianna (Arthur) Wetherholt

[REDACTED], Milton, WV, 25541

Dear editor,

Congratulations for your excellent homepage of the 198th Light Infantry Brigade. I recently found a Zippo lighter from the Vietnam war period. According to its engravings, it belonged to Bill Gilliland of the 265th MP platoon, 198th Light Infantry Brigade. Do you have any records where I could find more information about Bill Gilliland? Is there a place I can get information about this platoon? Thank you very much for help.

Rolf Gerster, Capt. Swiss Army

## In Memoriam: CPT Paul Spilberg

Dear readers,

It is with great sadness that I learned that Paul Spilberg passed away in Winston-Salem, NC on June 12, 2001. Spilberg was C.O. of Co. A, 1/46th Inf. in 1970-71. I met Paul at a 196th LIB reunion in Chicago in 1988. We corresponded quite frequently and I last saw him at Ft. Knox two years ago. He survived the attack on FSB Mary Ann but was once again battling a deadly enemy. This time it was cancer. He made sure we knew he was proud to have been part of us and how much he thought of us as a family. He loved his men and his men loved him. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on July 3. Condolences are extended to his family and friends. -GLN-

**My first reunion**

By Rich Merlin

I joined the Americal Division Veterans Association while I was in Vietnam in 1969. That was 32 years ago. Since that time I had little desire to get involved with any veterans organization or in attending any reunion. Until last year, that is when I became involved with my old unit, the 23rd Military Police Company, and the search for its members. The search so far has located or accounted for 643 of our members. Thus, was born a high desire to get together once again.

I have recently returned to California from my trip to the ADVA's reunion in Cleveland, Ohio. I am still flying high and hope to never come down. What a weekend, it is hard to find the words to describe it. From the hugs of friends who had not seen each other in 30 years to the tears of joy and sometimes sadness of remembering, this was a special time for all of us. There were 85 of us MP's there, from all LZ's and bases, from 1967 to 1972. There were also many more of our brothers at the reunion from other units and even a special group from WWII. I once again met many of my old friends, but also made many more friends. Indeed, it was a special weekend.

It was my first reunion, but will not be my last. I look forward to the next one in Washington DC. I encourage everyone to go, you will not regret it, and it will be a special time in your life. And by all means bring your family.

The following are a few quotes from our first timers:

"When you called me last year about the reunion I almost didn't respond. What a mistake that would have been. I have just completed one of the most important events since leaving Nam" Allan Bornkamp, Saddle Brook, NJ

"This past weekend I met up with the greatest bunch of people I have ever had the pleasure of meeting in my life" Vic Kornaski, Mt. Carmel, PA.

"The feelings of love, loss, camaraderie and fun were amazing" Jerry & Pat Widiker, Milwaukee, WI.

"As a career soldier who served 30 years I have attended many functions, but this one was at the top of the list" William McMinn, Copperas Cove, TX.

"As a result of attending the reunion I learned what true happiness is" Ralph Stiles, National Park, NJ.

"I arrived home, exhausted, excited, and happy for the time we spent in Cleveland" Wes Haun, The Woodlands, TX.

"It was Super! Just fantastic!" Paul Stiff, Troy, MI.

"I can not tell you the good this has done for mind and spirit. I feel renewed and I would encourage each of you to make the reunion in DC." Rodger Sudbury, Winter Haven, FL.

**Flag that flew at Chu Lai displayed in Cleveland for first time since 1971**

At Chu Lai each day, one of the duties of the Military Policemen of the 23rd MP Company was to raise and lower the US flag and the flag of South Vietnam which flew in front of the Americal Division Headquarters. Periodically, when the flag became weathered and began to show wear, it was changed out.

In early 1971, I was the Operations Officer for the Provost Marshal at the time, LTC Everett I. Perrin, Jr. I decided that the next time the flag was changed, I would keep it, rather than see it destroyed. And that is what I did. I wanted to save both flags, the US and the South Vietnamese, but a new South Vietnamese flag was put into use without me knowing. However, if I could only save one flag, I'm certainly glad it was Old Glory.

And so I returned home with my souvenir and thought little more about it. The flag sat in my closet for 30 years, folded into its cocked hat shape, literally gathering dust. When I decided to come to my first



The "Chu Lai" flag was a special backdrop for group photos

ADVA reunion in 2001 in Cleveland, I emailed Dave Taylor, of the Cleveland Reunion Committee. I explained the flag's background and asked Dave if he would like me to bring the flag. Dave enthusiastically did. We discussed where and how to hang it, and I unfolded it at that time to inspect it. I did not realize its size: nine feet by four feet. It was dusty, as I said, and wrinkled and a bit tattered on one end, from whipping in the wind coming off the South China Sea, but otherwise in excellent shape.

When Dave and I got together Friday morning of the reunion to hang the flag, he asked if he could touch it. I only then began to realize its potential emotional impact on other Americal veterans. When I presented it to the assembled veterans at the Friday buffet, I explained its origin and told them that the flag had not been flown or publicly displayed until that night. My announcement was met with thunderous applause. Afterwards, several veterans thanked me for bringing the flag to the reunion.

This was my first reunion, but definitely not my last. I will continue to bring Old Glory to future reunions. Some day I will donate it to the Americal Division Museum. I salute Old Glory, and the men and women who served under it.

Dale Meisel  
23rd Military Police Company

**Come Together Again**

Anonymous at the request of the author

I have attended the reunions of my two former Vietnam units and I've learned much about what these reunions can do for me. As we talk to, listen to, and observe others throughout the weekend we each walk away with our own conceptions. For me the reunions have proved to be for the purpose of healing. I've learned that I can pretend I was unaffected by war as I had done for so many years. Or I could seize the hand of my brothers who are "MY" link to the other side of the guilt that still dominates a large part of my life.

I believe that each of us have some degree of pain within us. I believe that each of us has at least one person who we served with that

is our connection. That connection can begin the healing process. Cleveland not only afforded me the opportunity to continue that process but it also allowed me to see others do the same.

I witnessed one such connection happen for a fellow veteran. Several times during the first day he asked me if a buddy of his had gotten there yet. In the hospitality room towards the end of the day he asked me again. This time I said, "He is right behind you"! As he turned around I watched as his heart and body turned to jelly. He reintroduced himself but it quickly became impossible for him to utter a word. I watched as his eyes filled with tears and his face contorted into a shape only this type of a reunion could mold. I reached across and put my hand on his arm because I knew, without doubt, that he had made his connection. Thank you my friend. I will always remember that moment because I saw myself in you.

If you or I attend a reunion, is a connection with "that one person" guaranteed? No way! But it is guaranteed that one can be made if we are open and willing. It might be with someone we had forgotten about or maybe the newfound friends that everyone seems to make. Or better still, it could be just getting together with those who have experienced the same life events as we have. In Webster's Dictionary reunion is defined as "reunite". It further defines reunite as "to come together again". My reunions have been a large part of my healing process. With each one I leave a little less scarred. It's my hope that all veterans find their way home. I believe a reunion is a good place to start!

**Cleveland: another special reunion**

Only one word can describe the Cleveland reunion- spectacular. Dave Taylor, Larry Watson, and the reunion committee did a wonderful job of preparing for an outstanding event. It is said each year that this was the best reunion yet. I certainly agree with that statement and I am already looking forward to the Veterans Day weekend 2002 reunion in Washington, D.C.



Gary Noller, COL Dick Carvell, Tommy Poppell, Dennis Powell

The reunion was special for me because I was able to spend it with so many of my closest friends. My own personal reunion included COL Richard Carvell, my first battalion commander in 1/46th Inf.; Dennis Powell, my first company commander in Co. B, and Tommy Poppell, my squad leader in the command platoon. We had time to converse about the old days as well as catch up with things going on in the present. We even so bold as to attempt to forecast the future. We look forward to staying in touch and sharing the ups and downs that life may afford. This is what reunions are all about. -GLN-

**The reunion brings a certain sadness**

The reunion is a happy time. You can see it every where you look. And why not? It is a unique opportunity to spend time with people that are very dear. It is a time of fun and excitement. Everyone is out to have a good time. But it can be a time of sadness too.

I reflected on the reunion as I was flying home from Cleveland to Kansas City. This year was different. It was not the same. Something was missing. It just did not feel right. I was sad. I knew why.

The first reunion that I attended was in Chicago in about 1990. I only attended the banquet as I was just passing through town on a business trip. I have attended every ADVA reunion since. It is etched on my calendar and nothing can keep me away.



WWII vets gather for a group photo in the hotel lobby

At the first reunion I sat at the table with other Vietnam vets. Yes, I said THE table. There were only a handful of Vietnam veterans who attended the ADVA reunion in 1990. The next year it was in Hyannis and after that San Antonio. As the years progressed more and more Vietnam vets began to attend the ADVA reunions.

It is nice to see Vietnam vets turn out by the hundreds. Their numbers are well represented. But the table has turned. World War II veterans are now vastly outnumbered by Vietnam vets. A dramatic change has taken place over the last ten years. It makes me sad.

Where were Vic, and Bill, and Joe, and Lloyd, and Jim, and Ernie, and Al, and Ken, and Don, and Mark, and Bernie, and Tillman, and Jose, and so many others I had always seen at the reunions? Some probably just don't like Cleveland. Some wanted to be there but were ill or otherwise occupied. Some, I regret, have departed us.

There were no WWII vets at the Executive Council meeting so I asked Jim Buckle to join us. He stated that he was not on the council this year. I told him to come to the meeting anyway. He obliged. It seems unimaginable to me that the ADVA can go forward without the continued leadership of our World War II members. We must and shall always have a place for them.

A couple of World War II vets told me that we (Vietnam vets) were doing a good job and that they were glad that we have taken over. Yes, I suppose that is an eventuality. But not so quick. Another World War II vet told me that he did not know if he would be at any more reunions. He said it was destiny. Well, Mr. Al Cotta, you better make sure that destiny has you in Washington, D.C. for Veterans Day weekend, 2002. After all, you are a charter member of the ADVA. What would a reunion be like without you?

We need you and we need all your buddies. The trip may be an inconvenience, or it may even be impossible. But please come if you can. We want to see you once again, all of you. We'll be sad if you are not there. We love you guys.

-GLN-



Looking For: Eugene (Gene) Ruthman, 11/70 - 11/71 523d Sig Bn. Contact: Mike

Nawrath [REDACTED], Manchester Center, VT 05255-0057

Looking For: Ron Morgan, Co B, 1/20th, 11th LIB. Contact: Richard Jones

[REDACTED], Clarkston, MI 48348

Looking For: Anyone, Co. B, 26th Engineers, May 1968-May 1969. Contact: Marvin Rous

[REDACTED], San Francisco, CA 94103

Looking For: Anybody, A Btry, 1/82nd Arty, Jim Ball, Oakie, Bob Ruth, Gudelski, Sgt. Stewart, 1969-70. Contact: Ralph Miller

Looking For: Terry Maxey's army buddies, 1/1967-12/1968. 11th LIB, C or B Co., 3/1st. Some friends were Joe Scotty of Philadelphia, Fred Crabtree of Pigstroph, Ar, and Frank R. Wilder of Milwaukee, WI. Contact: Alicia Swenson

Hastings, MN 55033

Looking For: Paul King, C Co 1/46th, 198th, 5/68-5/69. Contact: Jim Lion

[REDACTED], Huntley, IL 60142

Looking For: Anyone. FO with A Co., 3/21st Inf., 196th, FDO with C Btry, 3rd/82nd. Alan Freeman

[REDACTED], Chula Vista, CA 91910

Looking For: Donald McCray, 23rd S & T Battalion, 1969-1970. Contact: Jeffrey Fishman

[REDACTED], Middletown, NY 10941

Looking For: Bob Olverson or anyone, H-Trp 17th Cav., 1970-1971. Contact: Doug Moore

[REDACTED], Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870

Looking For: Red, members of the TOC crews, LTC Graves, HHT 1/1 Cav., Sep 69 to Sep 70. Contact: Russell E. Harriman

[REDACTED], Belton, TX 76513

Looking For: Anyone, My father, Russell Gover, was in S&T in 69-70. He is always mentioning old friends that he'd like to hear from. Contact: Russell Gover Jr.

Swanton, MD 21561

Looking For: TEX, Co. B, 1/6th, 1968/69. Contact: Tom Brizendine

[REDACTED], Silverhill, AL 36576

Looking For: Anyone, Co. E, 164th Inf. Regt, Bogainville, Solomon Is., 1/1/44 - 3/8/44. Contact: Millard E. Clark

[REDACTED], Leakesville, MS 39451

Looking For: Vamvakias, Zubak, Twang, Hayes, Wilkinson, anyone, 198th LIB, 9th

Spt Bn, 67-68, USS Gordan. Contact: Dennis R Longo

[REDACTED], Gilmanton, NH

Looking For: Michael Eckley, 1-82FA, 70-71. Contact: Woodrow Walker

[REDACTED], Wardensville, WV 26851

Looking For: Gimlets, D, 4/21, Oct. 70 to Sept. 71, Capt. Mulroy, Sgt Robbie, Rocky Rhoades, Doc Height, Jody Automont?

Contact: Dave Catron

Looking For: 1SG Harpin E. Myers, 4/31, 196th LIB, 1968-69. Contact: George J. Hawkins

[REDACTED], Santa Cruz, CA 95065

Looking For: Billy G. Murray or anyone from DSP, HHB 6/56 Arty., June 68 to Aug 69. Contact: Stan Adler

[REDACTED], Waukegan, IL 60085-3259

Looking For: Vinny Tabor, Co C., 1/52, 198 LIB 69-70; Contact: Sal Mazza

[REDACTED], Staten Island, NY 10302

Looking For: Wilbur Anderson or James R. Bass, H Troop 17th Cav, 198th LIB 1968-1969. Contact: Francis Bromagen

[REDACTED], Union City, IN 47390

Looking For: Arthur Kuder, C Co., 1/52, 198, WIA Oct. 15, 1969. Contact: Joel Martinez

[REDACTED], Arecibo, PR 00612-6335

Looking For: Charles Jenkins, Jack T. Burd, Gilbert Doser, or anybody, 1971 to 1972. Co.A 2/1st Inf. Contact: William Barry Beard

[REDACTED], Vicksburg, MS 39180

Looking For: Jim Milliken, A Co., 3/1st, 11th BDE, Jan- Mar 68. Vontact: Rex Miller

[REDACTED], Spring, TX 77373

Looking For: Anyone who knew my father Daniel Denke, 1/6th Inf., Upshur, 1967. WIA Feb. 68. Contact: Kristi Denke birdie3561@yahoo.com

Looking For: Anyone, B Co., 26th Engr. Bn., 5/68-5/69. Contact: Meghan Garvey

[REDACTED], San Francisco, CA 94105

Looking For: Barry Woodridge, F Trp/17th Cav., '70 & '71. Contact: Paul Ogden

[REDACTED], Louisville, KY 40207

Looking For: Anyone, B Co., 1/6, 198 L.I.B. 7/70-7/71. Contact: Arthur R. 'R.C.' Casto, Sr.

[REDACTED], Culloden, WV 25510

Looking For: Charlie Garcia, LZ WEST 69-70', 4/31 196th. Contact: Stephen Caballero

[REDACTED], Long Beach, Ca 90808

Looking For: Anyone, 11th LIB, Mountain Goats, Echo Recon, 1968-1970. Contact: John Gary Thomas

[REDACTED], Black Mountain, NC 28711

Looking For: Steve Shaw Or Anyone, E Trp. 1st Cav., 6/69-6/70. Larry L Meynardie

[REDACTED], Va Beach, VA 23464

Looking For: Roger Hudson or Capt. Thomas Chapman or anyone, Co. B, 1/6th Inf, 198th LIB, April 1968 to Nov 1969. Contact: Mark A. Seelbach

[REDACTED], La Porte, TX 77571

Looking For: Anyone, 5th/46th, 198th LIB, Nov 1968-Nov 1969. Contact: Bob Wolf

{'Buddy Wolf'} [REDACTED], York, PA 17404

Looking For: Mills, Radcliff, Hayes, Calmes, 4/31st, D Co., Recon. Contact: Donald Wayne Odorn

[REDACTED], Bastrop, LA 71220

Looking For: Anyone, 198th, 1/6th, Co. D. Contact: David L Gibson

[REDACTED], Bardwell, Ky 42023

Looking For: Anyone, B Co., 123rd Avn. Bn., Nov 69 - Nov 70. SSgt Dennis Chapin, SSgt Silver, SP5 Kenneth Reick, or CW2 Harry Stevenson? Contact: Robert C. Cook

[REDACTED], Valrico, FL 33594-6424

Looking For: Dennis Mead, Mike Robinson, Dean Cristy, Gus and Cox. C Co., 3/21st, 196 LIB. 5/69-6/70. Contact: Nels T. Bolstad

[REDACTED], Kalispell, MT 59903-0674

Looking For: Anyone, 3/67 thru 3/68, Co. A, 2/1st, 196th LIB. Contact: Pete Peterson

[REDACTED], Victorville, Ca 92392

Looking For: Joe Brancato, Jim Pensabene, Jackie Stanley, Tim Barnhart, 4/3d Inf., 9/70 to 10/71. Contact: Ron Brundage

[REDACTED], Redding, CT 06896

Looking For: Michael L. Hardy or anyone who was with 3/16 Arty and survived the sapper attack at FSB Mary Ann on March 28, 1971. Contact: Nola Whirlow

[REDACTED], San Francisco, CA 94105

Looking For: Barry Woodridge, F Trp/17th Cav., '70 & '71. Contact: Paul Ogden

[REDACTED], Louisville, KY 40207

Looking For: Anyone, B Co., 1/6, 198 L.I.B. 7/70-7/71. Contact: Arthur R. 'R.C.' Casto, Sr.

[REDACTED], Culloden, WV 25510

Looking For: Charlie Garcia, LZ WEST 69-70', 4/31 196th. Contact: Stephen Caballero

[REDACTED], St. Petersburg, FL 33710

## THE STORY OF CHRISTI HAI

Christi became a nine year old orphan when her father was killed during the war. Following his death, Mrs. Hai had to place Christi in an orphanage. This orphanage was built by the U.S. Navy at Cam Ranh Bay. Mrs. Hai worked there.

As Cam Ranh Bay was being razed Christi and her friends were picked up by a rescue force, placed in a 20 foot tuna fishing boat and cast adrift in the bay. They were picked by Americans.

Upon arrival in the USA, Christi Hai was adopted by an American family and has a degree in architectural engineering. She lives in Atlanta and has recently dedicated her life to raising funds and building orphanages for needy children in Vietnam. She's an astute business woman, a Christian and a grateful American. Prior to embarking on her endeavor, she had visited her homeland only twice since 1975. When she learned about my plans to return to Vietnam, she asked me to visit her mother and her former orphanage.

Here are extracts from my letters to her:

On Tuesday, at 9:00 P.M. on May 23, 2000, John Clark, Katy Spilberg, Bob Delzell and I arrived at Dalat. The 14 hour trip from Ho Chi Minh City left us weary and hungry. After checking into the hotel, I told my interpreter that we would have to leave early in the morning for Don Duong to see your mother. Ahn, my interpreter questioned, "Why wait until tomorrow, lets do it now!" I responded, "are you kidding? Knocking on doors at this late hour?" He said, "Hey, this is Vietnam...that's no problem here". My three traveling companions bade us farewell and off we went.

The road from Dalat to Don Duong is dark, narrow, mountainous and winding, about one hour drive at maximum speed. Upon arrival at this small town, we stopped at a market and asked for directions to your mother's home. Everyone in the store seemed to know her. We were told to double back through several small villages.

We reached a hollow that was about five kilometers long, with sparsely scattered small homes. We began knocking on doors and after stopping at five or six different homes, we finally arrived at your home. It was very near the end of the hollow. My watch read 11:00 P.M. The only sound came from barking dogs. It seemed so crazy, doing what would be very unseemly in America.

A faint light glittered from one of the back room's of your mom's home. We were greeted by a large dog. It was friendly, thank God. We knocked on the door, another light came on and your mother answered the door. The interpreter introduced me as your friend. We were warmly greeted and invited into your home for tea. We were joined in the parlor by your step-father and your brothers and sisters. Your mother is quite attractive and most gracious. She did all the talking, gesturing and smiling to the others as we spoke. She said to tell you that they are very anxious to see you.

Your mother likes the idea of the orphanage and said that she would be happy to help. She mentioned that any such project would have to be approved by local and higher levels of government, but the process shouldn't be difficult. I asked her about the Cam Ranh site and she stated that the facilities had been dismantled.

We left your home about midnight and returned to the hotel in Dalat at about 1:00 AM. It was too

late for dinner!

The following day, enroute to Nha Trang, we stopped to see the old orphanage at Cam Ranh. Most of the buildings were razed; the land remains unused. We took pictures and spoke to people living adjacent to the site, many of whom remember the original facility and your children. It would make a pretty good site, though it lies 2-3 hours from your mother's home. After viewing the "handicapped orphanage site" in HCMC, I would opt for Cam Ranh as a priority. More later.

Dear Christi:

On 21 May, your friend Mr. Hai, (Mr. Hai is Christi's friend with the same name who lives in Ho Chi Minh City. He assists Christi as a "local" coordinator and facilitator.) and I visited two orphanages in HCM City. One was a orphanage for blind children that appears to need, as a minimum, financial help; the other is a very nice facility established by Mr. Herman Gmeiner of Innsbruck. Hai seem to think that ROW should start with a project around Saigon. He stated that he would probably be able to act as a principal contact. That might be the best way to establish a toe-hold in the country, but let's wait.

Another possible site is Tra My, formerly Hau Duc, south west of Thein Phouc and near the former location of Fire Base Mary Ann. If located there and named for the Americal Division, or a subordinate unit, the facility might stir up veteran interest and support. The problem with this location is finding a local sponsor.

On June 5, John Clark and I met with Ambassador Pete Peterson, in Hanoi, for nearly an hour, then he asked me to meet Dr. Michael J Linnan, who heads up his office for the Center of Disease Control. Both encouraged that you and Dr. Ben establish a point of contact with Resource Exchange International or Counterpart International, based at Washington, or some other person or group living in Vietnam. Also, Dr. Linnan recommended contacting Mr. Curtis Swenzy the US/Vietnam Representative for Counterpart International and Chairman of NGO Committee, American Chamber of Commerce for advice. The ambassador also mentioned an organization called US-Vietnam Friendship Society.

You can contact the US Embassy at Hanoi by FAX or [REDACTED]. Dr. Linnan would be a good contact.

I will inform Dr. Ben Mathes of "Rivers of the World" (ROW) of my findings.

Col. Dick Carvelle (Ret)  
June 2000

Ed Note:

Col. Carvelle served with various units in Vietnam that included:

1966-1967-5th Special Forces Group (PROJECT Sigma, later part of SOG), 11 & 111 Corps and Border areas.

1967-1st Bn, 14th Inf (Task Force Oregon), 1 Corps

1970-198 LIB, Americal Division, 1 Corps

1970-1st Bn 46th Inf 196 LIB Americal Div, 1 Corps

1970-1971- 52nd ARVN Inf Reg, 18th Div, 111 Corps & Cambodia Border area.

## Eligibility for Membership

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

World War II	1942-1945
Korea War (Caribbean)	1954-1956
Vietnam War	1967-1973

Eligibility includes those who served with Task Force 6814 and Task Force Oregon. Branch of Service is immaterial.

## Dedication

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

## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION Bernard C. Chase, National Adjutant

[REDACTED]  
South Yarmouth, MA 02664

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Americal Unit Rgt/Bde \_\_\_\_\_ Bn \_\_\_\_\_ Co \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_ Associate \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Service \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Serial/SSN No. \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed DD-214 Y N

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