

PRESERVING AMERICAS FREEDOM: WORLD WAR II – KOREA – VIETNAM



# AMERICAL NEWSLETTER



DEDICATED AS A LIVING MEMORIAL TO ALL VETERANS OF THE AMERICAL DIVISION  
Founded 1945

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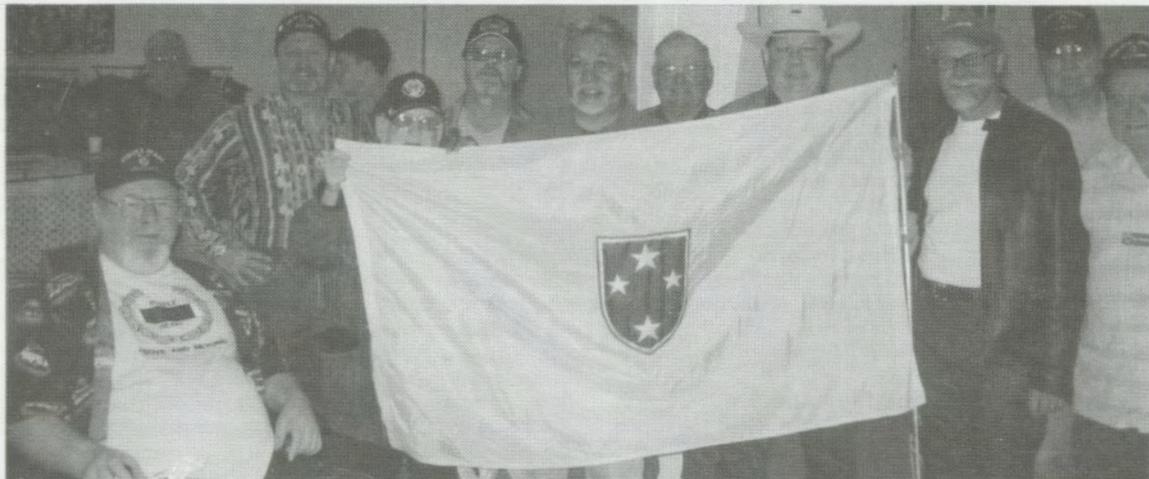
The Americal Newsletter is the official publication of the Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA). It is published each calendar quarter.

**April – May – June 2005**

Editor-In-Chief Emeritus: James C. Buckle

Editor: David W. Taylor

Vietnam Editor: Gary L. Noller



## REUNIONS

**“I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted their best, men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped raw, right down to their humanity.”**

(Above) Americal Vets in Abilene, Texas. (Below) Americal Vets in Melbourne, Florida.





America Book List

**Editors Note:** Periodically we will publish a list of books known to us that feature the America Division. Readers are invited to suggest other books they do not see on our list. Suggested books should be in one of two categories: (1) Book that covers an America members' tour of duty, a unit of the America or a battle the America participated in; (2) Book that provides an explanation of a theatre of operations that will lend credible background to understanding the role and contribution of the America Division in that theatre.

Suggested additions should be forwarded to Dave Taylor, Editor-In-Chief. His contact information is on the inside front cover.

**WORLD WAR II**

Combat Officer. A Memoir of War in the South Pacific. Charles H. Walker. Random House. 2004. Walker was a platoon leader, company commander and battalion executive officer with the 164<sup>th</sup> Infantry regiment. He chronicles his experiences from New Caledonia to Guadalcanal, the Fiji's, Leyte, Cebu and occupation duty in Japan.

Orchids In The Mud. Edited by Dr. Robert C. Muehrcke. J.S. Publishing. 1985. Personal accounts of the America by veterans of the 132<sup>nd</sup> Regiment. The book is out of print. Some copies may be available by writing to Joann Muehrcke, [REDACTED] Waterloo WI 53594.

The America Generation. Bill McLaughlin. Cape Elizabeth Press. 1999. Stories and vignettes about the America in WWII. McLaughlin served with the 110<sup>th</sup> Cavalry.

Under The Southern Cross. Francis D. Cronin. Combat Forces Press. 1951. The definitive history of the America Division in WWII. The book is copyrighted by the ADVA and available in soft cover on the ADVA price list, back cover of this newsletter.

**VIETNAM**

Death Valley. The Summer Offensive I Corps, August 1969. Keith William Nolan. Presidio Press. 1987. This offensive was the first major engagement after the announcement of the beginning of the US withdrawal from Vietnam. It features the 7<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment and the 196<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the America (Hiep Duc Valley), against the 2<sup>nd</sup> NVA Division.

Dragoons: C Troop, 1/1 Armored Cavalry, Vietnam 1967-1972. Grant Coble. AuthorHouse. 2005. Dragoons is a collective effort by over 20 C Troop Veterans to chronologically recall the events of their unit during the war. The days remembered are vignettes of an individuals experience. The memories are honest and give the reader a good feel for what it was like to be a Cav trooper.

Firebirds Chuck Carlock. Summit Publishing Group. 1995. Detailed account of the 71<sup>st</sup> Assault Helicopter Company, "Firebirds", in support of the America Division.

Hostile Fire. The Life & Death of First Lieutenant Sharon Lane. Philip Bigler. Vandamere Press. 1996. Lt. Lane was an America Nurse with the 312<sup>th</sup> Evacuation Hospital who was the only female service member to be killed by hostile fire in the Vietnam War. The book chronicles her military service and offers a background on the hospitals operations and the base at Chu Lai.

If I Die In A Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Ship Me Home. Tim O'Brien. Dell Publishing. 1969. O'Brien, one of the wars best known writers, writes of his experiences with Alpha Company, 5<sup>th</sup>/46<sup>th</sup> Infantry battalion, 198<sup>th</sup> LIB, 1968-1969.

Sappers in the Wire. The Life and Death of Firebase Mary Ann. Keith William Nolan. Texas A&M University Press. 1995. Detailed account of the 1<sup>st</sup>/46<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, 196<sup>th</sup> LIB on Firebase Mary Ann from September 1970 until its closure and battalion deactivation, mid-1971.

Survivors. Vietnam POWs Tell Their Stories. Zalin Grant. De Capo Press (paperback) 1994. The POW stories of nine American soldiers and pilots, most assigned to the America's 196<sup>th</sup> LIB, who were captured in early 1968. They were held for nine years, mostly in jungle camps and they tell their stories of daily survival.

Through the Valley: Vietnam 1967-1968. James F. Humphries. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. 1999. Detailed account of the close combat in the battles of Hiep Duc, March 11, Nhia Ha and Hill 406, by units of the America, primarily the 196<sup>th</sup> LIB.

Vietnam Battle Chronology. U.S. Army and Marine Corps Combat Operations, 1965-1973. David Burns Sigler. McFarland & Company Publishers (paperback) 1992. This handy reference includes all the America operations in Vietnam, with the dates, names, locations, type/objective of the operation and casualties (US & NVA/VC (WIA & KIA) where available. Each battle is not covered in detail will provide a sense of how specific combat operations fitted into the larger picture of the war.

Vietnam Vignettes. Tales of an Infantryman. Lee Basnar. Booklocker.com. 2004. Basnar was a Company Commander, C Co., 1/52<sup>nd</sup>, 198<sup>th</sup> LIB. The book describes his experiences as an ARVN advisor 1967-1968 and mostly, his experiences as a Company Commander 1970-1971. The book and autographed copies may be obtained through the web site mentioned above or e-mail [REDACTED] Phone [REDACTED] or writing to: Lee Basnar, [REDACTED] Sierra Vista, AZ 85650.

Why Didn't You Get Me Out? Frank Anton with Tommy Denton. Anton Publishing. 1997. Anton flew an UH-1C Huey Gunship with the 71<sup>st</sup> Assault Helicopter Company ("Firebirds"). The book traces his training, service as a pilot, his capture on January 5, 1968 and his five years as a POW in five different jungle camps and his eventual prison, the Hanoi Hilton, until his release on March 13, 1973. Autographed copies may be purchased for \$24 by writing to: Frank Anton, [REDACTED], Satellite Beach, FL 32937-2523.

Year in Nam. A Native American Soldier's Story. Leroy TeCube. University of Nebraska Press. 1999. America Vet Leroy TeCube left his Apache reservation to serve as an infantryman with Co B, 4<sup>th</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> LIB. His memoir provides an intimate glimpse of his life as an infantryman and his perspectives in war with his beliefs and culture as an Apache Indian. This book is available through the ADVA PX as well as Amazon.com and bookstores.

**NOTE: the following books are available through the America PX (see the inside back cover):**

Under The Southern Cross (Francis Cronin)

Why Didn't You Get Me Out? (Frank Anton)

Year In Nam. A Native American Soldier's Story (Leroy TeCube)

As we move into mid-year 2005, the ADVA is seeing good gains in new membership.

Since the last newsletter issue, seventy new members have been added to the roster. Of these new members, four are paid Life Members. The membership recruiting drive is beginning to pay off.

If you have buddies you served with in the America Division who are not members of the ADVA, contact them today and sponsor them for membership. We still have the recruiting packets available for mailing to prospective members. Contact the national Commander, Jon Hansen, or myself for a supply of these packets.

In this issue's National Adjutant notes, I want to share with all members some comments from the widow of a recently deceased member, John E. Anderson. John was a World War II Veteran who served with the 121<sup>st</sup> Medical Battalion, America Division. He took part in the Guadalcanal and Bougainville campaigns, was wounded in action and received the Purple Heart, among other decorations.

Mrs. Anderson writes, "John always enjoyed your America Newsletter and I'm so sorry he missed your latest Jan-Feb-Mar issue. He had told me things covered by many articles published in that issue – the history of the America shoulder patch, the naming of the America Division, remembering Guadalcanal and other things. We would have read it all together. We often spoke of his war experiences."

I think we can all agree Mrs. Anderson's comments demonstrate how the ADVA Newsletter provides an ongoing communication with fellow America Veterans and associates, and lets us share those remembrances with our family members.

As a reminder for annual pay members, be sure to check your renewal date in the address block on the back cover of this newsletter. The first line in the address block, under the postal bar coding, contains your membership renewal date. The address block will appear as follows:

Jan05  
616 \*\*\*\*\* 3 Digit 780  
Mr. John Q. Veteran  
4545 Anystreet  
Anytown, ST 78048-5555

If you are an annual pay member, and the date shown on your newsletter is May 05 or earlier, please send your dues payment to PNC Ron Ellis, Assistant Finance Officer. Ron's mailing address is listed on the outside back cover as part of the Membership Application Form.

As always, if you have any questions about your dues status, have a change of address or have a notification of the death of an ADVA member or former America Veteran, please contact me with that information.

Written correspondence should be mailed to the ADVA national Adjutant P.O. Box in Richardson, Texas. The full address is listed inside the front cover at the bottom right corner of the page.

You can also FAX or E-MAIL the information. My FAX number is [REDACTED]. My E-MAIL address is listed in the newsletter directory.

Roger Gilmore  
National Adjutant

**TAPS TAPS TAPS****101<sup>st</sup> Medical Regiment**

Mr. John E. Anderson  
Naples, FL  
March 21, 2005

**132<sup>nd</sup> Infantry**

Mr. Andrew J. Majka  
Chicago, IL  
April 19, 2004

**247<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery**

Mr. John R. Geib, Sr.  
Johnsburg, IL  
March 19, 2005

**182<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, Co. L**

Mr. Theodore Milgroom  
Framingham, MA  
Date Unknown

**164<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

Mr. Harry T. Nahigian  
Cranston, RI  
April 15, 2005

**14<sup>th</sup> Artillery, Btry C**

Mr. Terry Fisher  
Bedford, PA  
September 6, 2004

**198<sup>th</sup> LIB (A/1/52)**

Mr. Raymond F. Perry  
Wakefield, RI  
April 26, 2005

**259<sup>th</sup> C.A. Battalion**

Mr. Michael Vitelli  
Keizer, OR  
March 2, 2005

**1<sup>st</sup> / 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Cavalry**

Mr. Allen McHugh  
Columbus, OH  
August 26, 2004

**23<sup>rd</sup> MP Company**

Mr. Jay F. Walker  
Hendersonville, NC  
September 17, 2004

**LAST ROLL CALL**

(Deceased America Vets not members of the ADVA)

**101<sup>st</sup> Medical Regiment**

Mr. Robert d. Burns  
Woburn, MA  
Date Unknown

**NEW LIFE MEMBERS**

Mr. Lawrence G. Fitch  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, A/5/46  
San Diego, CA  
#Dave Taylor

Mr. Frank Magoni  
164<sup>th</sup> Inf, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn., Co I  
Sylvania, OH  
#Self

Mr. Tom J. Nash  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, HHC LRRP Det.  
Kearney, NJ  
#Self

Mr. Bernard A. Petronis  
17<sup>th</sup> Armored Cav, H Troop  
Chester, CT  
#Self

Mr. Julius G. Deriscavage  
196<sup>th</sup> LIB  
Mahoney City, PA  
#Bernie Chase

Mr. George W. Rhoden  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, C/1/20  
Glen St. Mary, FL  
#Bernie Chase

**Congratulations!****RE-INSTATED MEMBERS**

Mr. Jerry D. Ladd  
HHC  
Mesa, AZ  
#Don Shebasta

## NEW MEMBERS

Mr. Michael D. Anderson  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, A/1/52  
Emporia, KS  
#Dan R. Young

Mr. Al Bedford  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, HHC/1/6  
Staten Island, NY  
#Don Ballou

Mr. Robert A. Binderup  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, B/4/21  
Lancaster, PA  
#Self

Mr. Thomas W. Canapp  
16<sup>th</sup> Arty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Btry, HHC  
Bethlehem, PA  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. Greg V. Carson  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, B/4/21  
Erie, PA  
#Self

Mr. Paul C. Cuddy  
16<sup>th</sup> Arty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Btry, A Co  
Bridgewater, MA  
#John Keefe

Mr. Thomas R. Diggs, Jr.  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, D/5/46  
Poquoson, VA  
#Dave Taylor

Mr. Douglas Dowson  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, C/5/46  
Ramsey, NJ  
#Self

Mr. Gary E. Fennington  
723<sup>rd</sup> Maint Bn Co. D  
Jarrettsville, MD  
#Self

Mr. Wade T. Freese  
196<sup>th</sup> LIB, Recon 3/21  
Gonzales, LA  
#Self

Mr. Gary Froehlich  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, B/4/3  
Port Orange, FL  
#Self

Mr. Walter M. Gay  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, B/1/6  
Marlborough, NH  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. Wilton R. Gray, Jr.  
39<sup>th</sup> Engr, HHC  
New Smyrna, FL  
#Don Ballou

Mr. Edward E. Arndt, Jr.  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, C/5/46  
Franklin, TN  
#Dave Taylor

Mr. James P. Bentley  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, D/1/52  
Randolph, NY  
#Dave Taylor

Mr. Jesse I. Brown  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, C/4/21  
McMinnville, OR  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. Steve A. Carey  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, HHC/5/46  
Grover Beach, CA  
#Dave Taylor

Mr. David A. Couture  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, A/1/52  
Westland, MI  
#Dan R. Young

Mr. Ed Deverell  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, B/4/21  
Aurora, CO  
#Slater davis

Mr. Thomas B. Donnelly  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, HHC/5/46  
Dallas, TX  
#Self

Mr. Gordon Egan  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB  
Broomall, PA  
#Dan R. Young

Mr. David B. Frayne  
16<sup>th</sup> Arty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Btry, B Co.  
Wichita, KS  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. Michael Friel  
71<sup>st</sup> Avn Bde  
East Moriches, NY  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. Paul Garrison  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, C/1/52  
Delmar, NY  
#Self

Mr. Philip Goudelias  
39<sup>th</sup> Engr Co. C  
Melbourne, FL  
#Self

Mr. Harvey Griffin  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, A/5/46  
Silverstreet, SC  
#Dave Taylor

Mr. Patrick C. Guiberson  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, E/4/3  
Sumner, WA  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. William Howe  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, B/1/52  
Phoenix, AZ  
#Dan R. Young

Mr. Bradley C. Jackson  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, HHC/5/46  
Canby, OR  
#Don Ballou

Mr. Chuck Jones  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, E/4/3  
Galt, CA  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. Ralph Lyon  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, B/1/20  
Sandy Hook, KY  
#Dan R. Young

Mr. Michael Malone  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, B/4/21  
Grass lake, MI  
#Self

Mr. Peter G. McGeough  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, D/4/3  
North Merrick, NY  
#Conrad Steers

Mr. Albert E. Miller  
23<sup>rd</sup> MP Co.  
Fayetteville, NC  
#Rich Merlin

Mr. Richard Murray  
196<sup>th</sup> LIB, C/1/46  
White Marsh, MD  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. Edward O'Dea  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, D/5/46  
New York City, NY  
#Dave Taylor

Mr. Kenneth D. Porter  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, C/4/3  
Eden Prairie, MN  
#Self

Mr. Rich Sheffer  
26<sup>th</sup> Engrs  
Howell, MI  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. Tom Sizemore  
3/82<sup>nd</sup> Arty  
Lincoln, CA  
#Thomas Brewer

Mr. Archibald L. Hall  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, C/1/52  
Bayfield, CO  
#James Fivian

Mr. Robert L. Hramec  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, E/5/46  
Washington, IL  
#Michael Boise

Mr. Emilio H. Jimenez, Jr.  
523<sup>rd</sup> Soignal Bn, Co. B  
Mercerville, NJ  
#Self

Mr. Curtis Lingbeck  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB  
Wahasha, MN  
#Self

Mr. Ron Mageors  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, B/3/1  
Freeport, TX  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. William McDowell  
164<sup>th</sup> Inf Regt  
Mattoon, IL  
#Self

Mr. Rickey McLean  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, 4/21  
Puxico, MO  
#Self

Mr. James P. Mina  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, A/5/46  
Havertown, PA  
#Dave Taylor

Mr. Bill Noe  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, A/1/6  
Barbourville, KY  
#Dan R. Young

Mr. Marvin L. Owens  
196<sup>th</sup> LIB, B/2/1  
Noblesville, IN  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. Larry Robbins  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, C/5/46  
Yorba Linda, CA  
#Dave Taylor

Mr. Robert "Doc" Short  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, A/1/52  
Des Moines, IA  
#Larry Lovelace

Mr. Greg Slocum  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, A/4/3  
Londonberry, NH  
#PNC Gary Noller

Arlington, VA  
#Robert Miller

Mr. Herman E. Tatum  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, A/4/3  
Kennesaw, GA  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. Tom Thiesen  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, A/1/20  
Lawton, IA  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. James K. Walton  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, D/1/52  
Washington, DC  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. Charles Wunsch  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, B/5/46  
Sussex, WI  
#Self

Mr. Dan Zimmerschied  
263<sup>rd</sup> Maint Co.  
Great Bend, KS  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. O. H. Hubbard, Jr.  
Associate  
Sherman, TX  
#Jim Buckle

Bowie, MD  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. James R. Teller  
11<sup>th</sup> LIB, A/4/3  
Sioux Falls, ND  
#PNC Gary Noller

Mr. Jack Vater  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, A/5/46  
Withee, WI  
#Dave Taylor

Mr. Joseph L. Wickham  
198<sup>th</sup> LIB, A/5/46  
Liverpool, OH  
#Dave Taylor

Mr. Ronald J. Zahm  
Task Force Oregon HHC  
Gulf Breeze, FL  
#Don Shebasta

Mrs. Florence Dennis  
Associate  
Dallas, PA  
#Mark Deam

Mr. Robert J. Lindley  
Associate  
New S. Wales, Australia  
#Self

## The Soldiers That Slept In The Rain

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 ninety-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 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 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 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.

Andrew Ladak  
April 11, 2001

© Andrew Ladak, 2001

YOUR CHANGE OF ADDRESS IS  
IMPORTANT TO US!

Every newsletter issue we mail has a "Change Service Request" for the Postal Service. East issue the Postal Service returns because of an undeliverable address costs the ADVA \$.70.

We normally receive between 70-100 returned newsletters each issue because addresses have changed and the mail forwarding service has expired. Please help us to keep our costs low by:

1. If you are moving or will be at another address for a period of time (i.e. "Snow Birds"), please let the National Adjutant know so we can change your address. We update the mailing list each calendar quarter for the newsletter to be as current as possible.
2. If you have a permanent change of address please let us know. Even if the Postal Service notifies us of your new change of address, the newsletter is returned to us with that information. Sometimes, the forwarding address information has expired and we have no record of your new address. Please help us to help you.

Send your address changes, temporary or permanent, to Roger Gilmore, National Adjutant:

Phone: [REDACTED] Fax: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Mail: [REDACTED], Rowlett, TX 75089

**Editors Note:** If you wish to reply to an article in the Americal Newsletter that only lists an e-mail return address, and you do not have e-mail, you can receive assistance by contacting one of the newsletter editors. Write or call one of the editors and give them your request. They will forward your message via e-mail and obtain additional contact information.

The newsletter staff welcomes all letters and comments from ADVA members. Please include a phone number and/or e-mail address to help us contact you in a timely manner if we have questions about your letter.

## WORLD WAR II:

To The Editor,

As a member of the Americal Div. Veterans and the Secretary/Treasurer of the 754<sup>th</sup> Tank battalion WWII Association, from time to time we quote articles that appear in your circulation. I hope this meets your approval. I do reference where the material is from when used to construct our newsletter to our members on a quarterly basis.

I would like to request an opportunity to insert an article from the 754<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion in your newsletter. The battalion is anxious to acquire a copy of the book, "Orchids in the Mud" by Robert C. Muehrcke. The book is out of print now and unobtainable through the bookstores. If any member or family has a copy or extra copy that they are willing to part with, we would appreciate it. Being a member of the battalion that participated in the "Hornets Nest" at the Torokina area and a member of the tank destroyed during that battle, it holds a deep interest to me.

Thomas Howard  
754 Tank Battalion Association  
[REDACTED]  
St. Charles, MO 63303-6100

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Editor,  
My father was regular Army, attached to the 182<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment before the start of WWII. He died 11/22/84. Regarding the book, Under the Southern Cross, my father is in one of the photos, standing on the rear end of the landing barge, without his helmet on the docks of Noumea, New Caledonia. I would like to get this photo, and hope it is in a larger size so I can enlarge it. I would like to ask any WWII vet if they can provide a duplicate photo for me, or where one might be available.

Edward F. Hennessey  
[REDACTED]  
Lynn, MA 01904  
[REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*

To The Editor,

I am working on a film documentary about the Battle for Guadalcanal and would like to interview any 164<sup>th</sup> Regiment Americal Vet who was there. Most of the Vets still reside in the Dakota's, where I live so it will be easy for me to contact them.

Eric Nelson  
[REDACTED]  
Turtle Lake, ND 58575  
[REDACTED]

## VIETNAM:

Dear Editor,

I want to say thank you for the Americal Newsletter. This recent one was a good one. Across page 24 of the current issue was a small article, "Facing the Enemy". I can relate to this article as I went through this training before my tours in Vietnam.

You folks have done some good work there and it is appreciated. I was saddened to hear of General Rosson's death - a fine warrior who served his country well. He was one of the finest commanders I have served under during my tours in Vietnam.

Please know that we appreciate your efforts and hope our commanders continue to see healthy days ahead of them in true brotherhood as Americal Vets. We look forward to each new issue. Thank you.

David Blankenship  
Oak Harbor, WA

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Dear Editor,

I served with the 263<sup>rd</sup> Maintenance Co., Americal Division Artillery, in Chu Lai in 1969-1970. I would like to find information about my unit and find names of those that I served with before the unit was turned over in 1970.

Dan Zimmerschied  
[REDACTED]

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Dear Editor,

We have a website that others might enjoy visiting. The address is [www.kensvietnambuds.com](http://www.kensvietnambuds.com). The site is for the 4<sup>th</sup> platoon, Co. B, 4/21<sup>st</sup> Infantry, at Duc Pho in 1971.

Slater Davis, Mableton, Georgia  
[REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Editor,

I served in Co D, 5/46<sup>th</sup> of the 198<sup>th</sup> LIB. I was with the unit at Ft. Hood from December 7, 1967 until we went to Vietnam on March 28, 1968. I served with Co. D until September 1968. I then served with the brigade until March 1969.

We worked off of LZ Gator to start and then moved to Hill 69, LZ Bayonet, LZ Buff and others. In September I was a sergeant E-5 and became one of the duty NCO's for the Brigade tactical operations Center (TOC). I would like to contact anyone who remembers me.

Bob Holly  
[REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Editor,

I was with Co. C, 1/52<sup>nd</sup> Inf, 198<sup>th</sup> LIB. I was wounded the second time on May 22, 1969 when I stepped on a Bouncing Betty. I was the tunnel rat in the platoon. I remember Diablo and CPT Hall and also LTC Stinson whom we also lost trying to get our people out. I would like to hear from guys that were in the old outfit and might have known me. If anyone happens to have old photos of me I would greatly appreciate copies.

Stephen K. Alvey  
[REDACTED]

Dear Editor,

When I joined the ADVA some years ago, my name was listed as a new member, however, my unit was incorrect. I recently became a life member and my name was again listed, my unit was again incorrect. Could you please list my name as a life member in the next issue with the correct unit? Thank you for your assistance.

David Downing  
Co B., 1/6<sup>th</sup>, 198<sup>th</sup> LIB.

**Editors Note:** We have requested the national database reflect Mr. Downings correct unit and we are including his letter here so his fellow comrades will be able to know he is in the ADVA.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Editor,

Glen "Butch" Dale Tomek, 1<sup>st</sup> LT, 198<sup>th</sup> LIB, KIA 4/18/69, was my high school roommate at Missouri Military Academy in Mexico, MO. We graduated in 1965. I was in Vietnam with Echo Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Marines when he was killed. Now it is important that I know how he died. Can anyone be of assistance?

Robert Crider  
[REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Editor,

I am looking for anyone who knew my brother Ervin Proctor, 1/46<sup>th</sup> Inf, 198<sup>th</sup> LIB, June 1968 to September 13, 1968, when he was killed in Quang Ngai province. I'm trying to find anyone who remembers him or served with him. All the information I have is that he was riding in an APC when it was attacked by mortar and rocket-propelled grenades. I think there were more than my brother killed in this attack. If anyone can help me, please e-mail me. My contact information is: [REDACTED], or write to: [REDACTED], Maryville, TN 37801.

Bonnie Proctor Russell

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Editor,

I am looking for anyone who served with Co. A, 4/21<sup>st</sup> Inf, 11<sup>th</sup> LIB, 1968-69, Chu Lai and Duc Pho. I am especially interested in finding Bobby S. Sidhu, James Lesh and Donald Peterson. I was awarded the Purple Heart. My contact information is: [REDACTED], Aleppo, PA 15370.

Rex E. Miller

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Editor,

I would like to find Robert Stasiak, last known address was Chicago or anyone who served with Co. B, 3/1<sup>st</sup> Inf, 11<sup>th</sup> LIB near Duc Pho or Quang Ngai. Please write or phone at 16 Camerons Terrace, Covington, GA, 30016.

Gene Brown

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Editor,

I wish to contact James R. Melson. He was from Kentucky. We served together in the 39<sup>th</sup> Engineers, 45<sup>th</sup> Group Headquarters, Chu Lai, 1967-1968. Send an e-mail to: [REDACTED].

Wayne Merrill

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Editor,

Please add our address to your website "Links" page and let your readers know that we are now on the Internet. The website is especially oriented to Co. A, 1/6<sup>th</sup> Inf, 198<sup>th</sup> LIB. It can be found at: <http://www.a-1-6.org/>.

Larry Swank, Webmaster, A-1-6.org

## WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THE MILITARY

"AIM TOWARD THE ENEMY"

--- Instruction printed on US Rocket Launcher

"WHEN THE PIN IS PULLED, MR. GRENADE IS NOT OUR FRIEND"

--- US Marine Corps

"CLUSTER BOMBING FROM B-52s IS VERY, VERY ACCURATE. THE BOMBS ARE GUARANTEED TO ALWAYS HIT THE GROUND."

--- U.S.A.F. Ammo Troop

"IF THE ENEMY IS IN RANGE, SO ARE YOU"

--- Infantry Journal

"IT IS GENERALLY INADVISABLE TO EJECT DIRECTLY OVER THE AREA YOU JUST BOMBED."

--- U.S. Air Force manual

"TRY TO LOOK UNIMPORTANT; THE ENEMY MAY BE LOW ON AMMO"

--- Infantry Journal

"TRACERS WORK BOTH WAYS"

--- U.S. Army Ordnance

"FIVE-SECOND FUSES ONLY LAST THREE SECONDS."

--- Infantry Journal

"IF YOUR ATTACK IS GOING TOO WELL, YOU'RE WALKING INTO AN AMBUSH."

--- Infantry Journal

"ANY SHIP CAN BE A MINESWEEPER ... ONCE."

--- Anonymous

"NEVER TELL THE PLATOON SERGEANT YOU HAVE NOTHING TO DO."

--- Unknown Marine Recruit

"DON'T DRAW FIRE; IT IRRITATES THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU."

--- Infantry Journal

(Contributed by ADVA member Bob Chappell)

**Individuals Who Have Donated More Than \$10 To The ADVA Scholarship Fund**

Grateful appreciation is acknowledged to the contributors listed below who have donated to our current scholarship fund-drive to benefit the children and grandchildren of Americal Veterans.

Raymond Brady  
Thomas McAndrews  
Lionel Garant  
Edward Voros  
Leonard Graham  
Robert Williams -  
Robert Bartruff  
James Vitale  
Fred Martin  
William Elliot  
Daniel Burbine  
Jim Gates

Clint Zimlich  
Michael Lee  
Charles Herster  
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James Wark  
Volley Cole  
(SGM-Ret)  
Paul Szalkowski  
Donald Eichelberger  
Nelson Dion III  
Roland Castranova  
(PNC-ADVA)

*"Thank you so much for your generous gift. Members of the ADVA have already given so much of themselves to their fellow Americans, yet they continue to give more!"*

David Eckberg  
Leonard Oliver  
Galen Wanderscheid  
Rudolph Buchborn  
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John Sabolenko  
Joe Buss  
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*"I applied for this scholarship in honor of my grandfather. He was a great man who did wonderful things in his life. Winning this scholarship makes me feel closer to the grandfather I never knew."*

Ed Loeb  
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Curtis Dean  
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Dennis Orthmann

*"Please accept our gratitude and thanks to you and the organization from the bottom of our hearts. We especially appreciate being recognized by the men and women of the Americal who have made so many contributions to our country."*

Mrs. Jesse Drowly  
Ernest Mitchell  
Richard Knowles  
(Lieutenant General - Ret)  
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(CW4-Ret)  
John Gasper  
(Col-Ret)  
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Carlos Boone  
Joseph McCourt

**Contributions Made In Memory:**

- Paul Grice in memory of fallen brothers, Co. A., 1/20<sup>th</sup> Inf., 11<sup>th</sup> LIB.
- William Allen in memory of KIA's from 1/20<sup>th</sup> Inf., 11<sup>th</sup> LIB.
- PNC William Maddox in memory of Willie L. Field, Jr. KIA on Cebu, P.I.
- Ethel Thornton in memory of PNC Robert N. Thornton.
- Elizabeth Pariseau in memory of Maurice Sullivan
- Margaret Sullivan in memory of Maurice Sullivan
- Lorinda Mohla in memory of Harry Mohla
- Mary Kalat in memory of Edward L. Kalat
- PNC James Buckle in memory of Marion E. Doyle
- Bob Short in memory of Lt. Nainoa Hoe, C/3/21<sup>st</sup> Inf., KIA in Iraq.

**EASTERN REGIONAL CHAPTER**  
DC DE KY MD NJ NY OH PA VA WV

**COMMANDER**  
John "Jay" Flanagan  
[REDACTED]  
Cranford, NJ 07016  
Tel: [REDACTED]

**VICE COMMANDER**  
Conrad Steers  
[REDACTED]  
Hicksville, NY 11801  
Tel: [REDACTED]

**SECRETARY**  
Joe Tunis  
[REDACTED]  
Lake Ariel, PA 18436  
Tel: [REDACTED]

**TREASURER**  
Mark Deam  
[REDACTED]  
Sidney, OH 45365  
Tel: [REDACTED]

Leo Orfe: Sergeant-At-Arms  
Everitt Williams: Chaplain  
Visit our web site at:  
<http://home.woh.rr.com/sidneyalum/advaerc/>

Our 2005 Chapter Reunion will be in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, November 3-6, 2005. It will be hosted by Dave Taylor and Darryl "Tom" Smith. All Americal Association National Members are invited! Friday will be a full day with the electronic map battle presentation, cyclorama, buffet lunch and two-hour battlefield tour with guides and plenty of stops for picture taking. In the evening we will eat at the historic Dobbin House Tavern, in our private ballroom and our guest of honor will be President Abraham Lincoln who will address the group and remain for pictures. Saturday is reserved for shopping and Saturday night will be our annual banquet at our headquarters hotel, the Holiday Inn Battlefield, located in the heart of Gettysburg. (Hotel is only \$59/night, single or double). Reservations are due by September 3, 2005. For full information write or e-mail Dave Taylor: [REDACTED], Medina, Ohio 44256 or [REDACTED]



It is time to begin the New Year with payment of the annual dues. Membership Dues for year 2005 is again \$3.00. Feel free to pay for more than one year if you wish. We can track what year you are paid through. To the right of the mailing label you receive in the Chapter Newsletter is the year you are paid through. If your label shows 2005 or above, you are already paid. Remember that you must belong to the National ADVA in order to be eligible for membership in the chapter. Send your dues and/or questions to: Mark Deam, 418 East

Ruth Street, Sidney, Ohio 45365-1623. Please make your check payable to: ADVA/ERC. Any questions write to Mark, call [REDACTED]

### HAVE YOU JOINED A CHAPTER YET?

There are **two great ways** to reunite with comrades who share a common bond:

- **Keep your Americal Division Veterans Association membership current!**
- **Join the chapter in your area for regional reunions and events that are closer to your home.**

Each of the above requires separate memberships but both are very affordable and offer the opportunity for great times and developing great friendships.

### JOIN YOUR AMERICAL CHAPTER TODAY!

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

**COMMANDER**  
John Mathews  
[REDACTED]

Verona, WI 53593  
Tel: [REDACTED]

**ADJ / FIN OFF**  
Terry Babler  
[REDACTED]

New Glarus, WI 53574  
Tel: [REDACTED]

The Kokomo Indiana 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Vietnam Vets Reunion dates: September 15-18, 2005. Our Chapter will be in the big tent with information about the Americal and 1/1 Cavalry associations. We have 12 campsites on the grounds together (behind the East Gate). We will be there from September 14<sup>th</sup> through September 17<sup>th</sup>.

Mark your calendars for our 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Winterfest R&R in New Glarus, Wisconsin, on January 12-15, 2006. Guest speakers will be Diane Carlson Evans, founder of the Women's Vietnam Veterans and Medal of Honor recipient Sammy L. Davis. Hotels: Chalet Landhaus 1-800-944-1716 and Swiss Aire Motel 1-800-798-4391. For a complete listing of events, write or e-mail Terry Babler (info above).

We are also looking at doing a reunion in Washington D.C. for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, November 9-12, 2007. We will decide at the Kansas City reunion.

For those who want to join our Chapter, dues are \$10.00/year, which covers a spring, summer and fall newsletter on all our events and other events as well. If you wish to join for five years, the cost is \$45.00.

**ARTHUR R. WOOD**  
**SOUTH EAST CHAPTER**  
AL FL GA NC SC TN

**COMMANDER**  
Treasurer  
Paul Stiff  
[REDACTED]

Port Charlotte, FL 33949  
[REDACTED]

**SECRETARY /**  
Allen Feser  
[REDACTED]  
Lindenhurst, NY 11757  
[REDACTED]

Jerry "Doc" Anderson and Jon Hansen welcomed over 50 Americal Vets at the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion, Wickham Park, Melbourne, Florida on April 22-24. For the first time the Chapter set up a tent in the vendor area and handed out applications, and Jerry hosted a small gathering in the camping area. Jerry already has two camping spaces reserved for next year, so block out your 2006 calendar and let's make next year's reunion the biggest!

**NORTHWEST CHAPTER**  
AK WA OR ID MT WY

**COMMANDER**  
Dave Hammond  
[REDACTED]  
Beaverton, OR 97005  
Tel: [REDACTED]

Our Chapters sponsored 2006 ADVA National Reunion will be in Portland, Oregon on June 22-25. Anyone with time to help us please contact Dave Hammond. A brief meeting will be held in Kansas City to discuss activities and planning.

**NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER**  
MA NH VT ME CT RI

**COMMANDER**  
Arthur G. Cole  
[REDACTED]  
Wakefield, MA 01880  
Tel: [REDACTED]

**CENTRAL MID-WEST CHAPTER**  
ND SD KE NE MO IA

**COMMANDER**  
David A. Chrystal Sr.  
[REDACTED]  
Centralia, MO 65240  
Tel: [REDACTED]

I will be attending the Far West Chapter reunion in San Diego this September and I hope to attend the 164<sup>th</sup> Infantry reunion in Valley City, North Dakota. I need input from the membership as to where and when you would like to see the next chapter reunion to be. Please drop me a line with your stories, comments, etc. Dave

**FAR WEST CHAPTER**  
AZ CA CO HI NV NM UT

**COMMANDER**  
Richard A. Merlin  
[REDACTED]  
Riverside, CA 92503  
Tel: [REDACTED]

**SECRETARY / TREASURER**  
Gene McGrath  
[REDACTED]  
Pahrump, NV 89048  
[REDACTED]

Vice Commander: John Bowley  
Sergeant-at-Arms: Curt Rothacker  
Chaplain: Pat Tognoli

The Far West Chapter will hold its next reunion in San Diego, California starting Thursday, September 22, 2005 and ending on Sunday, September 25, 2005. We will be staying at the San Diego Bayside Holiday Inn, [REDACTED], San Diego, CA. [REDACTED].

Our special room rates will be \$99.00 a night. For the discounted rate, tell them you are with the Americal Far West Chapter. Reservation cut off date is August 23, 2005. 24-hour free airport/hotel shuttle bus is available. San Diego International Airport is only 5 minutes from the hotel. The hotel web site address is: <http://www.holinnbayside.com>. On Friday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> we will tour the Aircraft carrier USS Midway and there are many other side trips available to include The San Diego Zoo, Sea World, Sea Port Village, Tijuana, Mexico and much more. We will have our dinner dance on Saturday night, September 24<sup>th</sup>. Registration forms are available. For more information call Kurt McFadden, Reunion Chairman [REDACTED] or Rich Merlin, Chapter Commander, [REDACTED].

### RENO REUNION MEMORY BOOKS

If you did not order one or want an extra book we have a limited supply left for sale. This year's book is the best yet. It is in full color and has 36 pages. To order one, send a check for \$20.00, payable to the "ADVA Far West Chapter" to: Rich Merlin, [REDACTED], Riverside, CA 92506.

**SOUTH MID-WEST CHAPTER**  
AR LA MS OK TX

**COMMANDER**  
Cameron F. Baird  
[REDACTED]  
Stonewall, TX 78671  
Tel: [REDACTED]

Nominations are now being solicited for chapter officers, with the intent of electing new officers this fall. Nomination forms are available in the chapter newsletter or by contacting the chapter commander. Any member in good standing is encouraged to nominate himself or any other qualified member for the ballot. Much of the burden of running the chapter has fallen on a few people and a few extra hands and heads are needed.

Chapter newsletters, published twice a year, are being sent to all ADVA members in the chapter region regardless of membership in the chapter. If you haven't been receiving a chapter newsletter, please notify the chapter commander. We've also lost track of several members, whose newsletters are being returned for lack of a current address. These include my old platoon mate, Daniel Plata, plus Eduardo Martinez-Torres, Dennis Ramagos, Rex Miller, James Funkhauser, William Broyard and Henry Howard.

**Charlie Battery, 1/14<sup>th</sup> FA  
Oklahoma City & Fort Sill  
April 19-24, 2005**

David Laukat

Over the period of 19-24 April Charlie Battery, 1/14<sup>th</sup> FA held its third reunion since the days of the closing of the war in the Republic of South Vietnam. The reunion was held in two places, Oklahoma City at the Best Western Saddleback Inn and at Ft. Sill, the home of the field artillery and training location for most of the former Charlie battery members.

There were approximately 45 Veterans and wives or family present for this reunion. The Saddleback Inn provided a relaxing covered area for everyone to meet and a conference room to conduct our little bit of business. CSM (Ret) Bob Hamilton of the 6/14<sup>th</sup> FA came up from Lawton, Oklahoma (FT. Sill) to give everyone a short briefing on the next days activities. Both Bob and myself were

presented large Certificates of Appreciation (WARBONNET Award) from Veterans of the battery for our efforts. After conducting our business we held an honors ceremony dedicated to those in the Battery that lost their lives while serving their country far away from home and to those that have died since the rest of us have come home.

The next morning on Friday April 22<sup>nd</sup> at Ft. Sill we went to the 1/14 FA Bn area ("The Steel Warriors") and unloaded next to a static display that the soldiers of the active Charlie battery had set up for us to admire and handle. Now that brought back memories and tears to a lot of old grown men. The Army hasn't used one of those howitzers in 15 or more years. These young men do not deal with the old tube artillery that we did; they have the newest things out, the MLRS - Multiple Launch Rocket System.

From the static displays we moved onto the battalion parade field for the formal ceremonies. Here we met more of the older Veterans of the 14<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment. Major General Valcourt, Post Commander and Brigadier General Formica, III Corps Commander, and their deputies and Sergeants Major were present for the ceremonies. The current Charlie Battery was front and center with their commander, LTC Randall Cheesborough, 1/14 FA Commander gave the opening remarks. A Veteran's Commander spoke about brotherhood and Vet John Sartain recited the Shakespeare poem, "We Band of Brothers." Various plaques were presented in mutual respect.

Following the ceremonies everyone moved to the main battalion building for the ribbon cutting ceremony for the regimental room. Seven sets of flags and guidons surrounded the room, representing every battalion within the regiment. Within this room there is now 89 years of Army Artillery history stored; the 14<sup>th</sup> FA was originally constituted July 1, 1916.

Moving from the Regimental Room the soldiers and Vets went to the nearby consolidated mess, "Guns and Rockets" to eat the noon meal. We then moved on from the battalion area after saying our thanks to the officers and men who treated us so well. We adopted them and they adopted us; we are all one family now - brothers of a kind.



Charlie Battery Vets view the battery MLRS used today (Photo Courtesy of David Laukat)

Other areas we visited were the Apache / Comanche gravesite on Ft. Sill, where Chief Geronimo is buried, the PX and clothing store and the many sites available to see in Oklahoma City.

The 1/14<sup>th</sup> FA was in active combat throughout its tour of duty with the Americal Division, I Corps, RVN from 1967 to 1971, with its headquarters moving as the battalion moved to support its assigned maneuver brigades, the 196<sup>th</sup> and 198<sup>th</sup> LIB's. Charlie battery, last headquartered at LZ Fat City, was assigned as direct support primarily for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> battalions of the 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry. At least 10 members were lost to combat action in Vietnam. Weapons used by the battery were the 105mm Howitzer, M101 split trail and the later new M102 with the big fat tire.



Vets and spouses take pride in the new 1/14<sup>th</sup> FA Room (Photo courtesy of David Laukat)

The battery proved the title "King of Battle" and earned it through blood, sweat, hard work and devotion to duty, even to death to support those that needed them the most, the light infantry soldier. My hat is off to you my good friends and newly adopted brothers in the modern Charlie battery!

**Editors Note:** All Americal units holding reunions may have their reunion information published in the Americal National Newsletter. Contact David Taylor (contact information on inside front cover) as early as possible with your information.

**American Division Artillery  
Charleston, South Carolina**

**April 26-29, 2005**

**Joe & Eileen Tunis**

The Holiday Inn Express, Charleston, SC was the site for the 2005 American Division Field Artillery Reunion on April 26-29. Our Commander and reunion Chairman was Bob Miller who, along with his wife Carol, made the reunion a memorable occasion for all who attended. The hotel was located near public transportation and there were shuttle buses from the hotel to most points of interest in the city. The 35 attendees were able to take advantage of these facilities to visit the many places Charleston has to offer.

We took a guided tour of the historic district featuring the many old stately homes, churches and museums, along with the famous battery and old marketplace.

One of the many places to visit is Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum, featuring the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Yorktown. Built in Newport News, Virginia, it was commissioned in 1943. The Yorktown participated in the Pacific offensive, which ended with the defeat of Japan in 1945. It was modified in the 1950's with an angled deck for jets and then converted into an anti-submarine carrier when she served in the Vietnam War in the 1960's. It was used to recover the Apollo 8 Astronauts, the first to reach the moon in 1968. Decommissioned 2 years later she was towed to Charleston in 1975. She was featured in the movie "Tora, Tora, Tora."

The museum also features the destroyer Laffey, commissioned in 1944 and the Coast Guard Cutter Ingham and SS 343 submarine Clamagore. Fort Sumter located in the Charleston harbor and site of the beginning of the Civil War was also visited.

A visit to the Charleston Museum featured a replica of the confederate submarine, the H.L. Hunley. On the final evening we had a dinner across the street from the hotel. Commander Miller suggested having our 2006 reunion in Roanoke, Virginia. A vote of the members unanimously approved the motion!

**178<sup>th</sup> ASHC "Boxcar" Reunion #15**

**Indianapolis, Indiana**

**August 10-14 2005**

The hotel will be the Radisson City Center Hotel, Indianapolis, IN 46204. Reunion contact point is: Barry Beldin, Indianapolis, IN 46205. My phone is [REDACTED]. E-mail is: [REDACTED]

**Co B, 1/52<sup>nd</sup>, 198<sup>th</sup> LIB  
Nashville, Tennessee  
September 9-11, 2005**

Our reunion will be held at the Doubletree Hotel Downtown. Reservations can be made at [REDACTED] (rooms are under Bravo Company 1/52). Cost is \$99/night. The final date to receive the discount is August 10. Our main event will be Friday night. Saturday will be open for the guys and families to take in Nashville, visit with buddies, etc. Confirm reservations with Buddy Sadler [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]



American WWII Artillery Vets enjoy camaraderie in Charleston. Left to right: Joe Riccardo, Frank Vitale, Carlo DePorto and Joe Tunis. (Photo courtesy of Eileen Tunis)

**23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Vietnam Veterans Reunion  
Kokomo, Indiana  
September 15-18, 2005**

The annual Kokomo reunion is one of the oldest and largest Vietnam Veteran reunions. Approximately 30,000 Vietnam Vets attend. There is live music all weekend. The American is always well represented and the ADVA Great Lakes Regional Chapter and the 1st/1st Cavalry organization sponsor the get-together. They have sponsored campsites, a tent headquarters and a registration table in the large vendor tent. For those staying in the many area hotels there is a shuttle bus service. The Kokomo Reunion point of contact for camping information is Dick Forrey. E-mail: [REDACTED]. Phone: [REDACTED]. Web Site: [www.hcvvo.org](http://www.hcvvo.org).

The American hospitality area will be at the Ron Lewis / Terry Babler campsites all weekend. The American sponsors will set up a table in the large vendor tent from 11AM - 3PM each day for American Vets to sign in. There will be a group photo of American Vets by the main flag at 3:15PM on Saturday. American vets needing more information, contact Terry Babler, [REDACTED].

**H Troop, 17<sup>th</sup> Cavalry  
Alexandria, Virginia  
October 7-11, 2005**

H Troop, 17<sup>th</sup> Armored Cavalry is having its 2005 reunion in Alexandria, VA, October 7 through the 11<sup>th</sup>, 2005. The reunion will take place at the Days Inn Alexandria Landmark, Alexandria, VA 22312. Call [REDACTED] for hotel reservations. Be sure to mention H Troop, 17<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. For more information contact Felix Westwood at [REDACTED] or e-mail: [REDACTED] or contact Ramon B. Vega at e-mail: [REDACTED]

**3/1<sup>st</sup> Inf., 11<sup>th</sup> LIB (June 66 to December 68)  
Atlanta, Georgia  
October 14-16, 2005**

This reunion covers those in the battalion who were in Hawaii and Vietnam. Contact Tim Cook [REDACTED] or e-mail: [REDACTED]

**"Liaisons With Kites" ...The Unsung Heroes of the Americal**  
**These Special Pilots Scouted Enemy Positions in Unarmed, Unarmored "Grasshopper" Light Aircraft.**  
**They Worked For The Artillery, Supported The Infantry And Punished The Enemy**

David W. Taylor

**Necessity Born Out of Jungle Warfare**

The runway on the Pacific Island was only 350 feet long, bordered on each end by sheer cliffs and on each side by dense tropical jungle. Yet pilots landed their aircraft day and night, to refuel while their ground crews inspected the fragile condition of their aircraft, which were characterized as little more than "motorized kites", their Piper L-4 Cub airplanes. Their pilots did not wear pilot wings, but modified wings with an "L" and the cross canons of the field artillery. Their original training had been as artillery officers, but through the necessities of jungle warfare they became known as "Liaison Pilots", flying every kind of mission from reconnaissance and artillery spotting to medical evacuation and bombing and strafing. The brass would refer to their work as "Cub Operations". The infantry they supported called them unarmed "grasshoppers." And they defined themselves by their innovation, dedication and daily valor. This is their story.

**A New Kind of Forward Observer**

Boyd Vokes was serving in a National Guard Cavalry unit during summer maneuvers when Hitler and Mussolini, in his words, "started getting a little rambunctious." So their active duty was extended and their horses traded in for artillery pieces. After Pearl Harbor his unit was shipped to Scotland, Northern Ireland and eventually England. As a Staff Sergeant, Chief of Gun Section, he was chosen for Artillery Officer Candidate School (OCS) and sent to Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Vokes recalls his assignment process after OCS. "After finishing Artillery OCS you had a choice in specializing in some phase of artillery work. Since I had some experience with horses I thought I would try some of the armor, horse-pack artillery. This was .75's mountain stuff, so I went to the headquarters and the assignment officer kind of snickered at me." He said, "well, you have to be six feet tall and 180 pounds" (heavy lifting of the .75 artillery pieces off of the horses and climbing those mountains). "And here I was, a little runt. So I said, well - I have another option. I was thinking about flying anyway."

Vokes was sent to a newly formed pilot school in Denton Texas where he and his fellow students took 60 hours of flying instruction from the Army Air Force. "After that", he recalls, "they sent us back up to Ft. Sill where they taught us things that the Army Air Force felt were a little too dangerous for us - landing on curves, on hillsides, upwind and downwind of everything. We had three months of that."

Vokes and forty-three other artillery liaison pilots were shipped by sea to New Caledonia and a replacement depot. Major John Kalbaugh, himself an artillery officer and pilot, commanded the group. Each infantry division would be assigned eleven pilots. Typical deployment would be three to the division headquarters and two pilots to each artillery battalion. Vokes remembers when he arrived on New Caledonia, "the Americal and the 37<sup>th</sup> Division were in combat up in Bougainville. The 25<sup>th</sup> and the 43<sup>rd</sup> were over in New Guinea. I was assigned to the Americal."



**Meet the Liaison Pilots of the Americal: (Back row left to right), LT Vernon Bruce, LT Carew, LT Boyd Vokes, LT Robert Jones and LT Jack Lynn. (Front row, left to right), CPT Walter Samans, LT Russ Cochran, MAJ John Kalbaugh, LT Marian "Junior" Parks.**

(Photo courtesy of Boyd Vokes)

When the liaison pilots landed in Bougainville to support the Americal, their Piper L-4 Cubs had not yet arrived. Bougainville had three runway strips, two for bombers and one for fighters. Vokes remembers "the bombers were hitting an area on New Britain called Rabaul and since our planes had not yet arrived, they started assigning us to go up as observers in the dive bomber back turrets. One of our pilots was killed when his bomber was knocked down."

Before long the liaison pilots' planes arrived in boxes and crates on Bougainville. The Navy had assigned the pilots to a perimeter of a bomber strip where they could use the abutment for their Cubs. No sooner had they assembled the planes than the enemy concentrated their artillery fire on them, firing from the mountains overlooking the perimeter. With one plane hit by the enemy fire, Vokes and his fellow pilots flew their planes to an air strip on the beach, reserved for the fighter aircraft and out of range for the Jap artillery. In short order the Seabees straightened a dirt road which ran perpendicular to the beach and the pilots who supported both the Americal and 37<sup>th</sup> Division worked together off the beachside strip.

Vokes and his fellow pilots found their beach accommodations quite nice. "The Navy had a Captain - the equivalent of an Army Colonel - who told us, 'well, come live with us'. They had these Quonset Huts around that they had built for hospital things so we lived in one of those and we stayed with the Navy for six months or so. We ate with them. We had better food and they had their own wine mess, and all kinds of things that we didn't have in the Army where everything was dehydrated."

**The Home-Town Plane That Became A Bird of War**

The liaison pilots and their Piper Cubs came with no assigned mechanics. Once they arrived in Bougainville, the call went out for soldiers with mechanical experience. The newly classified "mechanics" were handed the manufacturers instructions for assembly of the planes and they went to work. The pilots taught them how to maintain them. These dedicated support crews remained with the pilots for the balance of the war.

The Piper Cub L-4, or "Grasshopper" was the same plane the WWII soldiers saw when growing up, circling football stadiums or ball parks, towing advertisements, taking pictures or just getting a free look at a game. They were single engine, high-wing monoplanes; Twenty-two feet long, thirty-two feet from wing tip to wing tip and about seven feet high. Powered by a sixty-five horsepower engine, they cruised at sixty-five miles per hour.

Boyd Vokes confesses, "we were real tickled with the planes because they did the job. Later on, as we looked at them closely we were a little bit more dubious about them because we had a plane that was cloth-covered. There was no protection of any kind. There was no metal under our seats or anything else. They had a landing gear that had thick rubber bands for shock absorbers.

It was a very crude plane. Actually, in those days, Piper Aircraft was only charging the Army \$1,300 for one of those planes. There was nothing to them. You could pick up the tail and move them around. One person could handle them." Vokes continues, "because we stayed low, 300-1,000 feet, so we could locate Jap positions in the dense jungle, it was not unusual to land and find bullet hole in the skin of our aircraft. Our mechanics had this fiber fabric type of cloth and they would just cut little squares out of it and patch the hole with adhesive."

Despite the unorthodox flight training at Ft. Sill to help prepare for unusual flying conditions, the war-time environment would test their mettle further, including flying in and out of volcanoes. Captain Walter Samans and Lieutenant Vernon Bruce were flying together (usually not done - the pilots mostly flew solo), with a mission to locate a Bougainville patrol and drop some supplies. They found the patrol miles out in enemy territory, parked on the shores of a lake they reported to be "in a deep valley." The "valley" was an old volcano crater some 2,500 feet in diameter and 1,000 feet from top to bottom. Samans and Bruce dove in, dropped down to treetop level to unload their cargo, and then started thinking about how to get out. Strong downdrafts kept all sixty-five horses straining, but they finally made it after forty-five minutes by determinedly flying skyward in tight circles.

Weather also presented a problem, particularly on Bougainville where it rained every day. With approximately 200 inches of rainfall a year, cub pilots would be over a target area directing artillery fire when a storm would move in between them and their landing area. Pilots had to circumvent the storm area, making a wide berth over enemy territory to get back to their landing strip.

**Earning a Place in History**

The Americal's cub pilots began the task of building up a reputation during the Japanese assault on the Empress Augusta Bay perimeter on Bougainville in March of 1944. Until then, ground and Army Air Corps personnel alike had regarded them with tolerance, if nothing else. To begin with, the "L-Pilots" had not been used at Guadalcanal, Tulagi, Rendova and New Georgia to secure those islands from the Japanese. Secondly, the planes themselves didn't look strong enough to withstand the first heavy wind.

This all changed on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 1944 when the Japanese launched a massive attack on the Americal's positions, with particularly heavy fighting around Hill 260. The eyes of the artillery - the Cubs - took to the air at before dawn broke. In previous weeks they had been used loosely ... now they would be in the air seven or eight hours a day. The Japanese had covered their movements well. Up the sides of the rugged hills they had pushed and pulled their artillery. Their positions



**Captain Walter Samans alongside his Piper Cub L-4 Aircraft with Thompson Sub-Machine Gun (Photo courtesy of Jamie Samans)**

were well hidden by the natural camouflage of the jungle. Some enemy batteries located on the crest or near the slope of mountains could be located by ground observation and neutralized. Most, however, had been placed in defileade on reverse slopes and they had to be ferreted out by the L-Pilots.

Boyd Vokes and his fellow pilots rewrote the textbooks during these crucial days in March on Bougainville. There was no precedent to guide them. The "Cub Operations" of the European-African Theatres were flown at high altitudes over relatively open ground. Official training told them to fly over or near their own batteries because of their vulnerability. But that would not allow them to find anything in the dense jungles below. Boyd Vokes remembers, "we were rarely told where the enemy positions were. It was up to us to find them for the artillery battalions we were assigned to." The pilots flew at varying altitudes, depending upon the ease with which the targets and artillery bursts could be observed and the amount of ground fire the "Nips" could throw their way. Sometimes the jungle over which they flew was so dense that they could locate the first American shells only by sound. Getting the radio traffic that a round was on the way, a pilot would cut his switch, glide in over the target area, and pick up the sound of the burst.

Hazards abounded for the L-Pilots. First they had to be sure they were out of the way of incoming friendly artillery. Second, they had to avoid the constant enemy fire. Lt. Vernon Bruce came in so low over a Jap gun position that fragments from an American shell ripped through the wings and fuselage of his plane. Japanese machine gun fire was another headache and frequently came close to finishing off a pilot. Three planes were hit in one day, but all managed to limp back to their landing strips.

Liaison pilots flew solo most of the time, carrying maps strapped to their legs with grid coordinates on them, flying the plane, reading their maps to pinpoint enemy positions, then calling in artillery fire over their radios. Vokes flew in support of the 246<sup>th</sup> Artillery Battalion (105MM) most of the time on Bougainville but he and his fellow L-Pilots would call on any artillery support based on the range to the target and the sector the target was in. Despite their slow movement and vulnerability, accidents were not infrequent. Lieutenant's Jack Lynn and Robert "Bob" Jones suffered two accidents each on Bougainville. Both of Jones' forced landings were made safely on the beach, but Lynn wasn't so lucky. On his first crash he left the strip on an operational flight but the plane went out of control, crashing into a water truck. The Cub was demolished and Lynn was taken away with an injured hip and badly cut face. Two weeks later, after the medics had pulled him together with more than eighty stitches all above the neck, he was flying again.

Lynn's second mishap occurred when his engine went on furlough shortly after a take-off. This time he landed in the water and he and his passenger, who was enjoying his first Cub flight, climbed out on the wing to wait for the Navy boat that took them aboard and towed their plane to shore.

Lieutenant's Bob Jones and Marion "Junior" Parks, who at the time were on a mission of mercy, had made the first "cub ocean landing". During a high wind four soldiers were blown out to sea in a rubber boat and the two pilots went up to locate them and guide a rescue boat to the spot. Just as they sighted the raft their engine conked out. Despite the heavy sea Parks set the plane down right side up, and the two pilots were picked up a few minutes later. They went ashore to learn that the soldiers they were searching for had swam to safety at about the time they were taking off.

It was during the intense patrol activity that followed the Japanese all out assault on Bougainville that the infantry developed a healthy respect for the Cub Pilots. Bougainville's jungles were dense, making it extremely difficult to locate terrain features and follow a compass. For that reason patrols frequently became lost. The Cubs took over the job of keeping patrols informed of their positions. Going even further than that, they sometimes conducted the patrol straight to their objective. Once, for example, a patrol searching for an abandoned Japanese artillery piece got off the track. Captain Samans dropped a smoke pot at the gun position and then flew back and forth between it and the patrol, guiding the foot soldiers through the jungle.

On another occasion an entire battalion started to make an attack on Japanese positions. The infantry had pushed through the dense jungle to a point, which they thought was only a short distance from the enemy. Actually the trek along almost impassable trails had taken the battalion 5,000 yards off their course. They were unable to establish their attack positions until Vokes corrected their error from his Cub and directed them to their objective.

L-Pilots also, on occasion, would assume the role of "air infantry" when the opportunity presented itself. Sometimes when spotting lone Japanese on trails they would swoop down and engage them with their pistols. Once they combined a "bombing and staffing" run. Captain Samans and Lieutenant Walter Dunham were flying, armed with Thompson Submachine Guns and grenades when they spotted a small Japanese patrol. They took their "fighter-bomber" in to attack at treetop level. They emptied their sub-machine guns on the first sweep, made a second run to unload their grenades, and then headed for home without observing the results. A few days' later friendly natives reported that of fifteen Japs bombed and strafed by an American plane, five were dead. Since no other aircraft had made a strike in that area, the dead enemies were chalked up as "definite" on the wall of Cub Operations at the base. On another occasion Samans saw Japanese soldiers swimming in a jungle river and swooped down with his Cub, dropping grenades as he flew over the "vacationers". Making a pass for another run with his Thompson Sub-Machine gun he observed five Japanese bodies floating face down in the water.

Although the L-Pilots usually limited their attacks to strafing and lone wolf bomber strikes, they did conduct at least one "formation raid" against the enemy's food supply. By 1944 the American march

through the Central and Southwest Pacific had cut the supply routes to the Japanese on Bougainville. The "Nips" were forced to chop away the jungle and plant gardens to supplement their meager rice food supply. Bomber crews were the first to think of ways to thwart this enemy effort, and from time to time would drop crude oil over large jungle gardens when they could find them. Not to be outdone, the Cub Pilots thought they could be effective as well. Accordingly Captain Samans and Lieutenants Bruce, Parks, Lynn and Cochran piloted five heavily loaded "Grasshoppers" to a large enemy jungle garden, coming in at treetop level they unloaded impact grenades and mortar shells. The garden quickly became a shambles and they happily departed.

#### A New Territory – The Philippines – Open and "Close-up"

After Bougainville came the Philippines. Boyd Vokes had been assigned to support the 245<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery battalion to replace a pilot who had been shot down in Bougainville. Before his assignment a company of infantry had been sent to Samar and Vokes was assigned to fly the regimental commander over to the island. He smiles when he remembers why he was selected. "The regimental commander was a big fellow and they chose me because I was a little one and I could get him off the ground in our little plane."

Vokes and his fellow pilots were generally happier to fly missions in the Philippines because the countryside tended to be much more open and things were closer. As he says, "you could more readily see things". The pilots found many coconut groves and large palm groves owned by companies such as Proctor & Gamble. Vokes recalls, "my buddy supporting the 246<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion, Junior Parks, got a DSC. One time a company of infantry was on patrol in a valley and Junior was giving them some support there. Up on the ridges on either side were palm shacks, which many of the Japs used as observation posts. So Junior came back and got a box of white phosphorus bags and he would fly over and drop those things down and he was burning them on both sides. And you know the Captain of the Infantry Company was so tickled that he didn't have to send his men up to check those out, that he wrote Junior up for a DSC."

Boyd Vokes the "Liaison Pilot", developed a fondness and deep respect for the infantrymen on the ground. "I always felt that an infantryman, in combat, all of them should have been given a DSC. That's an awful, awful position to be in. You know you cannot imagine it. They are out there by themselves, getting shot at constantly. It is an awful sensation."

Vokes remembers "we had a lot of activities in the Philippines, and I busted up a couple of planes there. Once I was landing on a small strip where a company of infantry had taken a village and they had a wounded man for me to take out. It was a macadamized strip – the only one I ever saw there – at the edge of town, and I had to come around and skirt the hills. When I went to land, it was so hot, the rays were coming off that strip, and it kept me floating, and I could not set the plane down. It wouldn't set down and I couldn't gas it because there were palm trees in front of me, so all I could do was wait until the thing settled down. When it settled, it was just at the end of the strip and I went right over the end of the strip where there was a ditch there so I sheered off the landing gear."

Vokes continues, "Another time I had an observer with me, and there was a company out on patrol and the ground forward observers battery had gone bad. So we wrapped up a battery in some burlap and I went over this company – they were in a valley then – and I had done a wing over and went down. I couldn't pull the thing out and I crashed. What I think happened is that in the backseat there was a second stick as well. We always took it off but there was a stub that stuck up where the stick fitted on. I think that back seat observer, when I did the wing over, must have flipped forward and got against that, and I could not pull the stick back, so I crashed and ruined the plane and broke this kid's pelvis."

"That was on Leyte and it wasn't long after that that things wound down. Our next move was to go to Cebu, so four or five of us took off. Our officers up at division artillery had contact with the guerrillas over there, on the far side of the island, and they had whipped up a little

strip for us. So three or four days before the invasion of Cebu we took off in our Cubs and went over and landed among the guerrillas. On D-Day at H-hour we were off and down below Cebu City, directing the fire from the cruisers and destroyers at targets on the beach as the men came in for the landings. Later that day when everything was under control we landed on the beach. Before too long the infantry had taken the city. In front of the Capital Building was a nice boulevard so we used that for a landing field. But at one end there was a monument and we always had to go in and slip down over that to get landed.

Vokes continues, "The Japs had taken 20mm mortars out of some wrecked planes above the city along the strips and put them in caves up above the city and they were popping them at us. They were high explosives and were banging all around us so we jumped in our planes and took off, landing at a little island about eight or ten miles up the coast that the Japs had a sod strip on. The island was only about 500 yards in diameter but we started searching around and here was this monument dedicated to Magellan. On his second trip around the world he had gotten to the Philippines when a couple Indian chiefs were at war, and he sided with one but was killed there."

As the operations on Cebu wound down Vokes could sense the change in focus to the European Theatre. "We could tell they were starting to shift the artillery and ammunition to Europe for the final big push. It got to the point in Cebu that, unless we would see 50 or more Japs in a bunch, they did not want to fire artillery on them. We just didn't have it. There was something new, however, that they sent over for us to experiment with – the "proximity fuse". At times they weren't that great because you could see some of them exploding during the trajectory. The explosions could sometimes map out the trajectory of the round. But usually when they came within so many yards or feet of an object they would explode as designed".

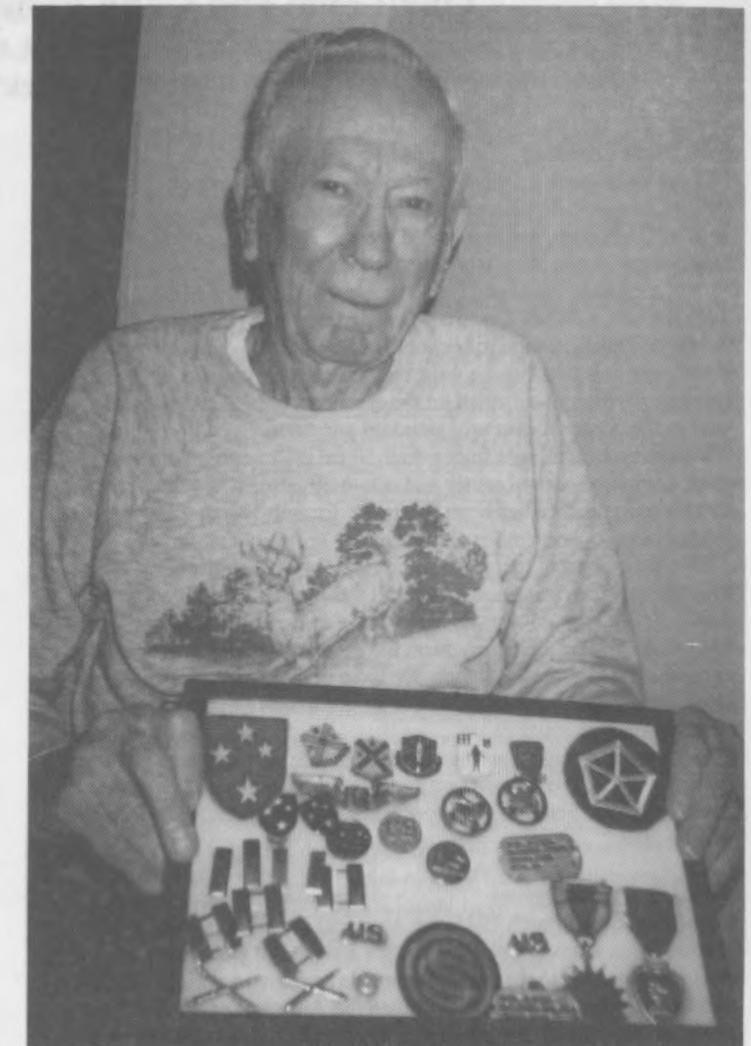
#### Another New Territory – Japan

As operations wound down on Cebu, Vokes and others thought things were well under control when they learned there were still approximately 6,000 Japanese soldiers who would surrender. "I thought they were all mostly gone." After Cebu, planning, training and thoughts turned to the invasion of Japan. Vokes remembers, "there were ships waiting for us at Cebu to take us to the invasion. Everyone was getting ready. The Division Artillery Officer put out an order that there would be no officers rotated home. When we were there in Cebu they had rotated some GI's, I think, with 65 points. I had 138; it didn't matter. He said no officers were going to be rotated, so we had to get prepared and it's a good thing that they dropped the bombs. You hear people say today 'They should never have dropped the bombs'. But those people were never there. They do not realize that half of us would have probably been killed. That's the way those Japanese soldiers were. Like the terrorists today, death meant nothing to them."

Vokes recalls the men he had contact with were elated when the bombs were dropped and Japan surrendered. "You know", he recalls, "When we left San Francisco, as we came under the Golden Gate Bridge they had an expression, 'Golden Gate in '48' and we thought, my God we'd better be back before then! And then the bomb happened."

Rather than board ships for the invasion, the members of the Americal boarded ships for the occupation of Japan. Vokes remembers the Japanese as being calm where he was stationed "I remember walking into a school one time and it was quite normal, just young kids that were maybe eight or ten years old; well-dressed, clean, and the teacher kept right on teaching."

Vokes, like his fellow comrades, witnessed the destruction of the A-bombs that saved them from invading Japan. One image stands out: "I remember one time shortly after getting there, of seeing this young woman walking down the street. She had this baby in a pouch on her back and its face was black. Evidently it had been dead for some time and she was still carrying it. Those people had gone through so much, but old Tojo was in charge and he did not want to surrender. He, and other leaders, put a lot of grief on us and their own people."



Boyd Vokes, November 2004, at his home in Clearfield, PA.  
(Photo by the author, David Taylor)

**Editors Note:** This article began with an inquiry from a Mr. Jamie Samans, grandson of Walter Samans, who informed me about his grandfather in an e-mail. The author is grateful for his assistance in locating Boyd Vokes and supplying reference materials. As a point of note, Walter Samans is deceased. His son, Walter "Andy" Samans Jr. died in Vietnam while serving with Co A, 4/503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, 173<sup>rd</sup> Brigade at the infamous battle of Dak To. The nation owes much to the Samans family and to the incredibly brave Liaison Pilots of the Americal.

Sources for this article were:

- [Flying Ace magazine](#) (August 1945), courtesy of Jamie Samans.
- The authors [Oral History Interview](#) of Boyd Vokes, November 13, 2004.
- [Under the Southern Cross](#), Captain Francis D. Cronin. 1951



## Our Leyte and Cebu Philippine Islands Adventure

(Battery D, 746<sup>th</sup> AAA Gun Battalion)

Leonard "Sack" Owczarzak

### Our First Landing

I can only speak for what I experienced as a member of "D" Battery on our Philippine experience. We really had no contact with A, B or C batteries, and you would have to contact members of those batteries to fill you in on what they accomplished.

We arrived in Tacloban, Leyte on March 4, 1945. After unloading from the U.S.A.T. Sea Cat, we proceeded by truck convoy to the village of Dulag, several miles south of Tacloban. I did not see an airstrip but was told that we were being dispersed on its perimeter. Our gun position was located on the southeast corner of the airstrip, next to the ocean. We set up a standard gun battery position of four 90mm guns, radar height finder, four 50 cal water-cooled machine guns, computer, control center and communications. We felt very fortunate, as the area had been "secured" for quite some time, and we did not have to worry much about snipers, ground or air attack.

We also inherited tent frames and floors, also a shower and kitchen from the previous transportation outfit that was moving to another island. These guys gave us advice on how to deal with the "natives". We had an air raid alert for several days and, of course, we were excited. And like good AA men, we were itching for a chance to get some shots on a Japanese plane; but alas, the alert passed and we went back to our daily routines.

We started to enjoy our location. No jungle, bugs, snakes or heavy rains. The local Filipino girls started to appear, asking to wash our "durdy clothes". Some of our sex-starved guys took advantage of some willing girls.

### The Americal Arrives

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 1945, the Americal Division landed on Cebu, several miles south of Cebu City. After a short but stiff resistance, the Japanese retreated to the prepared tunnels and cave positions overlooking the city and harbor. When the Americal came under fire from these positions they put out a call, "send us those AAA guys that helped us so much with those 90mm guns on Bougainville!"

This ended our short but pleasant stay at Dulag on Leyte. Our First Sergeant blew his whistle one evening shouting, "pack up guys, we have a march order for Cebu, to help the Americal!" We loaded up the next morning on L.S.T.'s in Tacloban Harbor and, after a short trip, we landed at Cebu City on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April. We unloaded on the docks of Cebu City and headed through the burned out, bombed out and devastated city of once was a historic and beautiful city, now very quiet and deserted. The Americal infantry had passed through previously, and had received murderous fire from the Japanese entrenched in the caves above. The Filipino came out of hiding and gave us a fantastic welcome, as we passed through on our way to our designated position north of the city, near the Lahug airfield.

That afternoon, we arrived in open and exposed Filipino farmers' pineapple field and we were told to dig a defensive position. There was not a bush or tree to hide behind and we were expecting any minute to be fired upon by the Japanese from their vantage point in the nearby hills. We could almost feel their eyes on us. We pulled all of our trucks and equipment in a big circle like the old western wagon trains used to do, for protection. We then dug our foxholes on the perimeter. We also set up a guard post on the small road next to our position. This road also went north to the Japanese positions in the hills.

After settling down for a delicious feast of K rations, we were hoping for a peaceful night of rest. Our quiet was soon shattered by a series of tremendous blasts from an exploding ammo dump, a short distance down the road from our position. Our very "alert" guards at the guard post had waved to several Filipinos - "They all look alike" - who had passed on the road, just before dusk fell, carrying bags of produce to the market. These "innocent" Filipinos turned out to be

Japanese infiltrators carrying satchel charges that resulted in a destroyed ammo dump! We experienced a literal rainfall of shrapnel, but luckily suffered no casualties. This was another example of my intuition saving myself from serious injury or even death. Just before the explosion I had returned to my foxhole after leaving the comfort of the 2-1/2 ton trucks front seat I had intended to sleep on. During the rain of shrapnel we had heard glass breaking, and in the morning found the truck windshield shattered by a piece of shrapnel that tore a large hole in the seat I was planning to spend the night on! Foxholes do serve their purpose!

1. Do you think that the U.S.A. can send reinforcements to Philippines where crack Japanese Forces are stationed? That is nonsense!
2. The Commander of the USAFFE is a big liar. And, do you not believe that your commanders in the Provinces are American spies?
3. If you believe what they say, you will be forced to be hiding forever hovering between life and death.
4. The Imperial Japanese Forces will not kill any prisoner of war. Those prisoners who are now concentrated at Tacloban will soon be released and will be sent to their respective homes.
5. If you do not like to die, but desire to join your parents, wives and children, SURRENDER IMMEDIATELY.
6. REWARD will be given to any of you who ASSASSINATE your commander and then surrender.

The Commanding General,  
The Imperial Japanese Forces  
District of Visayas

During the next couple of days Lt. Hill came to direct the firing of "D" and "B" batteries 90-millimeter guns against the Japanese positions in the hills. Whenever a Jap gun or mortar fired toward the Cebu City area, or the Lahug airfield, Lt. Hill ordered direct and continuous firing of the eight 90's, until the Jap firing ceased. The Japanese occupied-hills were not that far away and the field of fire between the hills and our gun positions was very clear and wide open. Lt. Hill and his BC Scope were all that was needed to zero in on a target. We were all sure that the Japanese could observe us in our very exposed position. With their advantage of height they could observe everything we were doing. They responded shortly afterward with what appeared to be 20mm fire. Almost all of it was over our heads, very scary, but no hits or casualties resulted. After several days of concentrated 90mm firing missions, the Americal Division reported that the Japanese had deserted the hill and cave positions, and had fled en-mass, to the northern part of the island.

Several days later a group of Battery "D" personnel went back into Cebu City's railroad yard and were given the mission of guarding large stocks of ammo that were stored in various buildings and railcars there. A humorous event happened when one in our group found a small safe in the railroad ticket office. He was determined to learn the contents and spent a whole day in his efforts to open the safe. Finally succeeding, the contents consisted of several tickets to the next station!

While there, we were informed of President Roosevelt's death. All of us GIs mourned our Commander-In-Chief's passing, as there are no Democrats or Republicans in foxholes. We thought that was a "gravy" detail, until we were advised that ammo could really be nasty when the enemy attempts to blow it up! And there we were, sitting on top of tons of it!

The Japanese had left these caves and tunnel positions after our 90mm guns had made them untenable. They had left for the northern part of Cebu in such a hurry I had a field day as a rabid souvenir hunter, in searching the caves for the many personal items the Japanese had left behind.

In the middle of May, 1945 "A" and "D" batteries were attached to the 132<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment of the Americal Division and moved to the Catman area of Cebu, about half-way up the coast to the north of Cebu City. We conducted patrols and we were set up there in a defensive position. We did not realize at the time that the major part of the seven or eight thousand remaining Japanese on the island were holed up in the Balambam and Asturias areas, just west of us, hoping their Navy would evacuate them to Luzon.

In June of 1945 Battery "D" left for Bogo in the very northern tip of Cebu, to engage in security patrols and roadblocks to prevent the Japanese using the main highway to flee to the west coast and possible evacuation. While on the roadblock a Filipino citizen came running to our position, excitedly proclaiming that about a mile up in the hills above our position, a group of Japanese had occupied his house. About five men from our group armed themselves and asked the Filipino to direct them to the house. As our group approached the house the Japanese opened fire and our guys returned fire until all firing from the enemy ceased. When the house was examined, seven Japanese soldiers were found dead inside, killed by the firefight.

While at the roadblock several of our group developed infectious hepatitis. Previously, while stationed near Cebu City, we had visited a native restaurant for a "steak dinner", which was probably water buffalo. We had been warned not to patronize such places because of the poor sanitation practiced by the Filipinos. Our illness was diagnosed as the result of the "steak dinner"! A truck convoy passing our roadblock was halted and we asked for transportation to the hospital in Cebu City. We did not realize until arriving there that one of the trucks was carrying the bodies of dead G.I.'s. We were evacuated by air to the General Hospital in Tacloban, Leyte, where after several weeks of treatment we recovered enough to be returned to our unit on Cebu. While in Leyte the war ended and we joyously celebrated our surviving 30 months of combat!

### POW Duty, September-October-November 1945

The 746<sup>th</sup> was then assigned the mission of collecting, processing and returning the Japanese prisoners to their home island. Getting the remaining seven or eight thousand Japanese remaining on Cebu to surrender became "hairy" at times because they would not believe the war was over, until they received a recorded message from Emperor Hirohito. Battery "D" ran the POW camp at Talrinoc Talisay, just a few miles south of Cebu City. We never had any problems with the prisoners, as they knew they were going home and were cooperative in every way. We had between 800 to 1,000 prisoners at any given time. When they arrived at the camp they were given the opportunity to shower and were issued fresh clothing, ran their own kitchen and medical attention was available. They were also given cots, blankets and tents to live in. They were not forced to work but could labor on the Cebu City docks, if they so desired with a small wage rendered. A Japanese Major had to be lectured about forcing the enlisted men to perform military drill. When our camp commander reprimanded the Japanese officer, there were many smiles on the faces of the enlisted prisoners.

One event stands out while we were operating the POW camp. Previous to the landing on Cebu, several B-24 bombers attacked the city. The Japanese shot down one of the bombers, but the 5 or 6-man crew survived. The Filipino civilians who witnessed the event told us that the surviving American crewmembers were forced to march to the Cebu City dock area, where a ranking Japanese officer made them kneel before he ceremoniously severed their heads with his Samurai sword!

A Criminal Investigation Division Army Air Force Major visited the POW camp, looking for this Japanese officer, in case he had come in with the other surrendering Japanese servicemen. One day when a truckload of prisoners arrived at the POW camp, the C.I.D. Major



90mm Anti-Aircraft Gun Used on Cebu, March - April 1945.  
(Photo courtesy of Leonard Owczarzak)

spotted a prisoner that resembled the Jap officer that had perpetrated the atrocity on the American bomber crew. He was ordered off the truck while protesting his innocence. He was taken to another tent for interrogation. An American-Nisei interpreter questioned him at great length, while he continued to deny everything, even though several Filipino citizens had positively identified him. The Major requested a jeep and an armed guard with a B.A.R. The prisoner was loaded into the back seat of the jeep, which drove away and we never saw him again.



Men from Battery "D", 746<sup>th</sup> AAA Bn. Near Bogo, Northern Cebu with Japanese Flag (Photo courtesy of Leonard Owczarzak)

Japanese Prisoner Nabuhiko Kishi at the "Base S" Camp, Philippines, September 1945 (Photo courtesy of Leonard Owczarzak).

In December 1945 we left Cebu City for Tacloban, Leyte to await transportation to the states. We were concerned that we might get an old Liberty Ship for the trip back, but were overjoyed when we were loaded aboard the U.S.S. Thomas Jefferson, a fairly new passenger freighter with very nice accommodations. We left Leyte on December 17<sup>th</sup> 1945 and arrived in San Francisco Harbor January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1946.

All of these events are a close to the actual happenings as possible. There were many dramatic, exciting and even humorous events that transpired at the various locations on Cebu which made our "Philippine Adventure" a very memorable experience for each and every member of our unit.

Leonard "Sack" Owczarzak  
Cpl., "D" battery, 746<sup>th</sup> AAA Gun Battalion. New Caledonia, Fiji, Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Leyte, Cebu

(Editors Note: Leonard Owczarzak lives in Brooklyn, Michigan)



POW Camp Guards, Base S, Battery "D", 746<sup>th</sup> AAA Bn., September 1945. Leonard Owczarzak is at Lower Left with Dog. (Photo courtesy of Leonard Owczarzak)

## Operation "Olympia" ...And What Could Have Been

Rick Ewart

I took my family to the D-Day Museum in New Orleans recently, which is relatively new and spectacular. We found it especially interesting and although we were in a "younger generation", we were able to relate to it. You see my father-in-law was Robert King Brown. He served during World War II in the Americal Division and went to Guadalcanal and other places to retake them from the Japanese (when he wasn't in the Brig that is).

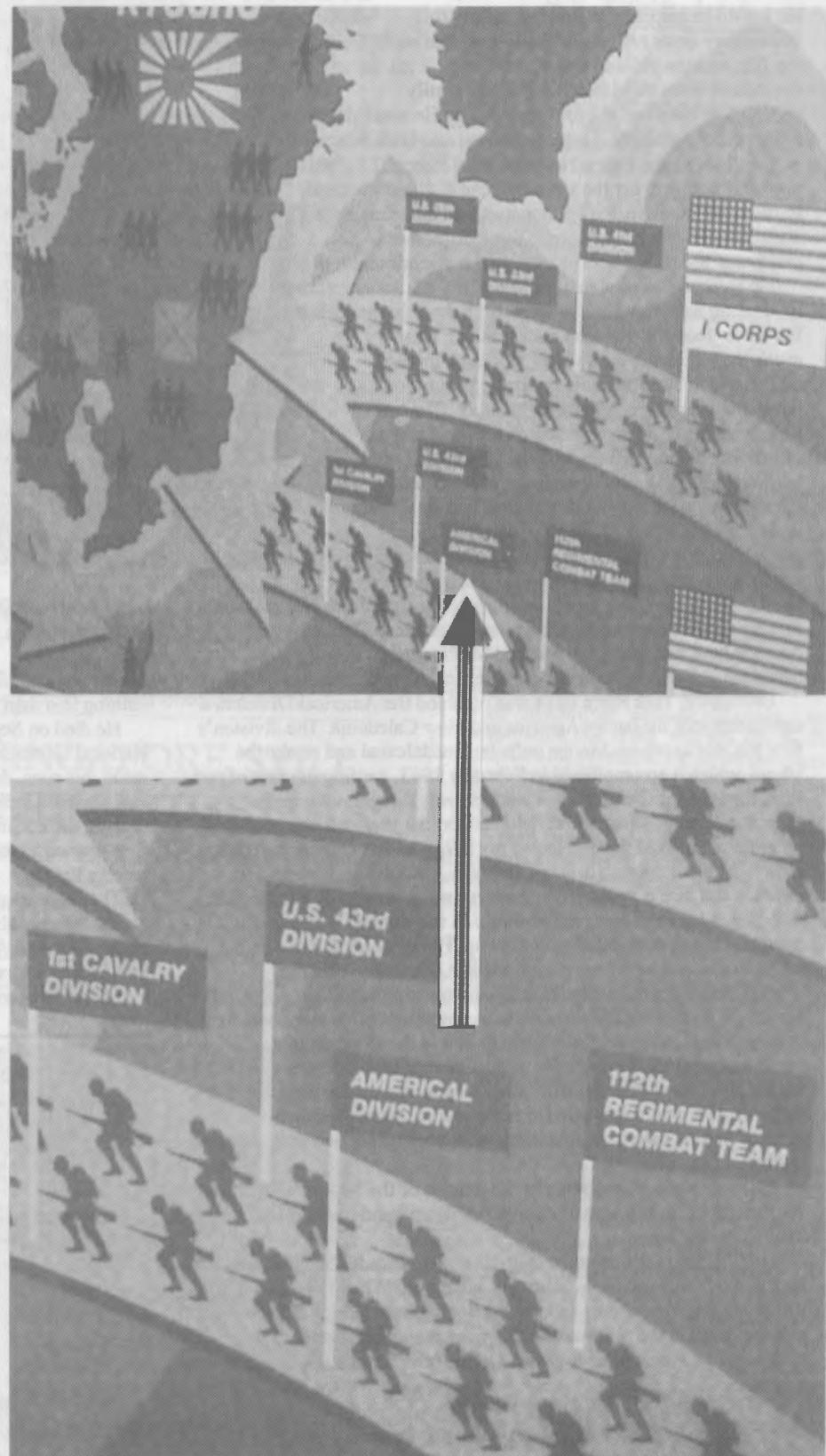
At the museum we were able to relate to some of the stories Bob used to tell us. Probably most moving to me at the museum wasn't what happened to Bob but what didn't happen and how things could have been much different. As we all know the U.S. dropped two atomic bombs on Japan, which ended the war. However what I didn't know (and apparently most of my generation) is that we had a different plan that never happened, as the bombs were successful. It wasn't clear if this other plan was "Plan B" and the bombs were "Plan A" or the other way.

The original plan was going to be a ground invasion of Japan on several different fronts, much like it was done on D-Day. It was to be the largest amphibious vehicle attack ever launched. It was going to go in two stages, the first on November 1, 1945, code named "Olympia". Essentially they were going to move 760,000 US forces into Japan at Kyushu, to attack an estimated 360,000 Japanese forces there. Casualty estimates ranged from 55,000 to 300,000 American troops – a pretty scary number – as much as 40% of the forces. I am enclosing some photos that depict the schematic of the Americal's assigned landing for the invasion.

There it was on the wall – the orders Bob never received. Bob lived with my wife, my son and I. He had many stories of those days, some good and some bad. He was quite the "life of the party", jovial and making the most of every day of his life. I recall when he was faced with making a decision to have a heart operation that he may well not be strong enough to survive, or die from the heart problem relatively soon; he decided he had to "gamble" and take the chance that it might help – all or nothing. Unfortunately it didn't help and he didn't pull through, but Lord knows he tried.

Bob died November 21, 2000 at the age of 82. My son was close to his "Grandpa" so it was hard on him. If it were not for the atomic bombs that ended the war, who knows if we would have ever had the opportunity to know Bob. That dwelled on me and made the New Orleans museum exhibit really heavy to see.

**Editors Note:** The overall plan for the invasion of Japan was under "Operation Downfall." The operation was to take place in two phases: First, "Operation Olympic" (or "Olympia") on November 1, 1945, after a heavy naval and aerial bombardment, 14 combat divisions, including the Americal, would land on Kyushu, the southern most of the Japanese home islands. The second phase would be on March 1, 1946, "Operation Coronet", whereby the main island of Honshu would be assaulted by 22 American combat divisions.



## Extraordinary Deeds in an Ordinary Life

Meredith Peterson Tufts

He would be surprised to find me writing this because we never really saw eye-to-eye. His was the fifth and last child of a dirt-poor family from the hills of Western Massachusetts. My family was middle class and at least comfortable. He was a high school graduate. I went to college and law school. I love Miss Piggy. He hated Miss Piggy, probably seeing in her the same traits he disliked in me – too assertive, too opinionated, and too smart for her own good. Despite these differences, my father-in-law had my respect – and my gratitude.

He worked as a rural mail carrier after graduating from tiny Huntington High School in the Berkshire foothills. He soon realized there wasn't much in Huntington for a young man and, in 1941, he enlisted in the United States Army. Eight months later, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. The train he was taking on leave reversed course, and instead of heading home to Massachusetts, he found himself enroute to Australia and the islands of the South Pacific by way of New York and the Panama Canal.

His unit, "Task Force 6814", was a hastily patched-together response to Pearl Harbor and the ensuing Japanese push for Australia. Task Force 6814 comprised three infantry regiments, one each from North Dakota, Illinois and Massachusetts, and ordnance, artillery, light tank and hospital detachments. They reached Melbourne on Feb 25, 1942, unloaded, reloaded and set out for Noumea, New Caledonia.

Ultimately, Task Force 6814 was renamed the Americal Division, a combination of the names America and New Caledonia. The division's first job was to relieve Marine units on Guadalcanal and retake the island, which it accomplished in February 1943, earning the first of two Presidential Unit Citations. The next job was Bougainville in the Solomon Islands, where the division endured a yearlong campaign.

A news photo of the day shows my father-in-law comparing rifles with Australian troops. He is tall and wiry, 6-foot-3 and barely 165 pounds. His face is young, with the large nose, broken by a mule kick, that I feared my children might inherit. In the tropical heat, his collar is open and his sleeves rolled are rolled up. His uniform is loose on his spare frame, and he is brown from the sun. He is 25 years old.

A boyhood spent fishing, hunting and tracking made him a natural choice for a scouting and reconnaissance unit that often went behind enemy lines. During the battle for Hill 260 in the Bougainville campaign, his unit came under attack. The first scout, severely wounded, lay helpless, trapped under rifle, machinegun and mortar fire. It was my father-in-law who volunteered to retrieve him. Maneuvering under the lines of fire, he pulled the first scout to safety and applied first aid to his wounds.

He spent almost three years in the jungles of the South Pacific and for the rest of his life bore a bayonet scar from hand-to-hand fighting against enemy forces.

Until Alzheimer's began to claim his mind decades later, he never spoke about his experience, with one exception. When I organized his drawer of unsorted photos and presented an album to him as a Christmas gift, he gazed at the pictures of other young men, his friends and comrades, and tears filled his eyes. Unlike him, too many of them never returned.

This very ordinary American boy from a very ordinary American town went on to live a very ordinary life. He married a nice Irish girl, raised three sons, worked for the same factory for 34 years and, from his days in Australia, refused ever again to eat lamb. His joys were TV sports, his place on the cape and his grandchildren. He was genuine,



Staff Sergeant Robert D. Tufts, at the far right, in New Caledonia with Australian troops (Photo courtesy of Meredith Peterson Tufts)

honest and completely without pretense. And he and those like him did nothing less than save the world.

He died on Sept. 30, 2003, his 87<sup>th</sup> birthday, and was buried at the National Cemetery in Bourne. On that overcast September day, we stood, his sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren, silent as "Taps" was played. Under muted commands, the honor guard folded the flag draping the coffin of Staff Sgt. Robert D. Tufts. His granddaughter, a first-year cadet at the United States Coast Guard Academy would receive the flag.

The sergeant approached her and placed the folded flag between her hands. "On behalf of the president of the United States and a grateful nation," he said, "I present to you this flag in honor of your grandfather's service to his country in World War II."

I hope he heard those words: "a grateful nation."

Article reprinted with permission, The Cape Cod Times, November 11, 2004. Meredith Peterson Tufts lives in Manchester, MA. She is a freelance writer and author who is currently working on a novel of the American Revolution.



## Some Memories of Our Journey to War

Howard Burroughs

Several issues ago in the ADVA Newsletter there was an article about our sea "Journey to War" under Task Force 6114. And some of my memories were quoted. I was sent to Fort Eustis, VA for artillery training, then sent to the Glen Martin Airfield in Baltimore where I hooked up with the 70<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery (Anti-Aircraft). We shipped out a few days after to Fort Dix, NJ and then on to the Brooklyn Navy Yard and the trooper ship Santa Rosa.

As we went through the Panama Canal a call went out for printers and compositors, of which I had experience. The chaplain wanted a paper printed, to be read on board for the troops. I became one of the staff on the paper. Six members of the staff were from F battery, 244<sup>th</sup> CA, one of whom, J.D. Moore, was the "Poet Laureate". Also on the paper were two soldiers from H Co., 132<sup>nd</sup> Regiment and three of us from the 70<sup>th</sup>. We called the Newsletter the TRANSPORT REPORTER, "Edited and Distributed Aboard Transport Santa Rosa — GRACELINE En Route".

I am enclosing a photo of a scene no one will forget. During our time shipboard we had to wear that old cork lifejacket whenever you walked about. It was really great when standing on the narrow stairwells on the chow line! Some things the memory stays sharp ... and we never forget them.

## TRANSPORT REPORTER

Printed and Distributed Aboard

United States Army

Transport "Santa Rosa"

Circulation one thousand

Published Every

Sunday, Wednesday &amp; Friday

En Route

ISSUE No. 4 VOL. No.2

FEBRUARY 14, 1942

## NAVY BLASTS 72 ENEMY VESSELS

Assaults by the United States Navy on the Marshall and Gilbert Islands in the Southwest Pacific area, netted the huge total of 72 enemy vessels sunk. It was disclosed today.

Included among these were a 17,000 ton aircraft carrier, a light cruiser, a destroyer, 2 submarines and 11 auxiliary vessels. In addition many freighters and tankers were also destroyed. Anti-Aircraft batteries and munition dumps on the Islands also suffered heavily from these attacks.

The important result of this successful action is that the supply line between the United States, New Zealand, and Australia has been blasted wide open. There is now a clear

## SINGAPORE STILL FLIES BRITISH FLAG

Though the battle lines are ever drawing nearer to Singapore proper, fierce fighting is still going on 3 miles North of the City. British reports said. The Australians are putting up an excellent fight. Taking tremendous toll for each yard



Above left and right: Portions of the "Transport Reporter" Newsletter on the Santa Rosa, showing typical articles that would appear; (these examples of articles are reduced 12% from original size to fit the format of the ADVA Newsletter).

Below and left: A rare photo of Task Force 6814. Soldiers on the Santa Rosa wearing their cork life jackets. Some soldiers used the cork when in New Caledonia to make insulated containers to keep beverages cool.

All materials courtesy of Howard Burroughs.

## At Ease !!!

## DRINKING WATER

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

## WASH WATER

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

## HOURS

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

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

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

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

1. Each individual upon receiving his food will move to the table NEAREST THE EXIT DOOR, at which there is a vacancy.

2. No egg shell, orange peel, etc. or any particle of food will be PLACED OR LEFT ON TABLE OR THROWN ON THE FLOOR, food which is not eaten, egg, shell etc, will be placed or left on mess kit until meal is finished, and then deposited in G. I. can at the end of table so that NO FOOD OR REFUSE FALLS ON FLOOR.

3. Any individual who accidentally or purposely soils the table, will ask the K. P. for a cloth and immediately clean that part of the table soiled.

4. Loud talk and yelling is unnecessary.

5. Mess card when issued, will be punched as each man enters the mess hall. Lost cards will be reported to the Mess Sgt. in charge. Cards found will be turned in to the mess Sgt. in charge.

6. Other than at mess time men will not enter the mess hall, except those on detail at that place.

7. Mess will be eaten, and men leave the hall within a reasonable time. No Loitering.

8. NO SMOKING DURING MEALS. Capt. Earl Cosby Mess Officer

## A Reunion Memory

Lee Gunton

Last July I had one of those precious opportunities to reunite with a few of my Charlie Company (5<sup>th</sup>/46<sup>th</sup>) grunts, along with our company commander, Captain Larry Johnson. Ed Arndt Jr sponsored the get-together, in his hometown of Franklin, Tennessee.

Much to my surprise, Ed presented us all with a certificate (proclamation) issued by the Mayor of Williamson County, Tennessee, Rogers Anderson. It said it all about who we were and how we feel and I'd like to share it with my fellow vets:

### Proclamation

Honoring Company C, 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 198<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Brigade, 23<sup>rd</sup> United States Infantry Americal Division

WHEREAS, the 5<sup>th</sup> battalion, 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry was activated as an integral unit within the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division, Fort Hood, Texas in September, 1967, for ultimate assignment to a "restricted overseas area". The battalion, consisting of Headquarters and Headquarters Company and lettered companies A,B,C,D and E, approximately 900 Officers and men, departed Fort Hood in March, 1968 en route for Southeast Asia; and was initially stationed at Chu Lai, Republic of South Vietnam, for acclimation in-country; and,

WHEREAS, upon departure from Chu Lai, Charlie Company, commanded by Captain Lawrence G. Johnson, assumed responsibility for Landing Zone Chippewa, located west of the division base and at extreme range of friendly fire support. Subsequent combat operations deployed the company throughout the I Corps tactical area, including LZ's Dottie, Lonely Boy, Sooner, West and other isolated strategic posts local to that part of Southeast Asia; and,

WHEREAS, thirty-six years have passed since Captain Johnson took his company of young men into the jungles of Vietnam. Over the span of years, life has treated each other of the returning veterans differently; however, one common thread has continued to bind each to the other. The experience of placing absolute trust in a fellow soldier without reservation and without hesitation, regardless of the circumstances, knowing that soldier will be standing beside you, no matter what, has left an indelible mark in the memories of all who stood in the ranks of Charlie Company; and,

WHEREAS, former members of Charlie Company held their first Vietnam Veterans reunion in 1973, with forty-two attending, and have continued to meet each year since. 2004 marks the thirty-second meeting of this band of brothers. A little older, hopefully



"We were soldiers once..." Proudly holding their Proclamations are: (Back row left to right) Mark Dine, Lee Gunton and Larry Johnson (Original C Co. Commander). Seated left to right: Russell "Pappy" Welder, Ed Arndt and Dean Cooper (Photo courtesy of Lee Gunton)

wiser, but united in the common affirmation that, if through some miracle of time, Charlie Company could once again form its ranks as they were in 1967, Captain Larry Johnson Commanding, all would be ready to serve and defend our nation as before, wherever the flag might lead.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that I, Rogers Anderson, as mayor of Williamson County, Tennessee, do hereby proclaim Saturday, July 31, 2004 as **Recognition Day for Charlie Company, 5<sup>th</sup>/46<sup>th</sup>**, in honor of the officers and men who served their comrades, their unit and the United States of America so gallantly during time when gallantry almost lost its meaning.

**AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that special recognition be given to members of Charlie Company, 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry attending their 32<sup>nd</sup> reunion since departure from Vietnam.

**Captain**  
Lawrence G. Johnson, Jacksonville, FL

**Sergeants**  
Dean J. Cooper, South Bend, IN  
Mark W. Dine, St. Mary's, OH

Lee R. Gunton, Vineland, NJ

Russell B. Welder, Cape Girardeau, MO

Edward E. Arndt, Jr., Franklin, TN

In witness thereof, I have hereto set my hand and caused the great seal of the County of Williamson to be affixed at Franklin, this 31<sup>st</sup> day of July 2004.

## Another Happy Reunion

Bob Moles

In June 2000 I attended my first Americal reunion in San Antonio, Texas. I was very apprehensive about seeing the people I had served with over 30 years ago. How would we feel about each other after all those years? What would we talk about? Would we even like each other? Of course the reunion was great and over too quickly. Since then I have attended the reunions in Cleveland and Little Rock and enjoyed them immensely.

One of the greatest things to come out of those reunions was seeing my friend Jim Brewer. Jim and I were a couple of old Missouri boys who picked each other out in a crowd and became friends. We served and trained in the same platoon in Texas beginning in April 1967. It abruptly ended on a bad day in Lo Giang on February 8, 1968 when friends were killed and friends were wounded, including Jim.

I had not spoken to Jim since 1968, but we picked up our friendship from 33 years and renewed it that day in San Antonio. We get together two or three times a year and we often talk on the phone. Our wives like each other and that's a bonus. Jim and I greet each other with a hug and part the same way.

The Americal introduced me to Jim and years later brought us together again. Thank you for that.

[Bob was in Co. A, 1/6th Inf., 198<sup>th</sup> LIB. - ed]

## A "Professional" Reunion

Robert G. Nivens

During the period 27-31 March 2005 a number of us were afforded another opportunity to assemble with modern-day 46th Infantry "Professionals" at Fort Knox and experience again that comradeship established some 35 years-or-so ago in Vietnam. For those of us able to attend, it was a magnificent series of events that will live in our memories forever. For those who could not be with us this year, please know that in March 2006 there will be another chance.

Our 46th Infantry Regiment is alive and well...and doing a fabulous job of training new soldiers at Fort Knox! The Commanders and Staffs of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions, 46th Infantry are the "cream of the crop". They habitually go "beyond the call of duty" in honoring the heritage of the organization and in welcoming and recognizing we more "mature" Professionals of previous years.

Typical of military life, the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion's C.O., LTC Jim Larsen, and 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion's C.O., LTC Jerry Cashion, are each completing their tenures as commander and each will be reassigned soon. Colonel Larsen is going to the 82d Airborne and Colonel Cashion is moving to West Point's Military Academy.

Most of you know that LZ Mary Ann's "Sappers in the Wire" tragedy happened on 28 March 1971. Annually, survivors of that event host a memorial service for those fallen Professionals. This year was no exception. The commander of today's C/1/46 was guest speaker at the Camp Carlson Recreation Center. The current brigade chaplain hosted the memorial salute.

On Tuesday 29 March, we were invited and encouraged to participate in a Professional Development seminar hosted by our Honorary Regimental Commander, Colonel Dick Carvell. Experiences in Vietnam were compared and contrasted to our current military's combat and counterinsurgency operations in the Middle East.

Wednesday, 30 March was a "jam-packed" day! We more "mature" Grunts were given detailed orientations of training areas. We engaged in the dedication of Forward Operating Base PROFESSIONAL where modern basic trainees live and operate from during their final three weeks of BCT. We chowed-down in the consolidated mess facility...[and sang Happy Birthday to COL Dick Carvell]. Then, at dusk, we were joined by the Commanding General of Fort Knox for the annual "Torchlight Memorial" in the regiment's Memorial Grove. This ceremony honors the lineage of the 46th Infantry during WW-I, WW-II, Vietnam and today.

This year's Torchlight was special. Colonel Carvell handed over "Honorary Command" of the 46th Infantry Regiment to Colonel Clyde Tate. Tate had assumed command of 1/46 in March 1971. The Torchlight Ceremony is habitually followed by a reception in the nearby Regimental Reception Center and again this year it was a superb event. Particularly noteworthy this year was the attendance by two daughters and two grandchildren of the late Colonel Craig G. Coverdale who commanded many of us at LZ Professional in 1969.

On Thursday, 31 March many of we older soldiers were awed by the graduation ceremony of BCT soldiers of C/2/46 upon completion of their initial nine weeks of training. It didn't happen that way 40-50 years ago when many of us completed our initial training programs. The Knox Field House was filled with staff and cadre; graduating recruits; old Grunts; and families of new soldiers from New Jersey to California, North Dakota to Alabama...and everywhere between. It was magnificent...as always!

During the course of the week many of us took advantage of occasions to visit the regiment's garrison area. For those Old Grunts who were "brave" enough to wear a 1/46<sup>th</sup> Inf. or 196<sup>th</sup> LIB or

AMERICAL Div identification cap, we would be "accosted" by appreciative soldiers thanking us for our service.

Many might consider the "Historical Wall" assembled within the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 46th Infantry Headquarters Building #6540 as a masterpiece and worthy of a special trip to our battalion.

I honestly believe that everyone who shared the week with me and our 46th Infantry at Fort Knox will bear me out that it was fabulous. For you who could not be there...we're gonna do it again next March 2006. Start making your plans now!



Wording on plaque: Forward Operating Base Professional. Dedicated to the Soldiers who served with valor and distinction in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, through the hedgerows and forests of Europe, the jungles of Vietnam, and the sands of Iraq. Lead to Victory!



1/46<sup>th</sup> Vietnam veterans gathered at the Forward Operating Base Professional plaque. L to R, not all identified: Rich Larson, Joe Birghoff, Paul Gildner, Dennis Powell, Richard Carvell (kneeling), Bob Tullos, Trevor Fisk, Bill Carvell (youth), Clyde Tate, Bob Short, Bruce Allen, Perry Zirlott, Bob Nivens, Dick Pills. Photos by Paul Gildner. (Editor's note: Robert G. "Bob" Nivens is the former Adjutant and HHC CO, 1/46<sup>th</sup> Infantry. He currently resides in Harpersville, AL.)

**Lester R. Stone, Jr.  
Memorial Highway  
Dedicated to 11<sup>th</sup> LIB  
MOH Recipient**

The state of New York has named a section of State Route 79 in honor of Lester R. Stone, Jr. SGT Stone was killed-in-action on March 3, 1969 while serving with 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, Co. B, 1/20<sup>th</sup> Inf., 11<sup>th</sup> LIB. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.



**SGT Lester R. Stone, Jr.**

The section of State Route 79 to bear Stone's name travels through the area where he grew up. Stone entered the U.S. Army after graduating from Harpursville High School. Special signs marking the route are up from the Pennsylvania state line north for 20 miles to Route 7 in Harpursville, NY.

The dedication was held at 11:00 AM on May 5, 2005. Several hundred people attended the ceremony to include Mrs. Doris Stone, SGT Stone's mother. Other relatives present were an uncle, sisters, a cousin, and several other relatives. Two men who served with Stone were able to be at the dedication.

Local dignitaries on hand for the event included Senator Thomas W. Libous, Assemblyman Clifford W. Crouch, Broome County Clerk Richard R. Blythe, and Jack Williams, Regional Director of the NYS Department of Transportation. These public officials took the necessary actions to make the memorial highway a reality.

County Clerk Richard Blythe served as master of ceremonies. He made the following comments at the dedication: "All of us at some time have used the word legacy and wondered what our personal legacy would be. What is Lester's legacy? It's all around us- from the patriotism of his family to his mother raising money for the VFW's Voice of Democracy Program."

**Citation**



**Medal of Honor**

**For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty.**

Sgt. Stone distinguished himself while serving as squad leader of the 1st Platoon. The 1st Platoon was on a combat patrol mission just west of Landing Zone Liz when it came under intense automatic weapons and grenade fire from a well concealed company size force of North Vietnamese regulars. Observing the platoon machine gunner fall critically wounded, Sgt. Stone remained in the exposed area to provide cover fire for the wounded soldier who was being pulled to safety by another member of the platoon. With enemy fire impacting all around him, Sgt. Stone had a malfunction in the machine gun, preventing him from firing the weapon automatically. Displaying extraordinary courage under the most adverse conditions, Sgt. Stone repaired the weapon and continued to place on the enemy positions effective suppressive fire which enabled the rescue to be completed. In a desperate attempt to overrun his position, an enemy force left its cover and charged Sgt. Stone. Disregarding the danger involved, Sgt. Stone rose to his knees and began placing intense fire on the enemy at pointblank range, killing six of the enemy before falling mortally wounded. His actions of unsurpassed valor were a source of inspiration to his entire unit, and he was responsible for saving the lives of a number of his fellow soldiers.

His actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military profession and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the U.S. Army.

**Events Set To Mark 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of North Wall**



This year marks the 10th anniversary of opening of the North Wall in Windsor, Ontario. The wall is a beautiful memorial to the Canadians who gave their lives in Vietnam. Each year since the wall was built, a small group of Americal vets have gone across the river and placed a wreath in remembrance of the Canadians who volunteered to serve in South Vietnam. There are 109 names on the wall and three more will be added this year.

Some special events planned this year. On July 1 the event will commence with the display of the "Wall That Heals". This display will continue through Monday, July 4. This is the Wall That Heals first appearance in Canada. There will be displays and biographies of all 109 known Canadians who gave their lives in the Vietnam War.

Confirmation has been received that most of the families that they will attend, almost all for the first time. They are coming from all over North America. It would be a great time to show their families that they have not been forgotten. Many of them have stated to the organizers that the thought nobody cared. It would be great to show we care even after all these years. The Americal Division will be represented and could use more people to attend.

The schedule includes a short opening ceremony, Friday, 18:00 hours. The parade will be Saturday, 10:00 hours. Color guards must RSVP. A candlelight vigil will also take place on Saturday, 21:30 hours. Hotel rooms have been blocked in Canada. You must have a birth certificate or passport to enter Canada. RSVP to: Canadian Vietnam Veterans Memorial Association, PO Box 7225 Windsor Ontario, Canada N9C 3Z1

For more information call toll free [REDACTED] and ask for Bob Dominas. You may also call Bill Allen Great Lakes ADVA, at [REDACTED]

**ADVA Service Officer News**

John Hofer

I recently attended a Navy Oral Surgery Course in Washington, D.C. While there, I visited many of the wounded Soldiers and Marines at Bethesda Naval Hospital and Walter Reed Army Medical Center. I am sure some of our ADVA members went through Walter Reed.

I have volunteered to become part of the Madison, Wisconsin VA hospital's "VA-DOD Seamless Transition" team that was initiated in Washington in 2005. This program will make sure that the wounded troops are helped during their transition from military medical facilities to VA Medical Centers or while on convalescent leave or while awaiting medical discharge.

It was quite emotional for me at first to visit the intensive care wards and see the wounded troops. Some of them were on their first day back by way of med-evac from Landstuhl Medical Center in Germany. It brought back memories of visiting guys from Co. B, 5/46<sup>th</sup> Infantry at the 91<sup>st</sup> Evac. Hospital in Chu Lai.

There were many amputee troops from the terrible improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that are everywhere in Iraq. But their spirits are very high.

I met Marine Corporal Jon Brown from Indiana that was wounded on his second tour in Iraq. He had some good stories about the battle of Fallujah and how they killed some Chechens that were really well trained and tough to kill.

I had the opportunity to take Cpl. Brown on a sightseeing trip in D.C. the last day I was there. We visited the "Faces of the Fallen" at Arlington National Cemetery and saw the changing of the "Old Guard".

I had to give him a little history of the Americal helping the Marines at Guadalcanal in WWII and again in I Corps in Vietnam. It was a great chance for both of us to share some experiences that are universal in ground combat.

The "Faces of the Fallen" is an exhibit of paintings of the troops that died in Iraq and Afghanistan. I took pictures of him with his Marine buddies that were killed. I then showed him some of my buddies that are on the Wall. Cpl Brown was taller and had better eyes to help find them.

I ended the tour with a visit to Fran O'Brien's Restaurant in downtown D.C. The restaurant is owned by Vietnam Veterans and has been providing dinners on Friday nights to Soldiers and Marines that are at Walter Reed and Bethesda. Of course I was wearing my Americal shirt, and I ran into a 1/52<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Americal vet who was with a DAV Chapter that are all amputees.

It was a great night for our troops. We finally returned to the hospital after Brown enjoyed his first beer since getting med-evac'd from Iraq.

I told this story to Bill Lobeck, a 198<sup>th</sup> LIB veteran who was wounded twice. Bill told me that while recovering at Ft. Leonard Wood hospital the guys would drink quite a few beers and then put the empties in an elevator and push 1<sup>st</sup> floor. I am sure our ADVA members have many memories of old Grunt tricks while recovering. They might want to send in accounts of them for publication in the newsletter.

Pictured on this page are Cpl. Brown and myself at Arlington National Cemetery. Jon also met Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz at Fran O'Brien's. We both got nervous when seeing Wolfowitz and his Secret Service detail entering the restaurant five feet ahead of us. Wolfowitz was very friendly with the corporal. He gave the young trooper a DOD challenge coin and an autographed book about the Iraqi elections.

Also pictured on this page is MAJ Tammy Duckworth, an Army Blackhawk pilot whose chopper was hit by an RPG. She lost both legs and had other wounds. She has a very positive attitude about her future. And, after visiting with these hero's, so do I.



**Above:** Left to right: John Hofer, Major Tammy Duckworth, Blackhawk Pilot and a physical therapist.

**Below:** Left is John Hofer and Right is Marine Corporal Jon Brown at the "Faces of the fallen" display at Arlington national Cemetery. (Photos courtesy of John Hofer)



## Round Through the Roof

Al Simms

During the night of September 26, 1968, LZ Young was hit by a combined mortar and ground attack. Gary and Bill had already left the section and we had not received any replacements yet. Present were Mr. T, SSG Parks, Bruce, Al, Abby and JB.

Sometime in the wee hours of the morning before daylight a projectile of some sort penetrated the roof of our Operations Conexes. It continued through the floor and penetrated some 3 to 6 feet into the ground below. We stayed in and on the bunker, continued to operate the radar, and placed heavy fire on the enemy from our roof.

Each of us received an Army Commendation Medal with V device for our performance that night. The subject of this paper is to speculate on what that projectile was and where it came from. It is my opinion that it was a dud American 105mm howitzer illumination round.

**Were we brave to stay in and on the bunker with a live round that could explode under us at any minute?**  
The Army said yes. Of course the one now under us had not exploded and the ones that were impacting outside were exploding. This may have played a role in our decision to stay.

Still, not knowing what the buried object was, we began to speculate that it might have some sort of time delay fuse. Or it might even have a defective fuse that was burning and would set the explosive off at any minute.

The bottom line was that our training and the need to locate and retaliate against the enemy prevailed. We stayed and worked.

Does it matter what type of round it was and who it came from? Not really. Regardless of what type or source, those of us inside the bunker would likely have been killed had it exploded.

If it were an American artillery HE round, a large caliber enemy mortar round, or an enemy rocket, the soldiers on the roof probably would have died also. So, why speculate? Just because it is interesting and challenging to do so!

**Where were we when the projectile hit the bunker?**

Jerry was on the roof with the M60 machine gun firing at the enemy. He was also scaring the guys in the bunker in front of us because he was firing just over their heads. I was with him and firing at the enemy with other weapons. JB was probably at a firing hole in the front of our bunker. SSG Parks

was standing in the operations conex. I think that Weasel was operating the radar. I speculate that Mr. T was in the Operations Center working the radios and maps.

**What does the hole- size indicate?**



The wide ribs on the roof are 3 to 4 inches wide and the narrow ones are 1 to 2 inches wide.

From the picture the hole in the ceiling is slightly over 4 inches (105mm) wide. The hole in the floor is also about 4 inches wide and perhaps 5 inches long. The boot in the corner of the picture is about four inches wide and about the same width as the hole.

The citation for the ARCOM says that it was a mortar round. But I distinctly remember someone - the EOD man, I think - saying at the time that it was probably a dud 105 illumination round from LZ Bowman.

Failure of the parachute to open would have caused the projectile to land in an unplanned spot - our bunker!

The angle with the floor of a line drawn through the two holes is about seventy degrees. This indicates that the weapon had a very high trajectory. Recoilless rifles and rockets were usually fired at low angles so this pretty much eliminates them.

It is possible that the round could have been deflected when it hit the roof. However, after penetrating the relatively thin roof (1/8" thick metal, one layer of ammo boxes, and perhaps one or two layers of sandbags) it continued on and penetrated the floor at the joint of the two conexes. It then continued through the thick metal skid under the conexes and then 3 to 6 feet of earth below.

This would indicate that the projectile's energy level was still very high. This

probably would not have been the case if it had been significantly deflected.

**What direction did it come from?**

The various photos and map indicate that our bunker faced North and slightly West. I have located the entry and exit points as best I can by using several pictures. Placing the bunker on the map and drawing a line through the two holes indicates that the errant projectile came from the direction of LZ Bowman.

Bowman was about 5 km away, which is well within the 12,000-km range of a 105mm howitzer. The land between LZ Bowman and LZ Young was mostly low hills, was unpopulated, and had no roads. The flat ground and road near LZ Young was not forested and the terrain was clearly visible from LZ Young.

If the weapon was an enemy mortar it would almost have to have been a large caliber 107mm Russian or Chinese mortar. Because of its size and 374 pound weight, this weapon was generally hauled on a two-wheeled cart.

There also was a mountain version of the Russian mortar that could be broken down into three pieces and carried by animals. It would have been very difficult to place this weapon in the area necessary for the projectile to have come from the same direction as LZ Bowman. Its minimum range was 800 meters and maximum range was 6.3 km.

Most of the enemy concentration was to the west and south of LZ Young. A very heavy concentration of VC were located to the southwest near LZ Professional and an NVA regiment was thought to be headquartered in the mountains to the west.

The citation for the ARCOM says that it was a mortar round. But I distinctly remember someone - the EOD man, I think - saying at the time that it was probably a dud 105 illumination round from LZ Bowman.

Failure of the parachute to open would have caused the projectile to land in an unplanned spot - our bunker!

I am pretty sure that they were firing illumination for us that night and may have also been firing HE on nearby locations for us. The howitzers on LZ Young were to the west of us and even if they could have fired straight up, the round could not have entered our bunker at that angle.

All of this leads me to believe, that either a dud 105mm howitzer illumination projectile or a misdirected 105mm HE projectile from LZ Bowman penetrated our bunker. What do you think?

*Al Simms, SP5, was a Radar Mechanic, Radar Section, HSB, 1/14th Arty, 198th LIB, Americal Division, 1967-68.*

## Want Some Lizard Soup?

Gary L. Noller

My momma raised me to be a big boy. I have not missed many meals in my life. But there once was a time I was so hungry I could eat a lizard.

It was about the end of October 1970. I was assigned as an infantryman to Co. B, 1/46th Infantry in the jungles of South Vietnam. My unit was operating in a dense mountainous area about 30 miles west of Chu Lai. We were on the opposite side of Song Trahn River from our firebase at Mary Ann.

The monsoons were at full strength and it had been raining continuously for many days. The creeks and rivers were running high and were very treacherous. The mucky mud made it tough going. We were cold and wet all the time. Luckily, the enemy had it just as bad or maybe even worse.

We normally carried at least a three-day supply of food when we left the firebase. Our food consisted of C-rations and whatever we could take with us from our care packages from home. Helicopters were to bring us food, ammunition, and other supplies while we were in the field. This sounded like a good idea but it did not always work out as planned.

We missed our three-day re-supply. It didn't come on day four either. Nor did we see it on day five. We were becoming a bit apprehensive. Our normally heavy rucksacks were noticeably much lighter. We were scraping bottom on food.

On day six we got a radio message from the battalion headquarters on FSB Mary Ann. They told us that a major storm was stagnant in the area and helicopters were not able to take to the skies. We were told that it was very likely that it would be several more days before supplies could be sent to us.

We were not very far from Mary Ann, but we were on the wrong side of the river. The Song Trahn had already claimed the life of one of our soldiers, and that was in the relative calm of the dry season. The river was now a raging torrent, expanded in size several times from its dry season width and depth.

We could attempt to walk to the village of Tien Phouc, but it was several miles away. There would be streams and rivers to cross to get there too. It was not safe to try to go too far from where we were.

The battalion commander ordered us to find safe high ground and to simply sit the weather out. It could not stay bad forever.

In a few hours we settled in on the top of a wooded hill. We set up security and cleared fields of fire and fighting positions. We constructed three-man tents from

poncho liners and sheets of clear plastic. And we waited.

Day six came and went. A group of soldiers made hobo stew. They put three or four cans of C-rations into a steel helmet and heated it over an open fire. They then divided it among the members of the squad.

Day seven passed. The medic ate all his Cepecol throat lozenges. Another fellow downed a bottle of Heinz 57 sauce. A scouting party was sent out to see if there were any potato fields in the area. Someone tried to make a fish hook out of a safety pin.

Day eight appeared. A hungry infantryman consumed a tube of toothpaste. The bark on trees started to look pretty good. How come there were no crickets around when you really needed one?

I mainly stayed in my makeshift tent and peered through a slit in the front. My rifle was always at the ready but hardly anything ever moved. It rained all the time so there was plenty of water. At least we would not die of thirst.

Then I saw a curious sight. There was a large tree about fifteen feet from the front of my tent. A fairly handsome lizard was making a slow pace up the tree. Its body was about the size of a football and its tail was equally as long. It was green and yellow and very ragged in shape. It looked like some kind of miniature dinosaur.

I quickly exited the tent, ran to the tree, and grabbed the lizard. Its body was soft and squishy. It was like squeezing a half-full water balloon.

The lizard did not resist. It opened its mouth and kind of bugged its eyes out at me. It seemed not to be afraid. Neither was I.

I immediately took the lizard to my squad leader, Tommy Poppell. Sgt. Poppell was a squad leader because he was smart and he was experienced. He would know what to do.

"Hey Sgt. Pop," I whispered, "look what I caught. Do you think we can eat it?"

Poppell uttered one of his characteristic hmmmm's. "I don't know," he said. "How would we cook it?"

I am from Kansas. I don't know why Poppell thought I might know how to cook a lizard. He is from Florida. Florida has alligators and people eat alligators. Lizards are like alligators. Kansas prairie dogs are not like alligators or lizards. No one eats a prairie dog anyway.

We could boil it in a pot of water. We could roast it on a spit. There was no way to fry it or to bake it. How do you clean it? Does it taste better cooked well done or just medium-rare? Do you eat it all or just the legs? Is it poisonous?

So we tossed the ideas around for a while. We were hungry. We were out of food. We did not know when a re-supply would arrive. Lizard soup might be good.

In the end we finally determined that even though we were very hungry we were not yet hungry enough to eat a wild lizard. After a few hours we turned the poor creature loose. It ambled away, none the worse for wear.

It was day nine or ten when we got the word that a chopper would attempt to reach us. The plan was for it to drop a few cases of C-rations to us. Several soldiers with machetes began to make a small clearing to receive the much-needed food. Again we waited.

Finally the faint thump-thump-thump of rotor blades could be heard in the distance. Radio contact was made with the incoming bird. "Pop smoke" was ordered. Goofy Grape drifted upward.

The helicopter came to a hover about fifty feet above us. I saw cases of C-rations sailing out of the open door of the chopper and landing hard on the jungle floor. After the chopper departed the commanding officer ordered a detail to stack the supplies in a neat stack and to count how many meals had been delivered. They would be divided up equally among the squads.

About this time I dug deep down into my rucksack and retrieved a can of pineapple rings. I zipped the can open with my P-38 opener and sat down by Sgt. Pop. "Hey Pop," I said, "Do you want something to eat?"

"Where the hell did you get that pineapple?" he inquired.

"It's been in my rucksack all the time," I replied. "Do you want some?"

Sgt. Poppell seemed a bit peeved at me. "Noller, if you have had that in your rucksack all the time how come you did not get it to eat before now? Now we have plenty of food. We just got our re-supply."

"Yeah, I know." I think I was smirking. "But if we would have eaten this can of pineapple rings, then we would have really been out of food."

Hey, my momma raised me to be a big boy. One does not get to be a big boy by being really out of food.

## Tell your story

Help collect and preserve the history of the Americal Division by telling about the things you experienced. You can write about any topic that you choose. Short stories such as the one on this page can be fun to write and can help tell the truth about our service in the Americal Division.

Submit your articles to Gary L. Noller, Vietnam Editor, 1662 Landmark Rd., Kerrville, TX, 78028. Articles may be sent by e-mail to [REDACTED]. You may include print or electronic photos. Print photos should be copies, as they will not be returned.

**USAF Vet Joins ADVA**

Most ADVA members are Army veterans and proudly wore the Southern Cross shield on their shoulders. But membership eligibility rules also allow veterans of other military branches to belong to the ADVA. Mr. Cliff Raymond, an U.S. Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War, is also proud to have served with Americal Division troops.

Raymond was born and raised in Houston, TX. He graduated from Milby High School in 1967 and attended college at San Jacinto College for a couple of years. But he followed a girlfriend to Chicago in 1969 and was reclassified 1-A by his local draft board. He immediately enlisted in the U.S. Air Force.

He admits that he joined the Air Force to stay out of the Army and out of Vietnam. He muses that he was born under a bad sign because he was sent to Vietnam and assigned to a post with the Army anyway.

His assignment was as a Ground Radio Operator at LZ Bayonet. His duties included working as a liaison between Forward Air Controllers (FACs) and soldiers of the 198<sup>th</sup> LIB on the ground. The job of the Air Force was to provide tactical air support to infantry units in contact with the enemy.

The call sign for Raymond's unit was HELIX. He recalls, "I was HELIX two-zero. The FACs were HELIX two-one, HELIX two-two, etc."

During his time off on LZ Bayonet, Raymond associated with the many Army troops at the base. "I hung out with tracker dogs, cooks, MP's, armored cav, arty, helicopter pilots, PX, and medics. You name them and I hung out with them."

While on Bayonet he became interested in photography. He spent many hours in the photo lab. The people he remembers the most are John Crowley and his funny East Coast accent; John Sutton, a medic who turned him on to reading; and ADVA PNC John (Dutch) DeGroot. Raymond remembers DeGroot as being infamous and at the same time always upbeat.

Of his time in Vietnam he remembers, "While I was there I knew very well that my non-combat ass was being well protected by Army guys. I settled in and on looking back I know I had one of the most memorable times of my life. I am so proud to be an American and to have served my country."

He also appreciates his buddies in the Americal Division. "I must say that in my four years of military service, LZ Bayonet and all the buds I met there are dearest to my heart. Thank you so much for allowing me to be a member of your group."

Raymond is a former golf course superintendent and currently sells real estate on Lake Sam Rayburn in Texas. He has one son, Tripp, and competes in triathlons.

**What? Huh? Did You Say Something? Are You Talking To Me?**

Gary L. Noller

In early April 1970 I trained as an armor crewman at Ft. Knox, KY. One particular night we went to the range with our M-48 Patton tanks for our scheduled ten rounds of practice firing. But things just did not work out as simply as that.

As it began to get dark the clouds opened up and we began to receive a steady rain. We positioned the tanks on the range and began to load the ammunition. As firing began, our tank commander informed us that twice as much ammunition had been delivered as had been ordered. We would each be required to fire twenty rounds.

We stood behind the tanks as we waited our turn to fire. There were about twenty tanks on the firing line. They fired at will. The sound was literally deafening.

After about an hour of this my ears began to hurt. I held my hands over them as much as I could. But we were kept busy opening ammo boxes, taking rounds out of the cardboard tubes, loading the tank, and disposing of brass.

Two hours into this routine I could not bear the pain anymore. I told my drill instructor that it felt like someone was jabbing ice picks in my ears. He told me that there was not much he could do about it and that we would be done very soon. I went behind one of the ammo trailers, sat on the ground, and held my hands tightly over my ears.

We spent a miserable night in our shelter-half tents. The next morning was clear and bright. We drove the tanks back to the main fort and got everything cleaned up.

For several days after the night fire exercise I had pain in both ears and was partially deaf. I could not hear the drill instructor when he blew his whistle for formations. I did not go to sick call nor did I tell anyone about my problem. I was a draftee. I did not want to call any attention to myself.

I eventually regained most of my hearing and went on to fulfill my military requirements to include almost eleven months in Vietnam as an infantryman.

Being exposed to the sounds of battle did not do any good for my hearing problem. When I processed out of the Army at Ft. Lewis, WA my medical record indicated that my hearing was normal.

But my hearing was far from normal. My right ear had diminished hearing. I could hear a watch tick in my left ear but not in my right ear.

I did nothing about my hearing loss for many years. Other veterans told me that I would not be able to get a claim approved unless I had medical treatment while in the service and then only if such treatment was documented in my medical records. I did not file a claim.

But in late 2004 I decided to file a claim. My main concern was that my hearing was steadily declining and that I may soon need hearing aids. I discussed the matter with a DAV service officer at the Kerrville, TX VA hospital. He told me that I could file the claim but he too cautioned me that it would probably not result in an approval.

He said that the best I should hope for was a zero percent compensatory but military service connected decision. This would mean that the VA would treat my hearing loss but I would not receive disability compensation for the loss. I told him that such a decision was fine with me.

I completed the lengthy VA claim form. I gave the service officer a limited power of attorney to get my records from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis. I wrote a brief statement claiming hearing loss and tinnitus due to my exposure to loud noise in training and in Vietnam.

The DAV service officer told me that it was necessary to prove two things. The first was to prove that I had hearing loss. This could be accomplished by the hearing test. The second was to prove that my hearing loss was due to military service. This could be hard to do because I was never treated for hearing problems while in the army.

About a month later I received a notice from the VA Regional Office in Houston instructing me to have my hearing tested by a private audiologist in San Antonio. I made the appointment and underwent about 30 minutes of testing. They forwarded their report to the VA.

As I prepared my claim I asked several of my military buddies to write a brief statement verifying that I had been exposed to loud noises during training and in Vietnam. I mailed these statements to the VA office in Houston.

That took care of things for a while. I received a letter from the VA stating that they had all the items that they needed and that they would make a decision in 60 days. But about 30 days later I received a letter from the VA stating that they had made their decision on my claim.

On my claim for hearing loss, it was decided to award me service connected zero percent compensation. On my claim for tinnitus it was decided to award me service connected ten- percent compensation. I currently collect \$108 a month in disability.

I cannot predict the outcome of a claim by other veterans for hearing loss. But my experience shows that a valid claim can be successful.

**Road From Laos To Kham Duc**

There is one big mystery about my tour of duty in Vietnam I would love to clear up. In 1969 I was assigned to MACV Advisory Team 16 based at Tam Ky, Quang Tin Province. One of the jobs I had was to fly as an aerial observer with Americal Bird Dog pilots based at Chu Lai. They would pick me up at the main Tam Ky airfield.

In April 1969 an Air Force FAC (forward air controller) based at Tam Ky told me that the NVA were building a road from Laos to Kham Duc to intersect Highway 14. The FAC said this road was only 4-6 kilometers west of Kham Duc at the time. The USAF FACs at Tam Ky called this road "Hayes Road" perhaps after the first pilot who discovered it.

On four occasions, two in May and two in June, we flew out to and past Kham Duc. At least twice we flew far enough west of Kham Duc, as I recall, to perhaps be over Laos.

I saw this extension of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which was at least a two-lane dirt road. I was amazed. It was an engineering marvel. The farther west we flew the better the road became. One of the pilots I flew with on at least two of these flights was a Warrant Officer named McManus. I believe he had red hair.

I know that there was a Laotian Route 966 that intersected Highway 14 in Kontum Province some 15 miles south of Kham Duc. It basically paralleled the border of Laos-Vietnam (NW to E).

From Americal CD information on Kham Duc, the NVA were discovered working hard on reconstructing Route 966 in early 1968. The route was then heavily bombed and work supposedly ceased on it. On another occasion, I have notes that indicate we flew south from Kham Duc to Ngok Tavak and further south perhaps to the intersection of Highway 14 and Route 966.

According to the book *Vietnam from Cease-Fire to Capitulation* by Colonel William E. Le Gro, (1981, U.S. Army Center of Military History), by April 1972 heavy traffic was seen on Route 534 from Laos to Heip Duc. Highway 534 was the road from Thang Binh to Heip Duc to Kham Duc. Then in 1973 a spur line (another road) was built off of the main line of the trail in Laos to the Laotian-South Vietnamese border. This spur appeared to serve Routes 966, 14, and 534.

Obviously as we withdrew our forces, the NVA rapidly moved in and rebuilt the roads. I would like to find out if any ADVA former Bird Dog pilots or observers have any information relating to the road from Laos to Kham Duc. I have 1/50,000 topographic maps of Kham Duc and the area west to and beyond the Laotian border.

Any six place grid coordinates as to the path of this road would be especially helpful.

Please contact me by writing to [REDACTED] Darien, IL, 60561 or calling [REDACTED] May God bless you and all of your families.

Michael P. Ebert

**23<sup>rd</sup> M.P. Co. Reactivation Scheduled For October**

An update on the reactivation of the 23<sup>rd</sup> M.P. Co. has been received from CPT Raymond Edwards, the acting S3 for the 503 M.P. Bn. at Fort Bragg, NC. He says, "The 23rd MP Co is scheduled to be activated at Fort Bragg on 16 Oct 2005 as a re-designed military police company."

Edwards is interested in speaking with 23<sup>rd</sup> M.P. veterans who served with the unit in Vietnam. For contact information, get in touch with Dutch DeGroot at [REDACTED]

DQS Website:

<http://www.mystae.com/reflections/vietnam/vietnam.html>, DQS Forum (BBoard): <http://www.mystae.com/talkshop/>

Paul Kopsick; Sr. Historian  
National Dusters Quads and Searchlights Assoc.  
HAWKS and Vulcan Combat Team

**Co. D, 1/20<sup>th</sup> Infantry**

Our former captain, Chuck Seketa, continues to develop our Delta Co. history. To complete that history, he has asked for any copies of orders that our men may have. If you have any copies of orders from your time in Delta, please forward them to Capt. Seketa. You can either mail them to him at his address below, or e-mail a scanned copy to his e-mail address.

Mr. Chuck Seketa

[REDACTED]  
Liverpool, New York 13088  
[REDACTED]

Thanks for your help. Forever friends.  
Alan Conger

**Combat Action Badge Announced**

The U. S. Army has announced the creation of a Combat Action Badge (CAB) to be awarded to soldiers who engage the enemy in battle. The CAB will not replace the Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB) and the Combat Medic Badge (CMB) that are presently authorized for award.

The Army News Service gives the following details on the new badge: "The CAB may be awarded to any soldier, branch and military occupational specialty immaterial, performing assigned duties in an area where hostile fire pay or imminent danger pay is authorized, who is personally present and actively engaging or being engaged by the enemy, and performing satisfactorily in accordance with the prescribed rules of engagement."

The Army was considering the creation of a Close Combat Badge which would have more limited authorization than the Combat Action Badge. It would have covered combat arms such as artillery, armor, cavalry, engineers and the like. The CAB covers all Military Occupation Specialties.

Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, Army chief of staff, said "Warfare is a human endeavor. Our intent is to recognize soldiers who demonstrate and live the Warrior Ethos."

The design of the new badge is expected to be revealed this summer. More news may be obtained from the internet at [www.army.mil/symbols/combatbadges](http://www.army.mil/symbols/combatbadges).

## Web Locator Requests

Looking For: Capt L Ingle, Battalion Medical Officer, Americal Division 1969-1970, HHC. Contact: Patrick Sheridan

[REDACTED], Bozeman, MT 59715

Looking For: James Cotter, C- 5/46<sup>th</sup> Inf. Contact: John Gardner

[REDACTED], Machias, ME

Looking For: Members of E Trp., 1/1 CAV, 2nd Plt., Aug. 70-Aug. 71. Contact: Joe Ramos

[REDACTED], Lubbock, TX 79416

Looking For: Anyone, C 2/1 196<sup>TH</sup>, Nov. 70-May 71. Also HHC morning reports, 23<sup>rd</sup> Admin. Co, June 71-Nov. 71. Contact: Russell Wright [REDACTED] Ivesdale, IL, 61851,

Looking For: Thomas Hyde, commander of Co C, 4/21st Inf., 11th Inf Bde in parts of 68-69/70-71 and anyone who remembers me. Contact: Raymond E Stanfield.

[REDACTED], Georgetown, DE 19947

Looking For: Anyone, 1/1 Cav., C troop, July 68-July 69. Contact: Michael Schroeder

[REDACTED], Westerville, OH 43081

Looking For: Anyone, Other Info: Anyone, 23d Admin., Nov 68-Nov 69. Contact: Walt 'Deep' Frier

[REDACTED], Mendenhall, MS 39114

Looking For: 1Lt Philip F. Kindig, H Troop, 17th Cavalry, 1970, formerly had been assigned 25th Inf. Contact: Walter M. Clifton,Jr.

[REDACTED], Sunnyvale, Tx 75182

Looking For: Joe from New York, wounded on June 10, 1969, 198th LIB, 17 Cavalry, H Troop, May 69-Nov. 1970. Contact: Larry Hucks

[REDACTED], Heath Springs, SC 29058

Looking For: Anyone, C Co., 1/20th Inf., 11th LIB, 1971, the day the 1LT stepped on the booby trapped 105 round. Contact: William Paul Gruender

[REDACTED], Atlanta, GA 30377

Looking For: Anyone, B Btry., 1/14th Arty., July 69-July 70. Contact: JACK MUNCHLER

[REDACTED], Calle Francia, Tucson, AZ 85706-3919

Looking For: Harold Smith (Smitty), 2/1st Inf., 196th LIB, 1969. Contact: Randy R. Gibson

[REDACTED], Sissonville, WV 25320

Looking For: Anyone, Co. A, 4/3rd Inf., 11th LIB, May '68 to May '69. Contact: James [Jim] R. Teller, 605-362-4166

[REDACTED], Sioux Falls, SD 57106

Looking For: Any HHC Americal Div (Div. Hq Co) personnel Nov-68/Dec-69 that knew CPT George Shea. He passed away in 1992. Contact: Michael Sumrell

[REDACTED], Raeford, NC 28376

Looking For: Anyone, E Co., 4/3rd Inf., 11th LIB, Mar. 1968, that knows my father Sgt Gordon W. Hough. Contact: Andrew W. Hough

[REDACTED], Orlando, FL 32810

Looking For: LT Hall, Rich Goings, Kent Peatross, Beech, Benson; Co. B 1/52nd Inf., 198 LIB, 1970. Contact: Paul Stanisewski, 207-878-9553

[REDACTED], Portland, ME 04103-1320 53

Looking For: People who served with James R. Lanham, Co. D, 39th Engr Bn(Cbt) 45th Group, 1965-1967. Contact: Jackie Brown

[REDACTED], Plum Branch, SC 29845

Looking For: Mike Linsey, Co. A, 1/20th Inf., 11th LIB, 69 - 70. Contact: Pete Duffy

[REDACTED], Fayetteville, NC 28303

Looking For: Anyone from 2nd Plt, H Troop 17th Cav. - 1968. Contact: Ardie R. 'Swede' Frantzich

[REDACTED], Clovis, CA 93611

Looking For: Terry Maul, 5/46th Inf., 198th LIB, 1970. Contact: John Arruda

[REDACTED], Swansea, Ma 02777

Looking For: Bucky Gross, Americal Division. Contact: Donald Zachry

[REDACTED], North Platte, Ne 69101

Looking For: Anyone, Co. B, 4/3rd Inf., 11th LIB, Dec. 67-Oct. 68. Contact: Joe Easterling

[REDACTED], Akron, Oh 44320

Looking For: Billy Miles, Co. D, 1/6th Inf., 198th LIB, wounded 18 Nov 1970. Contact: David Pike

[REDACTED], Timpson, TX 75975

Looking For: Robert (Bob) Pike, Steve Altman or Anyone, 3/16th Arty., HQ Btry., spring '70 to spring '71. Contact: Rob Raleigh

[REDACTED], Morrisville, PA 19067

Looking For: Everyone third platoon, 3rd squad, 3/68 to 8/68, Co. C, 5/46th 198th, 12/67 to 8/68. Contact: Craig Fring

[REDACTED], Flatwoods, KY 41139

Looking For: Patrick McClain, '67-'68, D Co., 4/3rd Bn, 11th Bde. Contact: Coy Napier

[REDACTED], Dade City, FL 33523

Looking For: Capt, Lt. Yardley or anyone, Co. B, 1/6th Inf., 198th Inf Bde. TET 68. Contact: W. Spencer Bumgardner (Boon)

[REDACTED], Laurel, Md 20707

Looking For: Anyone from Co. C, 1/6th Inf., 198th LIB, Sept. 69-July 70. Contact: Allen McPherson

[REDACTED], Peoria, AZ 85345

Looking For: Gene (Geno) Chenault, Americal Division from 69-71. Contact: Kenneth D. Cain

[REDACTED], Paso Robles, Ca 93446

Looking For: Paul Boyer, 23rd Admin Co AG Spec Correspondence 1969 and early 1970. Wally Klause

[REDACTED], Willmar, MN 56201

Looking For: Patrick Murray, Thomas Stoodley, Charles Yelvoiton (Charlie Pig), Harold Moody (medic), Chicken Man, & others; 3/1st Inf., Echo Co., Recon - November 69-November 70. Contact: Larry Dollarhide

[REDACTED], MO 65753

Looking For: Pelicans, Co. A, 123rd. Avn. Bn., 4/70 -12/70. Contact: Vaughn Campbell

[REDACTED], Mustang, Ok 73064

Looking For: Anyone, 3rd Platoon, Co. B, 4/21<sup>st</sup> Inf., Nov 70-Standdown. Contact: Ed Deverell mailto:

[REDACTED], Aurora, CO 80018

Looking For: Perry Smith, Lt. Yamato, Cpt. Meeker or anyone, Co. C, 3/1<sup>st</sup> Inf., 11<sup>th</sup> LIB, May 69 to April 70. Contact: Richard L. Morris

[REDACTED], Graceville, Fl 32440

Looking For: Lee Zigifus, Co. A, 1/46th Inf., 196<sup>th</sup> LIB, 1971 thru 1972. Contact: Michael Garcia

[REDACTED], Evergreen, AL 36401

Looking For: Harold Smith (Smitty), 2/1st Inf., 196th LIB, 1969. Contact: Randy R. Gibson

[REDACTED], Morrisville, PA 19067

Looking For: Everyone third platoon, 3rd squad, 3/68 to 8/68, Co. C, 5/46th 198th, 12/67 to 8/68. Contact: Craig Fring

[REDACTED], Morrisville, PA 19067

Looking For: Harold Smith (Smitty), 2/1st Inf., 196th LIB, 1969. Contact: Randy R. Gibson

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

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

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

## Dedication

The ADVA is dedicated as a LIVING MEMORIAL to all veterans of the American 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 American Division of the United States Army.



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