July • August • September
*2006*

# AMERICAL

## NEWSLETTER

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

PRESERVING AMERICA'S FREEDOM: WORLD WAR II • KOREA • VIETNAM

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New applications & dues send to Ron Ellis (address under "Command Staff"). All National Adjutant Correspondence send to:
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**AMERICAL**
NEWSLETTER
The Americal newsletter is the official publication of the Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA). It is published each calendar quarter.

- Editor-In-Chief Emeritus: James C. Buckle
- Editor-In-Chief: Gary L. Noller
- Vietnam Editor: Gary L. Noller
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1815 NL 42814

Dave Taylor

## Editor's Notes

### Editor-In-Chief

Dear fellow Vets: This issue marks my last newsletter as your Editor-In-Chief. Upon my advancement as your new Sr. Vice Commander, I thought it appropriate to relinquish this position to have adequate time for my new duties as the Sr. Vice - principally, which will be to lead an effort at a coordinated national campaign to recruit new members to the ADVA. This should be the number one priority for the ADVA. I also will be dedicating myself to the modernization of the WWII Museum, so it becomes the nation's single-source reference point about the Americal Division in WWII.

I recommended to National Commander Larry Watson that he appoint Gary Noller as the new Editor-In-Chief. He did and Gary has graciously accepted the position. Over my brief tenure as Editor-In-Chief I believe we accomplished some significant changes in design and content. Our newsletters are longer in length, exciting to look at and, now that we are sending everything electronically to the printer, more cost-effective.

This process has been a team effort and I thank Gary Noller and Dutch DeGroot, without whose help we could never give you the professional publication you get. I wish I could share with you the banter and the jokes directed at each other on the staff, that we send back and forth when we are tight on deadline. It provides much levity during an intense work effort, and it works well because we respect each other. Your newsletter staff expends over 150 hours to get each issue prepared for publication. I will still be involved with the newsletter as a contributor, particularly for the "Old Guard" section. And I know that Gary Noller has some exciting plans ahead as the new Editor.

Thanks for your kind comments these past two years!

## The Pride of Being A Veteran

"Every day that you wake up free, it's going to be a good day". And where does that freedom come from? I see that answer whenever I encounter Americal Vets. Our freedom ... our freedom to **fail**, our freedom to **succeed** and our freedom to **try** came from millions of ordinary citizens who saw as their duty to **serve** and not **to be served**. Ours were not perfect relationships in perfect circumstances. Throughout our history America has faced many enemies, some less obtuse than others, causing dissent and confusion. Yet our acts of selfless service has sustained our nation in good times and bad.

Your selfless service continues in many ways, the Americal Scholarship fund, and the hard work to put together many reunions, staying in touch with buddies and comforting them when times are tough. That sense of service not only carried us through the difficult times on active duty - it can also carry us through the ups and downs of our human experience.

Robert E. Lee once said, "Duty is the most sublime word in the English language. No one can do more, no one should ever hope to do less." You have completed your military service but your duty remains, as Veterans, to care for each other, to express the ideals of patriotism and to demonstrate your humanity to others.

Take pride in your role as a Veteran. You are remembered each time those words are sung, "Our country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of **thee** I sing." "Oh say does that star spangled banner yet wave?" (Yes ...because of you), "Oer the land of the free" (and here in the ADVA), "the home of the brave."

David W. Taylor

Jim Sheil

## Chaplain's Corner

### ADVA Guest Chaplain

*(Chaplain Sheil was with the 11th LIB in Vietnam and remains on Active Duty)*

In the Gospel of Matthew 25: 31-46, Jesus reminds us that how we deal with the people in our life is precisely how we deal with God. We cannot love God unless we love the people in our life. This is no simple thing, but Jesus gives us no choice.

Each of us can point to persons in our life who have hurt us in some way, who are annoying, perhaps genuine pains. Each of us has others who feel the same about us. But, as Jesus says, whatever we do for others we do for him, and whatever we don't do for others we don't do for him. There is no way around it.

Jesus does not give us a choice here, but what he calls us to do is something we are capable of doing – with prayer. We don't pray for people to change in order for us to love them. We pray for ourselves to receive the grace to accept and love others as they are. Grace is the power of God happening in us. As we focus more on God in prayer, we become more alert to God in the happenings of our daily life. Our circumstances don't change, but how we deal with them does change. With Grace we are moved to accept what is and to do what has to be done.

***Cover***
**Larry J. Watson**
**ADVA National Commander**
**June 2006 — June 2008**
*Story on next page*

Larry Watson- ADVA National Commander

## Commanders Comments
### "Ready to Lead and Ready to Serve"

I want to thank the leadership and members of the Americal Division Veterans Association for the confidence they placed in me for the next two years. I am looking forward to serving my fellow Americal Veterans. It was the Army that brought us together the first time, but it is the friendships and the quality of the people that have brought us back together.

We have a very capable line-up of elected officers and appointed staff in the pipeline for a solid future and I look forward to working with them throughout my term. My main job is to stay out of the way and let them do their jobs. I'll talk more about that a little later.

I will give you a very brief introduction of myself. I live in Wooster, Ohio, the small hometown I was raised in. After graduation from high school I attended welding school and worked as a welder in a truck manufacturing plant until I was drafted. I was an 11 Bravo in the Army and I served in Vietnam with C Co., 1/52 Infantry Battalion and with A Co., 1/6 Infantry Battalion, both battalions of the198th Light Infantry Brigade.

After my separation from the Army I worked for Ohio Power, a public power utility, and attended college classes at night. I graduated from the University of Akron with a bachelor's degree in Marketing. Later, I left Ohio Power to join my father in a small office equipment and supply dealership. I worked in this business until the pressure from larger high volume companies squeezed our profit to the point that I finally sold out.

I started a completely new career with a job at the Wayne County Veterans Service Commission. That was over eight years ago and I love it. I have been the Director for the past six years. I assist veterans and dependents with filing claims for VA benefits as well as state and local benefits. We provide financial assistance when a county veteran or dependent has an emergency. Also, we provide transportation to and from VA Healthcare facilities. We maintain veteran's monuments in cemeteries throughout the county.

Now enough about myself. What I really want to talk about are the goals I have for the ADVA. There is much to be done and I have a number of things I want to do in the first year of my term.

A main goal is the recruitment and retention of members. Dave Taylor, our Sr. Vice Commander, has some good ideas and has connected with other ADVA members who are equally passionate about recruiting, and have other ideas as well. Dave will be putting together an ADVA Recruiting Committee and a comprehensive ADVA Recruiting Plan.

One tool I think might be helpful by assisting our members in finding old friends is a Membership Directory. Inclusion in this Directory will be voluntary. If you prefer not to be listed, then you won't be. The Directory I envision will have two separate sections. The first section will have every member's name listed alphabetically followed by one or more page number references to the second section. The second section would list every unit that served with the Americal with the names, in alphabetical order, of ADVA members who served with that unit. Someone that served in more than one unit, like me, will have two or more page numbers after their name in section one. That way, members can reference by name or by unit to try to find old buddies. The Directory will be printed inexpensively so we can update directories as our recruiting campaign takes hold. The Directory will only be sold (at an inexpensive price – just to cover printing, no profit) to ADVA members and could serve as another incentive for Americal Vets to join the ADVA.

Rich Merlin, our Jr. Vice Commander, is chairing a committee to plan for the long-term future of the ADVA. This **"ADVA Future Focus"** committee will look down the road ten or fifteen years and try to layout a road map for where we are going, what changes can we expect in the future as our numbers grow but then decline, etc. What do we do with the funds in 20 years when our membership dwindles? Should we consolidate chapters? Etc. All of these decisions will be voted on by the membership but now is not too soon to start thinking about these questions. Rich, like Dave, is very capable and he has a committee made up of solid members.

I have asked Gary Noller to chair a committee to review our bylaws. Over the past year I have seen a lot of communication stressing the need for a change to some by-laws and other communication that indicated a lack of understanding about our by-laws. Gary is very knowledgeable about the ADVA's by-laws and has assembled a committee to look into the issues. All ADVA members will be kept informed about the committee's work. I have also asked Gary to step into Dave Taylor's former position as Editor-in-Chief of our newsletter. Gary has graciously accepted. He has been associated with the newsletter for a long time in a variety of capacities and deserves his promotion to "rise though the ranks."

Finally, my success as Commander and the success of our officers, staff, and committees will ultimately depend on you. The Americal needs you - every one of you - to recruit a new member and participate by asking questions, offering suggestions and sharing concerns, all in a spirit of camaraderie. I pledge to you an organization that will be completely transparent with an emphasis on communicating to the membership. Please plan to attend the ADVA national reunions. We will meet in Buffalo, New York next year. I hope you will be there to share the fun.





## By-Law Review Committee

Newly elected National Commander Larry Watson has appointed five ADVA members to an Ad Hoc By-Law Review Committee. Over the past year there have been requests to change some of the by-laws, along with some misunderstanding of the by-laws as well. Larry has appointed myself, Gary Noller, ADVA Editor-In-Chief to chair the committee. Other appointed committee members are: Rich Merlin, Jr. Vice Commander; Mike Twomey, Judge Advocate; Steven Reisdorff, Judge Advocate; and Roger Gilmore, National Adjutant.

All ADVA members are invited to send suggestions for by-law amendments, to one of the by-law committee members. Their contact information is listed on the inside front cover (page2). All submissions should be made no later than January 15, 2007. The committee will present the proposed amendments to Commander Watson on or before April 15, 2007.

PNC Gary Noller

## ADVA Future Focus Committee

Our Commander, Larry Watson, has asked me to head up a committee that can look at and plan the future of the ADVA over the next ten to fifteen years. Some of the items we will look at and begin discussing are:

- The possible realignment & compression of chapters where it may make sense to do so, to keep chapters vibrant. Perhaps eventually look at four geographically aligned chapters.
- Begin discussions to determine what we will do the money and assets of the ADVA when our association begins to cease to exist.
- What can we do and how can we insure the Americal's legacy remains after we are gone. For example our arrangement with Texas Tech's Vietnam Center, the WWII Museum in Worcester, MA and our Scholarship program.

There are many other things we can study and develop as well. My committee is as follows: Rich Merlin – Chairperson, Terry Babler, Roger Gilmore, Dave Hammond, Tom Packard, Bob Short, Paul Stiff, Dave Taylor and Larry Watson.

Rich Merlin - ADVA Jr. Vice Commander

## Recruiting & Retention Committee

National Commander Larry Watson has asked me to lead a national recruiting & retention effort that will start with developing a comprehensive plan then executing that plan. Everyone running for an elected office on the Executive Council and national offices expressed a priority for recruiting so I am looking forward to everyone's support. Personally, I believe the ADVA can be a catharsis for many of our Vets and it is for this reason that I want to do everything possible to make our Americal Vets aware of the ADVA. Many are not.

In my judgement the 2006-2007 budget for recruiting is not adequate for a fully funded program but it will be enough to get us started and test-market recruiting tactics. Of the $12 (WWII Vets) or $15 (Vietnam Vets) each member pays per year, it cost about $6.50 to create and mail 4 issues of the newsletter to that member. My goal is to break even with every new member on our recruiting expenses. Therefore the first year a new member (Vietnam member for example) joins the ADVA their $15 will pay for the cost of their newsletter that year and their prorated share of the total costs of acquiring the new members that year.

The following individuals have agreed to be on the recruiting / retention committee: Tom Bedient, Rolly Castronova, Roger Gilmore, Dave Hammond, Gary Noller and Paul Stiff. Each member has specific skill sets and ideas to help achieve our goals. Anyone else who would like to join us please let me know. I am looking for workers who have a passion for locating our past comrades. If any ADVA member (or spouse) can contribute time on the computer to data base target lists of Americal Vets (Excel spreadsheet) I am very interested in hearing from you. Larry Watson – as National Commander – will also be on the recruiting committee.

Dave Taylor – ADVA Sr. Vice Commander

## National Financial Report

The 2005-2006 budget year has ended on a positive note. Our income exceeded expenses by almost $8,000, due primarily to Wayne Bryant's efforts in making our resale of merchandise profitable. Net profit this year was $7,500. Wayne reported that about 40% of the sales came from the newsletter, 40% from the website and the balance from miscellaneous sources. Thanks Wayne for all your hard work, we appreciate it.

Expenses were well controlled, coming in about $3,400 under budget. The biggest budget expense was the national newsletter, costing almost $20,000. However, we must all thank Dave Taylor for the improvements we have seen in recent issues.

The ADVA Executive Council approved the 2006-2007 budget with plans for income of $35,000 and approved expenses of $34,250. The Historian Budget has been increased to $3,000. Overall, we continue on a sound financial base. We need to all work on recruiting new members, as that will drive the continued positive financial results.

Spencer Baba – National Finance Officer

# Letters to the Editor

## *World War II*

Dear Mr. Taylor,

I am writing as one of the last two Veterans living on New Caledonia. Jim Buckle has been my pen pal for years. As for my background I was not in the Americal Division but I arrived in New Caledonia in 1943 as a tank officer and there being no tank units at the time, was assigned to another unit for 2 years before going on to the Philippines.

I am writing to you on behalf of a young lady here, who is the guest of her grandfather who was in the U.S. Navy stationed here during the war. Perhaps you can advise me of an agency regarding his whereabouts or other info that I can contact him. His name is as follows: James Warren Hollman, Born 4 May 1923 in Howe, Oklahoma. Was in the Navy from 1941 to 1945 stationed in New Caledonia.

As for New Caledonia I must mention that the Caledonian's have never lost their affections for the Americans. In Veteran's ceremonies my granddaughter, 16, is very pro-American and is asked to carry the American flag (see photo below). Yes, New Caledonia is a beautiful island with its mountains, bays and climate and goodies to satisfy the belly. I welcome everyone to make the trip, particularly in September.

Sincerely Yours,

Emery C. Lavallie, 12 Rue de la Malmaison, Noumea, New Caledonia

Emery's granddaughter with American flag

Dear Mr. Taylor,

My name is Clyde Collins and I served in Company A of the 57th Engineers in the Americal Division during World War II. During my time with Company A, I had the privilege of serving with many brave men who endured great hardship and sacrifice in our war against the Japanese. One of the finest of these men was Donald Blaisdell, who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in 1944.

In March 1944 our company was assigned to carry ammunition for the 132nd Infantry Regiment on Hill 260 on Bougainville. There was a lot of activity taking place; many shells were falling. Our company was pinned down in foxholes on the hill. On the hill a severely injured soldier lay dying. Occasionally he would move his leg and call out for help. My foxhole buddy was Arthur Bills. Bills was determined to help the injured soldier. Bills left the foxhole under heavy fire … determined to reach the injured soldier. He never made it. Blaisdell saw Bills go down. Without saying a word, he jumped out of his foxhole and headed for Bills. He brought Bills body back to the foxhole and turned around to retrieve the other injured soldier on the hill; he brought his body back too. During all this time, Blaisdell was under extremely heavy fire from the Japanese. Even though he wasn't thinking about himself at the time, he never got a scratch. I consider it an honor to have served with men such as Donald Blaisdell.

Clyde R. Collins

Dear Editor,

My name is Gary Brown and I am documenting the service of Staff Sergeant Jack Grindle during WWII for his family. I would like to contact anyone who might have served with Jack. He was the squad leader of 2nd squad, 1st platoon, G Company, 132nd Infantry Regiment, Americal Division. Jack was in the Americal from 1942-1945. He was in combat on Bougainville, Leyte and Cebu. He was wounded on Cebu in 1945. Jack is in good health and now lives in Thousand palms, California. Jack has been my friend for the past 45 years and I am doing this to preserve Jacks history, who is one of the Greatest Generation. If you knew Jack Grindle, please contact me at ggtbrown@earthlink.ne

Gary Brown for Staff Sergeant Jack Grindle

## *Vietnam*

Dear Editor,

I need information regarding an explosion that occurred January 31, 1968 at the airstrip at Chu Lai. The Americal HQ came under mortar and rocket fire at approximately 03:00. Then about 04:00 - 04:30 the VC switched their fire from us to the Marine airstrip at Chu Lai. I think the Marines were the 12th or 13th MAC.

The VC hit either the main ammo bunker where the bombs were stored or the fuel bladders of jet fuel (I think it was the ammo bunker). The explosion was so huge that we thought it was an atomic bomb. The explosion resulted in several jets being destroyed, hangers being leveled, and many injured or killed. I was about a mile away when the explosion occurred.

I have lived for the past 35 plus years with loud ringing in my ears but never did anything about it until now. I have recently been seen by a VA hearing specialist that said the damage was probably due to an extremely loud noise and that the explosion was probably the cause. I need to provide some witness statements about how severe and loud the explosion was. Contact me a jadams@thesmsgroup.com.

Jerry Adams

Dear Editor,

My brother, Sgt. Thomas L. Chandler, was in the 1/46th Infantry. He was in Co. D first, then on to Co. E. He was in country from September 1969 to February 1970 when he was wounded and ultimately died of those wounds.

My sisters and I are trying to locate anyone who might have known him. He was so young and we miss the memories we were never able to have. You may contact me at palczewski@bellsouth.net.

Dear Editor,

Please announce that a new website for 1/20th Infantry is now available. It can be found at www.1-20infantry.org.

Chuck Seketa has done a tremendous amount of research on the 1/20th Infantry and it is now available on the website. Some documents also contain information about other units of the 11th brigade. Chuck is currently finishing up day by-day-logs of each infantry company in the battalion.

Dan Malin; Co. C, 1/20th Inf., 69-70





Dear Editor,

I am writing a book on Kham Duc and I would like to interview veterans of the 1/46th Inf. and 2/1st Inf. who were there from May 9 - 12, 1968. I also need to interview vets with the 2/1st who were at Kham Duc in July, 1970 (when I was there). In addition, I need more information on the Chinook accident in July, 1970. I would like to contact battalion commanders, company commanders, enlisted personnel, and anyone who may know anything about Kham Duc for the periods mentioned.

Send e-mail to [redacted] or contact me at [redacted] Cambria, CA 93428. My home telephone number is [redacted].

Greg Sanders; Americal Division TOC

Dear Editor,

I would like to inform ADVA members of an effort to change the custom of placing the right hand over the heart as a show of respect for the flag. I believe that veterans and retired military can and should render a hand salute on these special occasions.

MG Vern Lewis, USA (Ret.) and others are sponsoring a movement to officially recognize this change in custom. At this date there is no formal organization behind this effort. Word is being spread mouth-to-mouth and by the internet.

The goal is to have veterans use the hand salute for the Pledge of Allegiance, when the National Colors pass or are presented, when the National Anthem or honors are played, and when Taps are played and guns fired to render honor.

Currently there are no regulations that tell veterans what they can or can't do in this regard. It is a matter of personal choice. I believe the hand salute at these special times will serve to bond veterans to one another as brothers and sisters.

COL Thomas Bedient, USA (Ret.); 4/3rd Infantry

Dear Editor,

A National Purple Heart Hall of Honor is being built in New York's Hudson Valley, not far from the United States Military Academy at West Point. Any service member who has been awarded the Purple Heart is eligible to be entered in the Hall's database as part of the tribute to their service to our Nation.

Any service member who has earned the award will be afforded a place in the Hall. The service member needs to send a copy of their DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release of Discharge from Active Duty), which indicates receipt of the award, to the address below:

**The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor**
[redacted]
**Vails Gate, New York 12584-02078**

Michael Stashowiak

Dear Editor,

The article Grunt Gourmet in the April-May-June 2006 issue brought back many memories. I was surprised that no one mentioned good old beans and franks.

I am from Wisconsin (The Dairy State) and we know how to use cheese. In Vietnam I took a can of beans and franks and added a can or two of cheese spread. I mixed this up and heated them. Mmm-mmm, it was good.

I still make this delicacy to this day. I use B & M baked beans and some shredded Wisconsin sharp cheddar cheese. I usually make this when my brothers stop in. My wife will not touch beans and she was never in the Army.

James Gales; Co. B, 2/1st Inf.

Dear Editor,

One of your own, Ronald E Malachi, Co. C, 2/1st Infantry, 196th LIB, was put in for the Medal of Honor. It was downgraded to the Distinguished Service Cross. I have obtained Malachi's file and I have read it along with many other MOH award citations. After talking with some of the men he served with, I would like to see if there is anything we can do to possibly get the DSC upgraded to the MOH. I have the complete file with witness statements intact. I don't know where to go from here. Can you please give me some advice? You can contact me at [redacted]m.

Peggy Reider

Dear Editor,

I need to find anyone who served with me in Vietnam to help corroborate things that happened to me. I served from June 1970 to May 1971 with the 5/46th Infantry. I spent most of my time at Hill 76, Hill 270, LZ Donna, Ky Tra and Chu Lai. Write to me at [redacted], IL 62695 or phone [redacted].

Russ Printy; 5/46th Inf.

Dear Editor,

I am attempting to assist a veteran document the events which occurred in the early morning hours of December 24-25, 1969. The event may have involved a mortar or rocket attack on the Combat Center that resulted in many casualties. I am looking for any information that would support his VA claim. Contact me at David. [redacted].

David Schroeder, LICSW
Twin Ports VA Outpatient Clinic

Dear Editor,

I am the sister-in-law of Harold Lee Smith from Des Moines, Iowa. He was killed-in-action in February 1968 during the Tet Offensive. He served with Co. A, 1/52nd Inf., 198th LIB. His closest living relative is now my daughter, his niece. Learn more about Harold at http://www.virtualwall.org/ds/SmithHL01a.htm.

Neither my son nor daughter knew their uncle Harold. It is so important to them and to me to get in touch with people that may have served with him. Contact me at [redacted].

Barbara Smith

Dear Editor,

The Americal PX has two new items in inventory and ready for sale. A sleeve of three golf balls bearing the Americal shoulder insignia is $10. We also have a license plate frames for $4 each. The frame shows the logo of the ADVA and the words Americal Division Veterans Association on the top of the frame and the words Under the Southern Cross on the bottom of the frame.

Orders should be sent to me at [redacted], Greensboro, NC, 27405. See the order form at the back of the newsletter for more information on placing an order.

Wayne Bryant; ADVA Product Sales Director

Dear Editor,

Several months ago I sent a letter to someone in the Association about my father, who served in the division around 1968-1969. I don't know much, other than that he was there. I'm an Associate Member. I think that he was in the 198th. He would never talk much. Help me if you can. He was SFC O.H. Hubbard Sr. If anyone knew him please call or write to me. My phone is [redacted]. My cell is [redacted]. My address is [redacted], Sherman, Texas 75090.

O.H. Hubbard Jr.

## ADVA National Adjutant Notes

The ADVA annual reunion in Portland this past June was a great event! Thanks to Reunion Chairman Dave Hammond and his staff for a memorable reunion.

New membership continues to increase steadily. Since the last newsletter issue, we added forty-one new members to the ADVA roster. Of these forty-one new additions, seven are Paid Life Members. Four new members signed up at the Portland reunion.

In this issue's Adjutant notes section, I want to take a few lines to review the membership renewal process for annual pay members.

- Upon joining the ADVA as an annual payment member, you receive a membership card listing your name and the month and year your membership is up for renewal.
- Annual pay member renewal dates are January 1st, May 1st and September 1st each year as assigned by the National Adjutant.
- Approximately one week prior to these renewal dates, the National Adjutant's office mails the new membership card and payment instructions to all members due on these dates.
- Renewal payments are due upon receipt of your new membership card.

Annual pay members need 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. If the date shown on your newsletter is May06 or earlier, send your dues payment to PNC Ron Ellis, Assistant Finance Officer (see the outside back cover). Please notify me when you change your mailing address so the roster will be updated as soon as possible.

General correspondence and notice of address changes 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

*Roger Gilmore*

ADVA National Adjutant

## TAPS

### World War II Veterans

***101 st Medical Regt***
Robert J. O'Malley
Davis, CA
Date Unknown

***164th Inf Regt Co. A***
Hiram O. McAdow
Atchison, KS
May 23, 2006

***182 nd Inf Rgmt***
Denver E. White
Acworth, GA
August 17, 1989

Dewayne George (F Co.)
Ivins, UT
April 5, 2006

***221st FA***
Leonard A. Oliver
North Dartmouth, MA
May 29, 2006

***97th FA (Pack) A Btry***
Leslie H. Braun
Maroa, IL
Date Unknown

***Americal Chemical Section***
Andrew D. Ash
Marion, KS
April 25, 2006

**Vietnam Veterans**

***196th LIB***
Donald C. Brown, Jr.
Wheelersburg, OH
Date Unknown

***198th LIB 1/46 Inf***
Dennis R. Murphy
Dulles, VA
July 16, 2006

## LAST ROLL CALL

***(Deceased Americal Veterans not members of the ADVA)***

**Vietnam Veterans**

***11th LIB***
John E. Roark
Honea Path, SC
July 21, 2006

## CORRECTIONS
## 2ND QUARTER NEWSLETTER

Paul E. Collins
196th LIB HHC/4/31 Inf

## NEW MEMBERS

**Lane D. Anderson**
198th LIB D/5/46 Inf
Blair, WI
***# David W. Taylor***

**James J. Bolger**
3/16th FA HHB
Aurora, CO
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**Barlar E. Boothe, Jr.**
198th LIB B/1/52 Inf
Portland, OR
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**Patrick J. Boyle**
132nd ASHC
Harleysville, PA
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**James Briscoe**
198th LIB D/5/46 Inf
Powderly, TX
***# Leo Pillow***

**Gene Chenault**
196th LIB C/1/46 Inf
Englewood, FL
***# Jerry Anderson***

**Lawrence J. Doucette**
49th Signal Plt
Medford, MA
***# David W. Taylor***

**Jimmy F. Enocencio**
11th LIB E/4/21 Inf
Hilo, HI
***# Dave Hammond***

**Dwight C. Fields**
F Trp 17th Cav
Bronson, FL
***# Robert Kapp***

**Ronald Geiss**
23rd Medical Det.
Westville, NJ
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**Frank Gervais**
Div Arty – 251st Radar Det.
Lowell, MA
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**George W. Jones**
198th LIB B/5/46 Inf
Cameron, TX
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**LaVerle Kurtz**
11th LIB E/1/20 Inf
Wendell, ID
***# Dave Hammond***

**Kenneth D. Lawson**
198th LIB B/5/46 Inf
Talbott, TN
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**Reno L. Menegon**
164th Inf Regt Co. C
Payson, AZ
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**Jerome Meyer**
198th LIB A/1/6 Inf
San Leandro, CA
***# Dave Hammond***

**Wayne Meyers**
Naval Advisor – 525th QM Co.
Uncasville, CT
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**Mike Moore**
11th LIB B/4/21 Inf
Gray, TN
***# Sid Staton***

**Ray Moriarty**
198th LIB A/5/46 Inf
Granville, IL
***# David W. Taylor***

**Wilfred Phillips**
132nd Inf Regt K Co.
Mt. Vernon, IN
***# Self***

**Russell R. Printy**
198th LIB HHC/5/46 Inf
Woodson, IL
***# David W. Taylor***

**William D. Reavis**
11th LIB D/4/21 Inf
Greensboro, NC
***# Self***

**Norman L. Robinson**
Americal Div. HQ
Tucson, AZ
***# Dave Hammond***

**Gregory W. Sanders**
HHC Division HQ
Cambria, CA
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**Mark A. Seelbach**
198th LIB B/1/6 Inf
League City, TX
***# Gary Cooksey***

**Paul M. Senick**
198th LIB A/1/6 Inf
Bethlehem, PA
***# Dave Hammond***

**Ray Shafe**
6/56th Arty
Colon, MI
***# Terry Babler***

**Anthony W. Simmons**
11th LIB B/4/21 Inf
Bokchito, OK
***# Self***

**John N. Stevens**
181st FA (WWII)
Forked River, NJ
***# Self***

**Larry R. Tait**
23rd Admin Co.
De Witt, MI
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**Norman N. Tatara**
11th LIB D/1/20 Inf
Culver City, CA
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**James M. Thompson**
635th MI Det.
Fort Wayne, IN
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**William Thornton**
11th LIB C/1/20 Inf
Memphis, TN
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**Nate Wilondek**
71st ASHC
Defiance, OH
# Larry Wilt

## NEW PAID LIFE MEMBERS

**Robert Antuono**
23rd MPs
Glocester, RI
***# James D'Agostino***

**Robert J. Bartruff, Sr.**
26th Engrs, Co. D
Springfield, VA
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**Dan T. Bates**
11th LIB 6th Spt Bn
Florissant, MO
***# R. Thornton***

**James D. Brice**
196th LIB B/2/1 Inf
Sulphur Springs, TX
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**Richard F. Carvell**
196th LIB 1/46 Inf
St. Albans, WV
***# Charles Allard***

**Walter S. Hillenbrand**
198th LIB D/5/46 Inf
Cross Lanes, WV
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**Charlie Hobbs**
23rd MPs
Chattanooga, TN
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**David Krueger**
11th LIB B/4/3 Inf
Royal Oak, MI
***# Don Ballou***

**Paul T. Loyd**
196th LIB B/2/1 Inf
Cannelburg, IN
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**Dr. Sheldon A. Mirow**
196th LIB 2/1 Inf
Dallas, TX
***# PNC Roland Castronova***

**William M. Oberle**
198th LIB C/1/52 Inf
Albuquerque, NM
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**Leo Pillow**
198th LIB D/5/46 Inf
Apple Valley, CA
***# PNC James Buckle***

**Albert Vandette**
164th Inf Rgmt
Marlboro, MA
***# David W. Taylor***

**Orlando Vazquez**
196th LIB E/2/1 Inf
Carolina, P.R.
***# PNC Gary L. Noller***

**Jerry Washizaki**
11th LIB D/4/21 Inf
Powder Springs, GA
**# PNC Roland Castronova**

**Dale E. Wilson**
11th LIB C/3/1 Inf
Mountain View, HI
***# Don Ballou***

## REINSTATED MEMBERS

**Stephen E. Assam**
1/1st Cav
Brooklyn, NY
***# Bernie Chase***

**Garry Deines**
198th LIB C/1/52 Inf
Anaheim, CA
***# Dan R. Young***

**John H. Dewing**
11th LIB
Bellingham, WA
***# Self***

**Andrew Ladek**
**198th LIB C/5/46 Inf**
**Warren, MI**
***# Lloyd Morrell***

**Mark P. Zirngibl**
198th LIB 57th Inf Plt (Scout Dog)
Williams Bay, WI
***# Self***

**Please Remember:**

**We update our ADVA mailing list every three months before each newsletter mailing. Please notify us of any temporary or permanent address change, to eliminate returned newsletters and address change notifications, which cost us (the ADVA) money !**

## 2006 ADVA SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Submitted by Bob Short, Scholarship Fund Chairman

The scholarship fund trustees met on June 22, 2006, at the annual reunion in Portland and authorized awarding $25,000 in scholarships.

Joel Reynolds received the first place award of $3,000. Joel attends the University of Oregon and was sponsored by his grandfather, Jack Morton, who served in World War II with the 182nd Infantry Regiment.

Two second place awards of $2,500 each were presented to Tracy Gold and Kevin Little.

Tracy attends Duke University and was sponsored by her grandfather, the late William Gold, who served in World War II with the 26th Signal Company.

Kevin attends Taylor University and was sponsored by his father, Alan Little, who served in Vietnam with the 174th Aviation Company.

Stephen Arndt received the third place award of $2,000. Stephen attends Vanderbilt University and was sponsored by his father, Edward Arndt, who served in Vietnam with the 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry.

Caitlin Snow received the fourth place award of $1,500. Caitlin attends the University of Michigan and was sponsored by her father, Paul Snow, who served in Vietnam with the 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry.

Four fifth place awards of $1,000 each were presented to Brian Gates, Karn Petersen, Sadie Peterson, and Paige Schroeder.

Brian attends Western Illinois University and was sponsored by his father, Kenneth Gates, who served in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry.

Karn attends the University of Wisconsin—River Falls and was sponsored by her father, Roger Petersen, who served in Vietnam with the 23rd Military Police Company.

Sadie attends the Minnesota State Community & Technical College and was sponsored by her father, Bruce Hanstad, who served in Vietnam with the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry.

Paige attends Ohio State University and was sponsored by her father, Michael Schroeder, who served in Vietnam with the 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry.

An additional nineteen awards of $500 each were presented to the following individuals:

Andrea Borysiak attends Baker College and was sponsored by her father, Gerald Borysiak, who served in Vietnam with the 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry.

Patrick Bright attends Bemidji State University and was sponsored by his father, Gene Bright, who served in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry.

Melissa Bungo attends the University at Buffalo and was sponsored by her father, Ronald Krul, who served in Vietnam with the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry.

Lindsey Campbell attends Champlain College and was sponsored by her grandfather, the late Alan Campbell, who served in World War II with the 180th Field Artillery Regiment.

Kerry Coffey attends the University of Connecticut and was sponsored by her father, Gerald Coffey, who served in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion, 82nd Artillery.

Lauren Cooper attends Bridgewater State College and was sponsored by her grandfather, the late Leonard Oliver, who served in World War II with the 221st Field Artillery Battalion.

Tammy Ecklund attends the University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire and was sponsored by her father, Eric Ecklund, who served in Vietnam with the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry.

Julie Elmore attends Butler University and was sponsored by her father, Thomas Elmore, who served in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry.

Kelly Hofer attends the University of Wisconsin—Richland and was sponsored by her father, John Hofer, who served in Vietnam with the 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry.

John "Max" Hofer attends the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee and was sponsored by his father, John Hofer, who served in Vietnam with the 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry.

Michael Kreisel attends Amherst College and was sponsored by his grandfather, Frank Kreisel, who served in World War II with the 132nd Infantry Regiment.

Michael Laxer attends the University of Colorado and was sponsored by his father, Marc Laxer, who served in Vietnam with the 4th Battalion, 3rd infantry.

Katelyn Mahoney attends Chowan University and was sponsored by her grandfather, the late William McGoldrick, who served in World War II with the 182nd Infantry Regiment.

Scott Marwil attends Texas A&M University and was sponsored by his grandfather, the late Stanley Marwil, who served in World War II with the 247th Field Artillery Battalion.

Kelly Matthews attends the University of Connecticut and was sponsored by her father, Dennis Matthews, who served in Vietnam with the 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry.

Emily Siemer attends Southern Illinois University—Edwardsville and was sponsored by her father, Terrence Siemer, who served in Vietnam with the 16th Combat Aviation Group.

Tiffany Thiesen attends St. Luke's College and was sponsored by her father, Thomas Thiesen, who served in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry.

Elizabeth Trout attends Temple University and was sponsored by her grandfather, Kermit Trout, who served in World War II with the 26th Signal Company.

Nora Tuite attends Northeastern University and was sponsored by her grandfather, the late James Driscoll, who served in World War II with the 101st Quartermaster Regiment.

There were a total of forty-four qualified applicants this year. Thirty-one applicants were sponsored by Vietnam veterans and thirteen were sponsored by World War II veterans.

Most of the money donated to the scholarship fund comes from our annual raffle ticket sale and from donations made throughout the year in memory of Americal veterans and family members who have passed away. The raffle winner this year was Larry Levy from Sparks, Nevada.

I wish to thank everyone who has contributed to the scholarship fund over the course of the last year. Our organization can be very proud of the educational support that we provide these talented young men and women.





# ADVA Scholarship Fund

## 2005 – 2006 Finance Report

Tim Vail – Fund Treasurer

**Summary of Finances:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Scholarship Fund Balance – 07/01/05 | $ 100,435.58 |
| Income from Contributions, Donations, etc. | 22,525.00 |
| Interest Income | 1,178.39 |
| Appreciation of Vanguard Fund | 3,585.54 |
| Sub-Total: | 127,724.51 |
| Scholarship Fund Expenses (includes scholarships) | 26,850.88 |
| Scholarship Fund Balance – 06/30/06 | $ 100,873.63 |

(Itemization of Fund Expenses)

| | |
|---|---|
| • Printing Expense | $ 1,004.57 |
| • Postage Expense | 596.31 |
| • Scholarship Awards – 06/22/06: | 25,000.00 |
| • Raffle Winner – 06/24/06: | 250.00 |
| Total: | $ 26,850.88 |

## ADVA SCHOLARSHIP FUND TRUSTEES

**Robert Short, Chairman**
[redacted]
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
[redacted]

**Timothy Vail, Treasurer**
[redacted]
Roanoke, VA 24012
[redacted]

**Larry Watson, National Commander**
[redacted]
Wooster, OH 44691
[redacted]

**Ed Marsh**
[redacted]
Jones, MI 49062
[redacted]
Term of Office Ends in 2007

**Richard Scales**
[redacted]
Oakley, IL 62501
[redacted]
Term of Office Ends 2008

**Richard Smith**
[redacted].
Friend, NE 68359
[redacted]
Term of Office Ends 2009

**Gary Noller**
[redacted]
Kerrville, TX 78028
[redacted]
Term of Office Ends 2010

*Dear Mr. Short,*

Thank you so much for awarding me with a $500 scholarship from the Americal Division Veterans Association. The money awarded to me will help me achieve a higher education. I know my grandfather would be proud. I realize if it wasn't for him, and all the other brave people, who fought for our freedom, I would not have this wonderful opportunity that I have today. I appreciate your generosity and consideration of my application.

Sincerely
*Lindsey A. Campbell*

Lindsey A. Campbell

*Dear Mr. Short,*

I recently found out that I am a recipient of the Americal Division Veterans Association scholarship and I wanted to write to the members of the ADVA to express my sincere appreciation. The ADVA scholarship means a lot to me. My grandfather served in the 132nd Infantry and risked his life for me, my family and for America. I am both proud and honored to receive this award.

This fall I will be attending Amherst College to study physics chemistry or math. I am very excited about attending college. Thank you so much for helping to achieve my goals and dreams.

Sincerely
*Michael Kreisel*

Michael Kreisel

*Dear Mr. Short,*

I would like to take a moment to thank you and the rest of the A.D.V.A. for your generous contribution to my education at the University of Michigan. I am extremely grateful to have such support, giving scholarships to help students achieve their dreams is one of the most wonderful gifts that could be given. Of course, much of what is possible today for young adults could not be possible without your service and commitment to our country. Again, I would like to thank you not only for the generous scholarship, but also for all you have done for our nation. God Bless you and the Americal Veterans.

Sincerely
*Caitlin Snow*

Caitlin with father, Paul Snow, 4th/21st Infantry

*Americal Division Veterans Association,*

It is a great privilege to thank you for the scholarship you have given me. I am looking forward to school and as many of you know, every little bit helps. It is a great endeavor, your scholarship program, to help those associated with your organization achieve a higher education. Thank you again for the scholarship.

Sincerely
*Miss Julie Elmore*

Julie with father Tom Elmore. 1st/20th Infantry

*To The Americal Division Veterans Association,*

Thank you for the award of a scholarship from your association. I was encouraged to know that the Americal Division had such an association and scholarship fund. I hope to raise awareness of the Americal Division in connection with my college career, and the exploits and stories of the people that have served with the division throughout time. Once again I thank you for this award.

Sincerely
*Patrick Bright*

Patrick Bright

Dear Mr. Short,

I would like to thank the Americal Division Veterans Association for the recent scholarship that was awarded to me. I am very excited that I will be attending Bridgewater State College in just over a month from now. Thank you again for helping me to reach my goals.

Sincerely
*Lauren Cooper*

*Dear Mr. Short and the ADVA Scholarship Committee,*

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the very generous ADVA scholarship I was recently awarded. It is with great pride that I accept this scholarship in honor of my father, Kenneth Gates, who served 1970-71 in Vietnam with Charlie Company, 1st battalion of the 36th Infantry, 196th LIB of the Americal Division. We are both very appreciative of the ADVA support in my education.

I'll be returning to Western Illinois University where I am majoring in communications and marketing. I will continue to work hard, putting your scholarship funds to good use. I sincerely appreciate the generosity of all the Americal Veterans.

Sincerely
*Brian Gates*

Brian with father, Kenneth Gates





*Dear Mr. Short,*

Thank you and the Americal Division veterans association so very much for offering scholarship opportunities to hard working students whom are related to ADVA members. Your gift helps to manage the financial struggle a lot of today's student's face. Soon I will be entering my clinical rotation for my radiology degree. My clinical learning experience will be at Hackley Hospital here in Muskegon, Michigan. For the next nine months I will be working 40-hour weeks without pay during my rotation phase. My expected graduation date should be mid to late June of 2007. Your scholarship award and support at this time is so much appreciated! Thank you all in the ADVA for your service to country and your continuing support of ADVA family members in this generous way.

Sincerely
*Andrea Lynn Borysiak*

Gerald Borysiak, 2nd/1st Infantry, with his daughter Andrea

*Dear Mr. Short and Americal Division Veterans Association,*

Thank you so much for the scholarship! I can't express enough how thankful I am for all that the Americal Division Veterans have done for me; first, defend my country and now, help to finance my education. Between tuition, room and board, books and meal plans, the cost of higher education today is overwhelming. Thank you again for helping to make going to Duke more manageable. I only wish that my late grandfather, William Gold, could be here to hear the news. He would have been very proud of me.

Sincerely
*Tracy Gold*

Tracy Gold

*Americal Division Veterans Association,*

I would like to thank you very much for awarding me the scholarship of $500 for 2006. I am attending the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire and I am an Elementary Education major. I am planning to study abroad next summer (2007) in South Africa, so the scholarship will help in those plans. I would like to thank you again for your generosity with the scholarship.

Sincerely
*Tammy Ecklund*

Eric Ecklund, 4th, 31st Infantry, with daughter Tammy

*Dear Mr. Short and the Scholarship Committee,*

I am extremely thankful for the Americal Division Veterans Association's scholarship award of $2,500. The generosity of ADVA members is deeply appreciated!

I continue to be impressed by the ADVA's support of higher education and the ADVA's ability to provide a link for communications and camaraderie among its members.

Sincerely
*Kevin Little*

*Americal Division Veterans Association Scholarship Fund Committee:*

I would like to take a moment to thank the Americal Division Veterans Association for honoring me with this scholarship. It is scholarship funds such as this that make it possible for me to attend an institute of higher education and achieve my life-long goals. My grandfather, William F. McGoldrick Sr., would be thrilled to know that the association that he lovingly dedicated so much of his time to is continuing to help younger generations. Thank you again for bestowing me with this honor.

Sincerely
*Katelyn M. Mahoney*

*Dear Mr. Short,*

I have received the scholarship and thank you all very much for your generous award, which I have been given. College is never something easily afforded and through your efforts my burden has been lightened. I greatly appreciate both your current efforts to aid the youth and your invaluable previous efforts. You all have helped me realize my dream of attending Vanderbilt University. More importantly, thank you for serving our country in the Army. The sacrifices made by the men in the Americal Division Association have preserved our nation, our freedom and our way of life.

Sincerely
*Stephen Arndt*

*Dear Mr. Short,*

Thank you very much for the ADVA scholarship. I will forward the check to my university next week. I am attaching a picture of myself with my grandfather, Stanley J. Marwil.

Sincerely
*Scott J. Marwil*

## FAR WEST CHAPTER

AZ CA CO HI NV NM UT

**COMMANDER**
**Richard A. Merlin**
[redacted]
Riverside, CA 92503
[redacted]

**SEC/TREAS**
**Gene McGrath**
[redacted]
Pahrump, NV 89048
[redacted]

**Vice Commander** John Bowley
**Sergeant-At-Arms** Curt Rothacker
**Chaplain** Pat Tognoli

This will be my last message as the Far West Chapter Commander. This September I will complete my second term as Chapter Commander. The last 4 years have been very enjoyable, and I believe we have accomplished some good things. While some Chapters around the country are falling, we are in good condition. Our membership is larger and stronger than it was four years ago. We have over $6,000.00 in our checking account – about double what is was in 2002. We have a great newsletter, and maybe the only one in all of ADVA that is in color. We have improved our reunions, and have gotten more Vietnam Vets involved. Best of all, we hosted the 2004 National Reunion in Reno, which was one of the biggest and best the Americal has ever had.

On the down side, we have lost a few of our WWII Vets; the reunions are just not the same without them. I feel blessed that I had the opportunity to meet most of these fine men over the last few years, and I will never forget them. Although I won't be continuing as Far West Chapter Commander, I will continue serving you at the national level. As of July 1st. 2006, I was appointed the new Junior Vice Commander of the ADVA.

Thank you for your support and special thanks to the WWII Vets who trusted me enough to hand over the reigns of the Chapter. I hope I did you well.

*REUNION 2006*

This year's annual Chapter reunion has been scheduled for September 17-19 in Las Vegas at the Golden Nugget Hotel. Activities include the "Fremont Street Experience", sight seeing, gaming, and spending time visiting with old friends in the hospitality suite. A business meeting including election of new Chapter officers has been planned, as well as a dinner dance. The date and location of the 2007 reunion is also on the agenda.

*NEW CHAPTER OFFICERS*

Far West Chapter members please take note: your Chapter officers are changing, and new ones are being elected at this year's business meeting. This will change where you send Far West Chapter dues payments, correspondence, news articles, and how you direct other business with the Chapter. As of this publication, the results of the election are not known. Please watch future publications of the Cannon, national newsletter, and mailings to obtain new information.

*CONGRATULATIONS NEW NATIONAL OFFICERS*

Far West Chapter salutes and congratulates the following members of our Chapter who have been selected for National Offices:

Rich Merlin – Junior Vice Commander
Lloyd Morrell – Executive Council
Pat Tognoli – Scholarship Fund Trustee

*WELCOME NEW MEMBER*

We are pleased to welcome another new member to the Far West Chapter. He is Vietnam veteran James W. Woodworth who served with the HQ Co., 5/46th Inf., 198th Bde. in 1969.

Our roster now numbers 153 members.

## NORTHWEST CHAPTER

AK WA OR ID MT WY

**COMMANDER**
**David Hammond**
[redacted]
Beaverton, OR 97005
[redacted]

Thanks to all who attended the ADVA 2006 Portland reunion. The reunion was a great success and the weather was even greater. See the article in this newsletter issue for reunion highlights.

Reunion Memory Books. The memory books will go to print the last part of August. Anyone wishing to order a book please contact me. Cost is $20. Those of you who pre-ordered or purchased at the time of the reunion will have a book mailed to you.

Reunion T-shirts and Travel Coffee Mugs. We have a few T-shorts and travel mugs still available. T-shirts are $10. Mugs are $5.00. The ADVA License plate frames that were given to attendees are available from the ADVA PX.

## GREAT LAKES REGIONAL CHAPTER

IL IN MI MN WI

**COMMANDER**
**Dale J. Belke**
[redacted]
Brodhead, WI 53520
[redacted]

**SEC/TREAS**
**Gene McGrath**
[redacted]
Pahrump, NV 89048
[redacted]

It is my pleasure to inform you that Dale Belke is our new Great Lakes Chapter Commander. Dale served with the 1st/20th Infantry in 1970 and has served as Chaplain for the Great Lakes Chapter for several years. He is employed by the state of Wisconsin working with Veterans.

Plans are in process for the 21st Winterfest R&R All Veterans Reunion in New Glarus, Wisconsin on January 11-14, 2007. Looking forward to seeing everyone again and some first timers. There will be a Great Lakes Chapter Meeting on Saturday morning, January 13, at 9:00AM on the 2nd floor in the conference room at the Chalet Landhaus Hotel.

Our Senior Vice Commander, John (Dutch) DeGroot has been serving as an Air Force reservist in the Middle East. We look forward to him coming home in September. Welcome home Dutch!

Plans are in the making for a National Reunion in Washington, D.C. for the 25th Anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Veterans Day 2007. The dates are November 9-12. A hotel has been selected. A lot of Americal groups are interested in attending this special celebration in 2007. More details to follow later. We are looking for sponsors, if anyone is interested.

For those of you that may not be a member of the Great Lakes Chapter yet, the dues are $10/year or save and pay $45 for five years. This covers the cost of three newsletters a year. For all current members please check your mailing label in the cover of the Great Lakes Newsletter to find the expiration dates of your dues. If you have no date, we welcome you to join us. Please fill out page 2 of the Chapter Newsletter and send back to Great Lakes Regional Chapter, c/o Terry Babler, Adjutant, [redacted], New Glarus, WI 53574.

## SOUTH MIDWEST CHAPTER

AR LA OK TX

**COMMANDER**
**Cameron F. Baird**
[redacted]
Stonewall, TX 78671
[redacted]

Ballots included in the last chapter newsletter have decided several important issues relating to chapter business. Most importantly, Mr. Paul Grice has been elected as Chapter Treasurer. The other ballot items are still being tabulated and will be announced in the next newsletter. If you have recently moved or have not been receiving a newsletter, please contact the chapter commander for a complimentary copy.

All members are invited to participate in the Veterans Day parade in Dallas on Saturday, November 11th. Anyone who would like to take part should contact ADVA National Adjutant Roger Gilmore (contact information located inside the front cover of the newsletter). Please contact him ASAP so that the appropriate plans can be made.

## EASTERN REGIONAL CHAPTER

DC DE KY MD NJ NY OH PA VA WV

**COMMANDER**
**John "Jay" Flanagan**
[redacted]
Cranford, NJ 07016
[redacted]

**VICE COMMANDER**
**Conrad Steers**
[redacted]
Hicksville, NY 11801
[redacted]

**SECRETARY**
**Position Currently Open**

**TREASURER**
**Mark Deam**
[redacted]
Sidney, OH 45365
[redacted]

**Status: Eastern Chapter Merger With New England**

The merger of the New England Chapter with the Eastern Region Chapter has not been finalized but it is in the works. The New England Chapter has suffered from a lack of participation and, after discussing the possibilities of a merger, the NEC Commander, Rolly Castronova and I agreed to merge the two chapters into one. We expect this to be completed sometime in the 4th calendar quarter. The option of New England becoming a separate chapter again is always a possibility, which we will fully support. There must be enough interest and participation in the future and we need some Vets to come forward to make it happen, to make it attractive to the ADVA members living in the New England area.

**Chapter Reunion**

Vice-Commander Connie Steers has done an excellent job putting together our 2006 reunion, which will be in October in Ronkonkoma, New Your (Long Island). It is a beautiful area and Connie has arranged for a variety of tours, shopping and museums for our entertainment. He also has a great banquet lined up for Saturday night. All ADVA members, especially the New England members, are invited to join us. Please check the Reunion Flyer inside the back cover of the newsletter for the registration form with all the details of the reunion. Once again, it is our hope that many of the New England Chapter members will join us.

**Officers**

Sadly, Joe and Irene Tunis found it necessary to resign from the position of Chapter Secretary. They did a great job for the Chapter for a great many years. Joe and Eileen were a great source of knowledge about past Chapter activities and members. I found their assistance invaluable. If anyone is interested in the position of Chapter Secretary, please contact me as soon as possible. My home phone is: [redacted]. My e-mail is: [redacted]

Jay Flanagan – Chapter Commander

## CENTRAL MID-WEST CHAPTER

ND SD KE NE MO IA

**COMMANDER**
**David A. Chrystal Sr**
[redacted]
Centralia, MO 65240
[redacted]

## ARTHUR R. WOOD SOUTH EAST REGION CHAPTER

AZ CA CO HI NV NM UT

**COMMANDER**
**Paul Stiff**
[redacted]
Port Charlotte, FL 33949
[redacted]

**SEC/TREAS**
**Allen Feser**
[redacted]
Lindenhurst, NY 11757
[redacted]

## NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

MA NH VT ME CT RI

**COMMANDER**
**PNC Roland Castronova**
[redacted]
Peabody, MA 01960
[redacted]

# Reunion Report: Portland 2006

*By Dave Hammond*

The cold water of the Willamette River splashed over the side of the speeding jet boat. Some people shrieked with delight. Some people just shrieked. This was day two of the 2006 ADVA national reunion in Portland, Oregon.

Three years ago I missed a meeting at the national reunion. As has been true for many of us in our past military experiences, you don't volunteer. You get volunteered. I was approached by the then National Commander and Vice Commander and asked to host a reunion in Portland. Not wanting to appear as a slacker, I said I would give it some thought and figured with three years lead time the world may come to an end or I might have a heart attack and die. Neither happened, so Portland was the site of the 2006 reunion.

Dave Hammond, Reunion Chairman, with wife Christie, welcome Americal Vets at the Marriott

With the endless support and help of my wife Christie, the help of my Charlie Company, 5/46th, 198th, family, and friends, we pulled it off.

My goal was to keep it simple. Make plenty of time for vets and families to socialize and get a chance to see Portland and Oregon. The weekend prior to the reunion we had nothing but rain and wind. If that weather would have continued, I contemplated a dull knife or a jump off of one of Portland's many bridges. Sunny skies and record temperatures were set on the reunion weekend. There must be an Americal sun god because he shown on the reunion.

The Waterfront Marriott was my first choice for the reunion's location. The Marriott staff was excellent in helping with the planning and accommodating the many changes that happened as the reunion drew closer. The beautiful hotel located in downtown Portland and within walking distance to the Riverplace Marina made it ideal. Attendees could stroll along the waterfront shops, bars, restaurants, and floating restaurant. This was also the loading area for our Friday night jet boat rides and picnic.

Thursday was a travel and arrival day for most. The hospitality room and vendor rooms were open and attended by many.

Friday morning began with tours of the Columbia Gorge, the Oregon Coast, and City of Portland. Friday afternoon attendees followed the sounds of the bugle call by Ken Teglia, our own pied piper, which directed all to the dockside pick up area where jet boats sped us across the choppy waves of the Willamette River for an evening of music, a picnic dinner, jet boat rides, and a tour of the USS Blueback Submarine. Grant Finkbeiner even led the group in my favorite Vietnam song played by the DJ, "We Gotta Get Out Of This Place." After being jet boat shuttled back to the Marriot, the hospitality room was the gathering place for cold drinks, lively conversation, and catching up with old and new friends. The place was packed.

Americal Vets from two wars relax together

Saturday was a day for ADVA meetings or a free day for many to explore the city. The general membership meeting was well attended. First timers were introduced and welcomed, along with the ADVA council and commander comments. Dr. Richard Verrone spoke and showed a slide presentation of the Texas Tech Vietnam depository and talked of how important it is to preserve the Vietnam war history.

Reunion Hospitality Room was always filled with lots of Vets, photos and memories

The afternoon activities featured Kim Cook, a veteran and published author of *Do Bar Fights Count? How to write your Military Stories*. Kim spoke on the importance of writing our military stories for history and family. Kim's Dad is a WWII Americal Veteran and her Mom is also a WWII Veteran.

The Saturday evening festivities begin with a first timer's

Grant Finkbeiner leads Vets in singing "We Gotta Get Out of This Place!"

reception. It was a time for ADVA officers to personally welcome all those attendees who were making their first reunion. Sorry to say I missed it as I was in a frantic search for my notes for the banquet, which was to begin in less than two hours. I never did find them. The banquet began with a social cocktail hour as guests begin finding their seats.

The lights were dimmed as music and a slide show presentation was shown on two large screens on each side of the stage. Chris Dauterman, with the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs, did a fantastic job of handling all of the audio visual tasks and produced an outstanding and very moving show.

The colors were presented by Portland's American Legion Post #1 honor guard who were invited and accepted to join

Dr. Richard Verrone, Texas Tech's Vietnam Center (Lubbock, Texas) givers ADVA members an update on the centers' activities. Americal Vietnam Vets are encouraged to contact the center to donate papers and artifacts when they are ready to release them to preserve the Americal's history in Vietnam

us for dinner. Sharon Dusté sang a beautiful version of the National Anthem, and although I may be a little biased as she is my sister in law, it was great.

Dinner of baked Alaskan salmon or broiled flank steak was enjoyed by all before the evening's program began. The WWII veterans were asked to stand and were presented with red Portland rose boutonnieres and corsages with a round of applause. We were fortunate to have nineteen in attendance, two of which were women.

Larry Watson, the new national commander, gave his welcoming comments. Special guests included Jim Willis, Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs and a fellow Vietnam vet, who gave a welcome from Oregon's Governor and displayed a tattered Oregon flag that was flown in Vietnam in honor of Task Force Oregon.

(Left to right) Wayne Bryant-Product Sales Director, Dr. Richard Verrone – The Vietnam Center, Jay Flanagan – Eastern Chapter Commander and Spencer Baba – National Finance Officer, at the Executive Council Meeting.

It was the reunion's honor to have Mr. Nick Bacon, Medal of Honor Recipient attend. The MOH citation was read by Gary Noller and Nick was asked and consented to say a few words.

Another of our special guests was Marine Lance Corporal Jeremy Wilson; a recent returnee from Iraq. Jeremy was introduced as Mike Colligan's guest who supplied Jeremy with beef jerky and care packages from home while serving in Iraq. Jeremy received a standing welcome and even a gift of a 1957 Chevy after the banquet from one of our own. More on the gift in a later newsletter. Jeremy and I are still in shock.

Bottles of wine with the Americal crest that had been placed on tables prior to the dinner were given away to a lucky person at each table. The wine was a gift from Sharon and Bob Dusté of Villa Shasté Winery in Glen Ellen, California; my sister and brother-in-law, and long time veteran supporters.

A very emotional slide presentation with Lee Greenwood's "Proud to be an American" closed the evening's program. I saw a few tears shed. Gary Noller is now in the process of possibly linking it to the ADVA web site. Live music and dancing continued on til almost midnight, and then it was lights out.

All in all, the reunion seemed a success. I hope all who attended had a great time. Again, thanks to everyone who helped make it that way. But one word of advice: Don't miss a meeting or you, too, may have the pleasure of hosting a national reunion.

Dave Hammond
2006 ADVA Portland Reunion Chairman

At the podium, Dave Eichhorn, representing the Eastern Chapter, announces the 2007 National Reunion will be in Buffalo, New York.

(Left) Newly elected National Commander Larry Watson and (right) Bob Short, ADVA Scholarship Chairman.

A Portion of the Vets at the Annual Meeting

Two members of the "Old Guard" chat before the annual meeting.

Jim Willis, Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs, and Vietnam Vet, speaks at the annual banquet.

Members of the 23rd MP Company (Vietnam) pose for a reunion picture. Joining them (front row – center) is MOH Recipient Nick Bacon who was not an MP in Vietnam but his son is now a member of the 23rd MP Company on active duty.
(Front row-far right) is reunion guest of honor, Jim Willis-Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs.

Dave Hammond – Reunion Chairman – by dockside in a reflective moment.

## Americal WWII Museum Update

*By David W. Taylor*

**Moving Forward**

In the April-May-June newsletter I wrote about the need for modernizing the Americal WWII Museum in Worcester, Massachusetts. Since then much work has been done but much work has yet to be accomplished. We were fortunate to secure a 200-hour internship (at no cost to the ADVA) with Preston Hill, a Harvard student who is completing his work for a Masters Degree in Museum Studies from Harvard University's Extension School. From mid-June until late July Preston worked in the museum with a set of objectives from me and he has accomplished much. Key items include:

- Draft a museum layout to reconfigure existing artifacts as well as providing additional graphics, which will accurately portray the story of the Americal in WWII.
- Database museum holdings to include a photographic catalogue.
- Recommend a Collection Policy and an Accession Policy for the museum's advisory committee to review and approve. In the past years items were donated to the museum, which had no relevance to the Americal Division or the war in the South Pacific. At other times a few items were apparently loaned to ADVA members and never returned. These practices will no longer be permitted.

Harvard Intern Preston Hill

**Museum Vision**

The advisory committee has approved our vision statement for the Americal WWII Museum:

**"To serve as the largest non-government repository of artifacts and records pertaining to the Americal Army Division in World War II and serve as a premiere reference source for education and historical inquiry"**

**Museum Mission**

The advisory committee has approved the following statement regarding the museum's mission:

The mission of the Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA) World War II Museum is to collect, preserve, research and educate regarding the history, culture, documents and artifacts of the Americal Army Division in the Pacific Theatre during World War II.

- **Collect.** Maintain an active effort to acquire donations of materials & holdings from the Association's WWII Veteran membership.
- **Preserve.** Apply professional and contemporary curatorial standards to the museum to accurately document and safeguard its holdings for future generations.
- **Research.** Afford the general public and historians seamless access through on-site as well as electronic means of obtaining information about the division.
- **Educate.** Provide primary source information in original form and content, without bias, to ensure an accurate understanding of the division's history during WWII.

**Phasing of Project on Target**

In the past issue I listed a number of short-term objectives for the museum and targeted completion dates. I want to bring you up-to-date on them:

**Vision & Mission Statement** (Target date April 30). Approved by the Advisory Committee April 30

**Inventory of Holdings** (Target date May 30) completed May 8th. The initial inventory was completed on our behalf by one of the full-time archivists at the Salisbury St. Armory, where our museum resides on the 2nd floor. In addition our intern, Preston Hill, is completing his inventory (mentioned earlier) by the end of August.

I have compared the existing inventory (which had been in place for many years) to the one I contracted when I became curator (completed May 8th). A few items are missing from the earlier inventory. At this time I cannot tell if they were loaned out, or remained at Fort Devens, MA where the museum was located prior to being moved to Worcester, MA. We are still looking into this.





**Museum Re-Design Proposal** completed on target August 15th. It will be discussed at the Advisory Committee meeting on October 3, 2006, at the museum.

**Transfer of Vietnam** holdings to Texas Tech's Vietnam Center is on hold momentarily. It was to be accomplished by August 30th. We will accomplish the transfer by year's end, after our meeting on October 3rd.

**Non-Americal – Non-Pacific War Holdings** (these include things not even connected to WWII) are being evaluated as to their disposition.

**Fundraising Approved!**
**Board of Trustees Established**

I am pleased to announce the ADVA Executive Council voted overwhelmingly to approve a WWII Museum Fundraising program. The fundraising begins with this issue of the ADVA Newsletter. We plan to have a fundraiser each fall to give us the means to move forward with our museum modernization. Please be as generous as you can to this worthy project.

Because the Museum Advisory Committee is composed – in part - of ADVA associate members, I have formed a Board of Trustees of ADVA members to oversee the expenditure of funds raised for the museum. The Advisory Committee will continue to be the key driver for overseeing museum modernization, with oversight from the Board of Trustees. Serving on the board will be the following:

- **Dave Taylor** – ADVA Sr. Vice Commander-WWII Historian-Acting Museum Curator, who will be Chairman of the Board of Trustees.
- **PNC Jim Buckle** – WWII Vet who will represent the 182nd Regiment.
- **Les Hines** – ADVA Vietnam Historian whose passion for preserving Americal history is well known.
- **PNC Ron Ellis** – Assistant National Finance Officer who will mange the monies raised by fundraising (placed in an ADVA account) and handle disbursements.
- **Mitchell Przybycien** – ADVA Executive Council member and WWII Vet who will represent the 132nd Regiment.
- **PNC Gary Noller** – Editor-in-Chief and pointman for our ADVA involvement in Texas Tech's Vietnam Center, who brings a deep passion for our preservation goals.
- **Larry Watson** – National Commander
- **The 164th Regiment** will be represented on the board. We are currently surveying members to make an appointment.

## *One Last Campaign for the Old Guard!*

**MUSEUM**

The Americal WWII Museum
**All Donations Tax Deductible!**

***ADVA Vets (WWII & Vietnam)***
***Please donate to a worthy cause!***

***☑ Yes! I want to help perpetuate the history of the Americal Division.***

Send your tax-deductible check made payable to:
**ADVA WWII Museum**

Send your check to:
**PNC Ronald Ellis**
[redacted]
**Henderson, Texas 75652**

**Your canceled check from the bank will be your receipt for tax purposes!**
**Any inquiries for donating materials (artifacts or documents) to the museum please contact:**

**David W. Taylor**
[redacted]
**Medina, Ohio 44256**
[redacted]

# A Long Vacation

(At Government Expense)

*Siegel "Bob" Varner*

(**Editors Note:** This is part 3 of Bob Siegel's Americal WWII memoirs, from the 1st and 2nd Quarter newsletter issues, 2006. His story picks up with the infantry march to Cebu City)

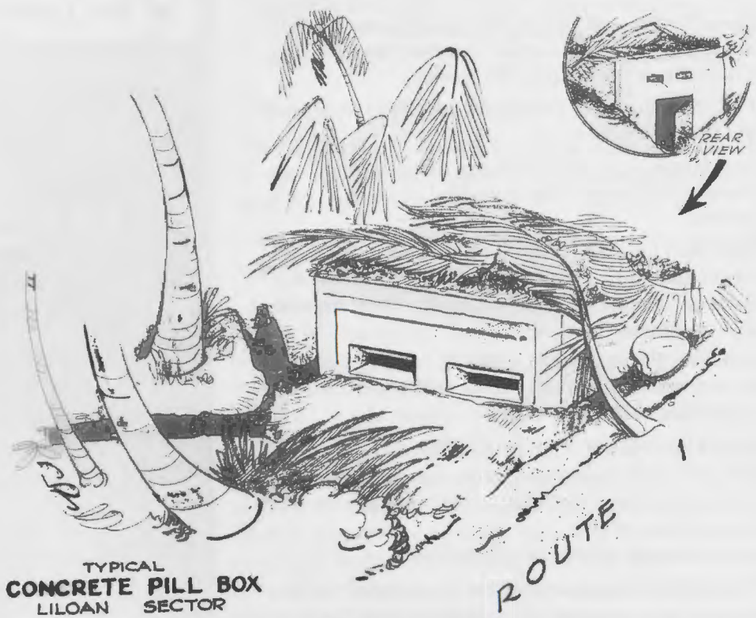
**Cebu, Philippine Islands** (*con't*)

We had passed a small church, which had no defenses. Later that day a Jap force counter-attacked and we had some losses. We dug in that night south of the city, feeling pretty lucky. The next morning we crossed a long area of mud salt flats until we came to the city. We were completely unopposed in the city. We wandered on the docks and by the old fort. I think it was built by the Spaniards hundreds of years ago (Gloria and I got to go inside in 1983 when we visited Cebu). As we walked through the city an American who had been on the island during the entire Japanese occupation met us. The Filipinos had hidden him whenever necessary to prevent his capture. Another Filipino, who was a veteran of the US Navy, greeted us cheerfully. When we stopped for the night it was near a convent. The nuns who came out to talk to us were wearing a very unusual headdress. It looked like they could fly.

The Japs had elected not to defend the city, but the hills behind the city were a different story. Babag Ridge, as it was called, was honeycombed with tunnels and pillboxes. Some direct assaults were attempted, unsuccessfully. So we pulled out and moved north to supposedly outflank those positions. We camped in a small grove of trees at the foot of a ridgeline, perpendicular to the main ridge. Our foxholes were shallow because we didn't expect any trouble. Just at dusk there was a small burst of small-arms fire and the report came to us that a Jap patrol of about 10 men had walked right into one of our platoons. Six of them never left. All within 100 feet of me and I didn't see a thing.

The next day we started up one of the ridgelines leaving to Babag. We met "K" or "L" company coming down with some of their wounded. Part way up, we were ordered back down to a better defensive position, expecting attacks later. We dug in deeper but nothing happened that night, or the next day. Then we got orders to "be ready to move out at midnight." We were going to use the old "Dawn Attack Strategy." We did leave at midnight, leaving our nice safe holes behind. It was a moonless night, so we could barely see where we were walking. We had gone about a thousand yards when we met the Japs who had the same strategy in mind. Our lead scout, Russell Peterson, from Nebraska, was killed in the first few seconds. I, and some of the rest of the squad, jumped into a bomb crater and waited for orders. It was so dark we couldn't see each other four feet apart.

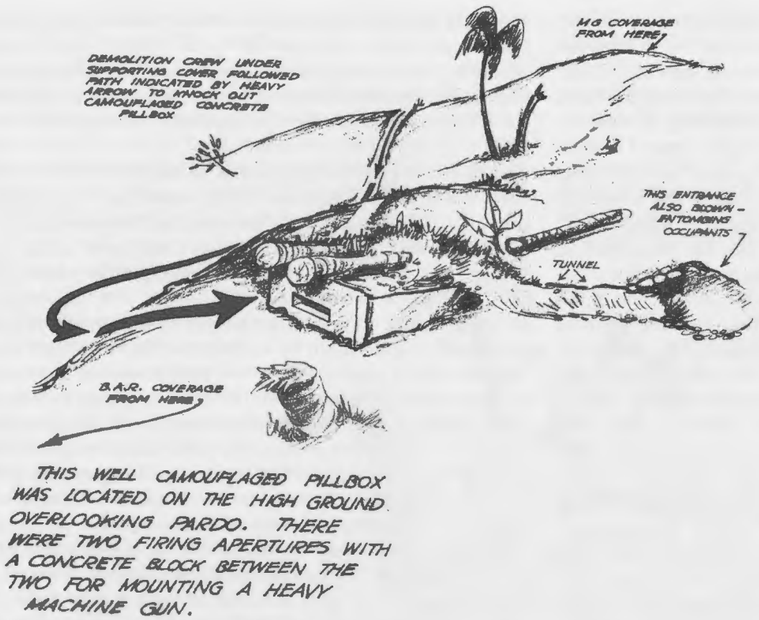
There was a patch of bamboo 10 to 15 feet from us dimly outlined against the sky. All of a sudden I heard, "HAIAKU! ... HAIAKU!" (HURRY! HURRY!), and four or five forms rushed by me. They were so close I could have touched them with something shorter than a ten-foot pole. But it happened so fast that they were gone before I, or anyone else got a shot at them. I was excited but not scared like before. After a short delay we were ordered back to the positions we had just left. We got back at three or four in the morning. At about 5:30-6:00AM the Japs came at us with a major attack. They lost over sixty men and I think we had about 10 or 15 killed. The brunt of the attack came at the sector to my right and along the top of the ridge. To my front was a very steep drop. My hole-mate and I satisfied ourselves by dropping a few grenades over the edge – just to discourage any Japs from sneaking up on us. They did on one side, crawling into a hole and stabbing the occupants. We lost two or three men this way. The next morning we walked out in front of the line and looked at the dead. They didn't seem like people, more like wax dummies. They had holes and gouges in them – as if the wax was soft and pliable and a big hand had scooped out here and there. I think this is the reason I lost my desire to be a deer hunter. After seeing what a rifle slug can do to a man, no thanks.




Drawings depict Japanese defenses against Americal soldiers on Cebu. Source: "Mines, Booby Traps and Obstacles Encountered on Cebu, Philippine Islands" (Prepared by the Americal's 57tb Engineer Combat battalion and published by the Eighth Army 67th Engineer Topographical Company, July 1945. Document supplied by Siegal "Bob" Varner, 132nd Regt.)








Drawings depict Japanese defenses against Americal soldiers on Cebu. Source: "Mines, Booby Traps and Obstacles Encountered on Cebu, Philippine Islands" (Prepared by the Americal's 57th Engineer Combat battalion and published by the Eighth Army 67th Engineer Topographical Company, July 1945. Document supplied by Siegal "Bob" Varner, 132nd Regt.)

We waited, but no more attacks came so we headed out again. We came to the end of the ridge and had to cross a valley to get to the next hill – Hill 26. We could see across the valley and count numerous foxholes. We held up for an artillery bombardment. We even had a couple tanks for support. Then we crossed the valley and headed up the hill. There was a little resistance, but not much.We saw some of the Japs climb out and run over the hill. At one point I rested my rifle in the crotch of a small tree and took a few shots at them. I thought one went down after I shot. But I don't know if I hit him or someone else did or maybe he just stumbled. Whatever, we just kept going to the top. Bruce Sexton, my buddy, took a Jap battle flag from a dead Japs helmet. It had the bloodstains and a few white phosphorus burns to mark it as real. We didn't have time to scrounge in the front of the attack.

After we got to the top we could see all the way back to Cebu City and the sea. Squad leader Sgt. Bowles and I were going to dig in on the front edge of the hill facing Babag Ridge, which incidentally towered over us. We took turns digging and resting in the shade of a small tree. As I sat there, Wham! Wham! Wham! The Japs on Babag opened up on us with a 20-mm cannon using exploding shells. If I said before I was lucky, I repeat it now. The first shell landed so close to me that I always felt it was between my feet as I sat there. I had the shrapnel in the heel of my left boot to help me in that belief. Bowles was hit on the inside of his left thigh and bled, as the saying goes, "profusely". He said it didn't hurt too badly and, as long as it got him out of action he'd settle. The third person, a new replacement, who was to share our foxhole was also hit, but not badly. We pulled back to the back of the hill where it was safer. Another squad member was also hit. This is when I was promoted to assistant squad leader, because Bowles was evacuated. Hank Zygoski, who was assistant, was promoted to Squad Leader. The first platoon was digging in much lower and to our left. They really suffered heavy casualties. I think it was about eight to ten killed and twenty or more wounded. When we finally got dug in the Japs didn't fire at us often because the flash of their guns would draw artillery fire from our guns. Their positions were tunnels from the backside of the ridge all the way through to the face of an almost perpendicular wall.

So while we held, other troops tried to outflank what was an impossible position to take frontally. About ten feet from our hole there was an Artillery Forward Observer (FO) officer and his crew. The first night, rather late, the Japs did let loose a burst. The FO was hit, and because he couldn't see, thought he was hit worse than what he was. He cried for a medic and generally made a fuss. He was evacuated and replaced by another FO who was a red head. That night the Japs opened up again, they must have had that one hole really zeroed in because the second FO was also hit. This guy was no cry baby though, he got on the radio and within minutes – and a string of curses about "those *#!#!! Japs" the rounds he called for started to hit the wall shortly. They never fired on that spot again.

It think it was the second or third day that my friend Donald "Red" Krumm was slightly wounded as were six or eight other guys from an attack by the Japs on our flank. The wounded were grouped around the company command post (CP) for the night and were going to be taken back the next day, because of fear of an ambush on the trail. I talked to "Red" and he was all smiles because it wasn't a bad wound – but bad enough to evacuate him. Some of the less seriously wounded had to stay because our ranks were shot to pieces. During the night the Japs hit us again from the parallel ridge with machine guns and mortars. "Red" and three others were killed and several more were wounded again. I sometimes wondered if he might have been safer where he was previously.

At lunch time one day I was going to the CP when the Japs opened up with knee mortars. The knee mortar was really like a long distance hand grenade. Powerful enough

to kill but not enough blast to dig craters. Anyway I didn't have much choice, there were no holes close by, so I just hit the ground. The rounds were getting closer, and all I could do was hug the ground closer. Even one that landed within 3 feet of me didn't hit me. If I had been standing or even sitting up, I'm sure I would have had a Purple Heart. I believe this is one of the causes of my hearing loss. My ears rang for two weeks after. Another reason could be the jungle-rot (fungus) that I had in my ears from "Bogie" (Bougainville).

Occasionally the artillery would fire an illumination round at night, which would light a huge area as the parachute-suspended flare floated to the earth. It was one of the few beautiful sights of the war. Another was the sight of cruisers or destroyers firing support as guided by radio contact. Their accuracy was remarkable. We were never happy to see anyone killed, but one that was more special was Al Condari. He was scheduled to "rotated" and was only waiting for a sergeant to replace him. He had been hit twice and stayed with his men. The second wound was fatal. I remember him as the last time I saw him. Covered with blood from one of the men in his platoon.

About this time Sgt. Sommers became ill with some bug or was wounded and evacuated to Leyte. Later we got word that he had died of one or the other. It seemed strange that he would die that way instead of in the field. When we were relieved we returned to Cebu City for a shower, change of clothes and hot food. That was when we learned that President Roosevelt had died three days earlier on April 12th, my 20th birthday. After a short break we headed (walked) up the road to Babag Ridge. We were amazed at the fortifications we passed and all of the supplies stored in the tunnels, including bolts of silk. As we passed one tunnel somebody thought he spotted a Jap inside. Standard procedure: Throw in grenades, move to position in front, fire automatic weapons into the interior. One of the more gung ho types threw in the grenades and reached for my BAR. Needless to say, I stepped up and fired it myself. I've often thought, "how stupid!" It goes to show how powerful "peer pressure" is. After all, who wants to be known as a coward?

**Up The Coast ... Danao.**

While we were waiting to board LCT's for our next action, Joe E. Brown (a famous comedian) heard that we were going to embark for another landing. Although he was scheduled to put on a show for other troops, he came over and put on a special one for us. The infantry especially favored him because he seemed to favor us. The amphibious landing was made at Danao, 20 miles up the coast. It was unopposed so we moved inland and set up a defensive perimeter. We were on top of a hill that had a lot of underbrush. Our foxhole was only 6 inches deep because the ground was so rocky. The trail in front of us didn't look like it was used very much. That night after I had done my shift of guard duty and awakened Hank for his turn, I went to sleep outside my hole. The bottom of the hole was very rough. Suddenly a BAR opened up on some Japs coming up the trail. It was Hank, with my BAR at that. He hit one of them because we could hear him moaning through the night. We could not see him to shoot him so grenades were used to try to "silence" him. Finally at dawn he died. He was no more than 30 feet from the hole. Hank said they were so close before he saw them he didn't have time to wake me first. So much for "unopposed" landings.

A day or two later we moved to the inland road, right next to a bridge. The people of the town had evacuated in advance of the landing and the next day they returned – all 10,000 of them. It seemed as if all of them came across "our bridge". All day long they came, carrying what possessions they could. One family had 8 turkeys (yes, live turkeys!) tied in pairs, strung on poles. The people took four off the poles and tried to give them to us. We couldn't convince them that we didn't need them, so we took them but gave them to some other Filipinos later. (When Gloria and I visited in 1983 the <u>same</u> foxhole was still there. It was occupied by a family and had been improved by the addition of a canvas roof). While the "parade" of returning villagers was going on some one told us there were "Hapon" (rhymes with Capon) in a nearby field. Quickly a volunteer patrol was formed to check it out. We heard rifle shots, American only, and then silence. The patrol came back and told us that there were three ... they were sick and no condition to fight. I've often wondered if they might have been taken prisoner. But those who gone out on the patrol had many friends killed and were in no mood to be captors.

I developed a fever so the medic sent me to a mobile hospital that was in the church in Danao. The sick Filipinos who tried to stop there for aid were told a hospital had been set up for them farther on. There were three exceptions. First, a six year-old boy had been used by the enemy soldiers for bayonet practice, with multiple stab wounds in his stomach area. The American doctors worked on him until 2AM, when he died. Next, an 11 or 12 year-old girl had been "abused"; her arms were sliced to the bone from shoulder to elbow. She lived, at least until they sewed her up and moved her to another hospital. The third was an older woman who had walked six miles after a Jap officer struck her with a samurai sword. The blow almost decapitated her. She could not hold her head up. The staff worked on her all night long, but she died. The cots for the GI's were in the center of the church and the operations were performed in the altar area. The church was 300 years old. Of stone, it had never seen cruelty like this before. It is always hard to lose friends, but we are there to fight. The civilian losses just don't seem fair. I had even less regard for the Japanese after this episode.

After a few days I was sent back to "I" Company to begin the next phase. We had a long truck ride up the coast road, which was a first class highway. We headed inland supported by tanks, at least partway. Then it was the old routine, walking across many a hill, looking for the enemy. At one stop I was relaxing with my BAR on the ground next to me. We were dispersed like we were supposed to be when I spotted a Jap. He had jumped out of a hole 100 yards away on the adjacent ridge and had gone over the top of that hill. He was gone before I had a chance to get off a shot. Besides,





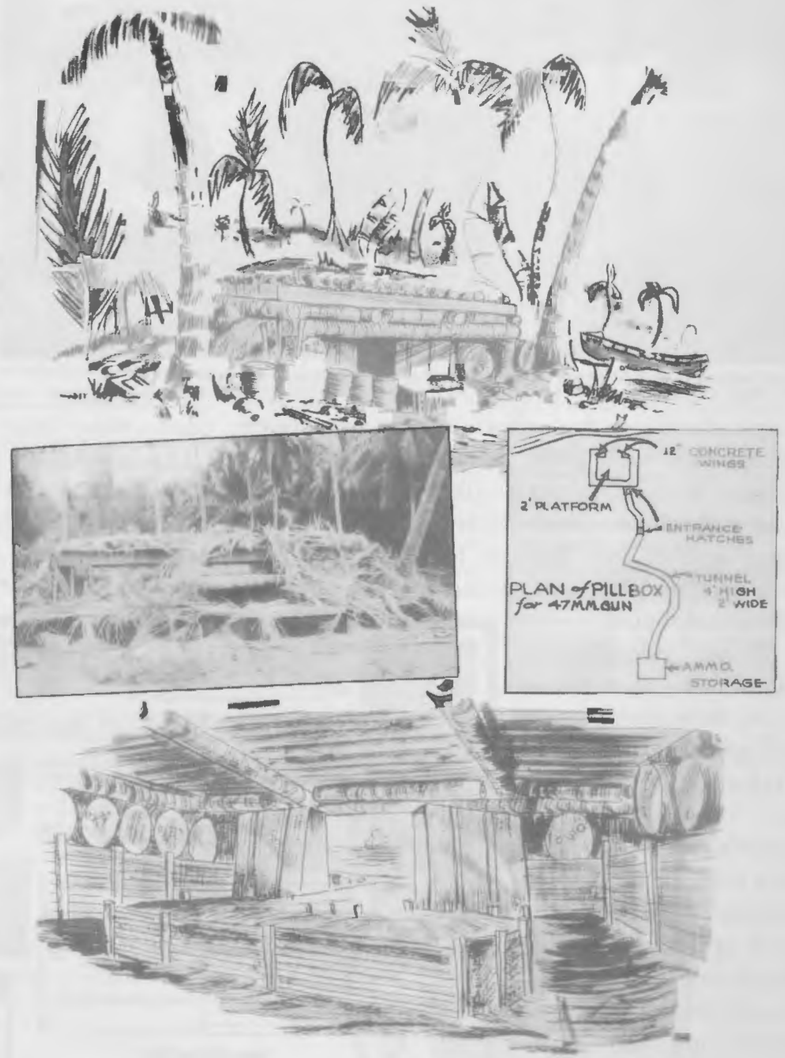
if he had any friends in that hole I would have been a dead duck, if I had moved. <u>If</u> ...that is.

Later we reached a village, which had been shelled slightly. A banana tree had been knocked down. The small yellow bananas were some of the best I have ever tasted. Then we started over the mountains. I don't know the specific requirements to be called a mountain but loaded as we were, it felt like one. We followed one ridge along a trail. The locals had told us that there were Japs in the area. We went into a normal patrol formation. Two scouts 50 yards out with me, and the BAR, 10 yards behind them. Then the rest of our squad, our platoon and the company were following.

A small L4 liaison plane was flying over in case we needed artillery support. All of a sudden he cut his engine. Leaning out the window he yelled, "Japs on the trail ahead". Then, re-starting his engine he pulled away, just barely missing the top of the ridge. So instead of following the trail, we went over a rise on the side. When I got to the top of the rise I could see on the trail a machine gun nest with two gunners. They were aimed at where we would have been if we had stayed on the path. I didn't say anything to my scouts; I just leveled my BAR and fired several bursts. Again, I have to say I don't know if I hit anything or not. Because, when I got on the other side of the rise to reload, I fell into a Jap foxhole. Immediately a large group estimated as a company began firing at us from a ridge which paralleled ours.

As long as we stayed motionless they didn't fire, but any movement brought on a fresh barrage. The scouts, very new to the squad, were afraid to get out of there. I was relatively "safe" in my hole so I had to threaten them to get them to move. As I told them, "when I move they'll fire and you'll get hit." First one got up and ran. He was hit in the arm. The second got up and ran. He was hit in the leg. When I poked my head up to see what was happening a sniper hit the one-inch diameter tree six inches form my face. The splinters made me think I had been hit (tell me again how they are poor shots). When I got out of my "safe haven" and started running fifty yards to the rest of the company, I fell. I did the fifty yards on my knees in record time! I didn't get hit; maybe the Japs were laughing too hard to aim better.

**Editors Note: This article is an edited version of Bob Varner's wartime autobiography. This edition is part 3. The final edition will be published in the 4th Quarter 2006 Newsletter.**

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**Drawings depict Japanese defenses against Americal soldiers on Cebu. Source: "Mines, Booby Traps and Obstacles Encountered on Cebu, Philippine Islands" (Prepared by the Americal's 57th Engineer Combat battalion and published by the Eighth Army 67th Engineer Topographical Company, July 1945. Document supplied by Siegal "Bob" Varner, 132nd Regt.)**

## The 164th Infantry Memorial Highway

The North Dakota State Highway Department on July 8, 2006 dedicated US Highway 2 –within the border of North Dakota- to become "The 164th Infantry Memorial Highway."

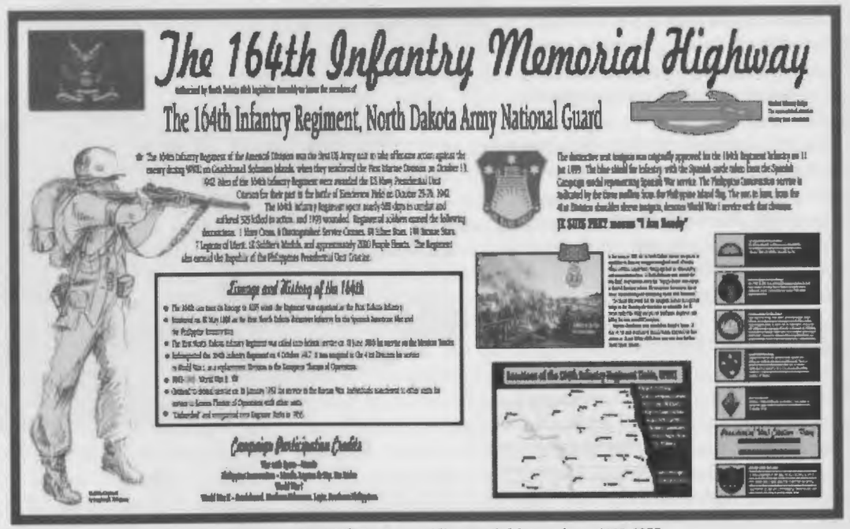
Past Presidents of the 164th Regiment Association hold the new Memorial Highway sign: (Left to right) Col (Ret) Vern Fetch, CW4 (Ret) Frank Eide, LTC (Ret) Bernie Wagner and Association Secretary/Treasurer Ben Kemp.

Spearheading this effort of the regiment's recognition was 164th Association President, Bernie Wagner, Hetty Walker, State Senator Larry Robinson from Valley City, ND, and State Senator Tom Trebeath from Cavalier, ND. Robinson and Trebeath sponsored the legislation at the state house.

Eleven identification signs have been placed along the highway at sites designated by the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT). In addition, five Historic Interpretive Panels will be placed at each of five rest stops on Highway 2 – one near Larimore, one near Devils Lake, one near Minot, one near Williston and another "in the middle of nowhere"! (Ergo the reason for a rest stop!). A sixth panel is being purchased by the Veterans Clubs of Valley City, where the highway dedication took place, and will be placed in the city's Veterans Park.

The interpretive panels will not only mention the 164th's service in WWII as part of the Americal Division but the regiments entire lineage and history from 1883 to 1955. The 164th Associations Executive Committee approved the content. Graphics Designer & Sign Consultant Dee Fields designed the layout of the panels with assistance from the 164th Newsletter Editor, Shirley J. Olgeirson and input from the 164th Executive Committee.

**Editors Note:** Grateful appreciation is given to Shirley J. Olgeirson, 164th Newsletter Editor, for providing the information and photos for this story. Your ADVA editor has a great working relationship with the 164th Association and its newsletter. We share stories and news, for the betterment of both associations.




Historical Interpretive Panels will feature the 164th Regiments' lineage & history from 1883-1955.





## LEGACY

**Editors Note:** This letter was recently sent to PNC Ron Ward, who initiated the ADVA Scholarship program

Dear Ron,

I feel as though I know you even though we have never met. That is maybe because I heard your name often from my father, Bob Beschle, in connection with the ADVA Scholarship Fund and because he spoke of you often. Thank you for sending the card and note to my mother after my father's death.

The ADVA Scholarship program has a special meaning to my family and me. I would like to share some of my experience with you. As you know my father was a long time member of the ADVA and enjoyed participating in its activities. When dad would finish an ADVA newsletter he would mail it to me so I could read it. When my children wanted to go to college, he encouraged them to apply of one of the association's scholarships. We were honored when our daughter Bethanie won a scholarship in 1996 and our other daughter Danielle was awarded a scholarship in 1997.

When my father died on February 8, 2006 we worked to put together a memorial service for him. We wanted to give a eulogy for him but because of the emotions involved my brother and sister did not think they could stand before the group to talk. My dad's two granddaughters could not be there for the service so my wife and I decided to read their ADVA Scholarship essays about their grandfather. Two former marines that blew Taps at the end of the service told me they were some of the best eulogies they had ever heard.

I want to thank the ADVA for the scholarship program. In the end the ADVA and the scholarship essay's helped us in ways we never expected. They helped my dads grandchildren, who could not be at the service, provide a fitting tribute to a man whose family feels is deserving of it. The scholarship essays … what a treasure they can be.

*Thomas Beschle – Proud Son of a WWII Veteran*

### *ADVA Scholarship Essay by Danielle Beschle – 1997*

My Grandfather, he was one of the lucky ones. One of those lucky guys shipped in from all around our country forming the Americal Division. He was lucky because for a few precious moments of his lifetime he had the privilege of being a part of world history and a part of making American history. Because of this call to duty and his newly government-issued friends, we're here today some fifty years later to enjoy, preserve and foster what those brave men accomplished on foreign battlefields.

The legacy to be brave, to be ready to stand up for something more important than yourself was forged by him in that hot jungle many years ago.

My Grandfather made me a part of that patriotic realization that integrity and responsibility come first. Each one of us in the family has a different reaction and frame of reference as to what my Grandfather accomplished because of and through the Americal. I was lucky to hear his words and wisdom. His stories displayed camaraderie among boys becoming men. His love of country, pride in his daily work and unit always exaggerate what is so great about the American way.

As a young man, my Grandfather saw wrong and tried to right it. He saw hurt and tried to heal it; he faced fear and outlived it. He took these responsibilities and wove them into a lifetime of personal and professional accomplishments. The Americal gave him a sense of purpose, focus and direction. The Americal experience became the basis of his life and this has, in turn, had an impact on my life. I feel lucky to be related to such a man.

The family portrait is now complete; his memories are now alive within all of us. His legacy to me remains. I felt like I had been there before, because he had been there first. I learned to love and respect this country deeply because my Grandfather loves it so completely. How lucky can an American kid get?

### *ADVA Scholarship Essay by Bethanie Beschle – 1996*

My Grandfather and the Americal – it's hard to separate them. It's hard to know where he leaves off and his involvement with the Americal begins, for they shall always remain intertwined. It's hard to imagine that he was once an innocent boy answering America's call in November of 1941. Because he said yes he faced the absolute best and worst days of his life. He learned to laugh and cry. He learned how to clean a rifle and how to use it. He was expected to hurt, but as a medic he learned to heal. He learned to be a good soldier as he developed into a man of honor and valor.

Every single one of my Grandfathers stories cheerfully and generously retold in tropical detail and colorful language had the same theme. They were about the daily life of an ordinary boy who became part of an extraordinary story called the Pacific Theatre. He was lucky enough to pull a tour of duty with the Americal. He was born into honor and inaugurated by courage with those other New England boys as they put duty before themselves. Each prepared to pay the price for freedom. Each one was a willing participant in the battles of freedom.

I'm glad I listened to my Grandfathers stories. As he relived the highlights of these Americal experiences, his message left a legacy to our family. His belief that this country, his country, was worth something became our belief. He was not alone growing up to represent the very meaning of freedom; America is not just a country. America is a people, and the Americal Division was composed of only the very best of America's people. This is what the Americal meant to him, and now because of him, it now means all of that to me. It remains the tapestry of his life.

# "Medals of Honor"

*By Michelle Muellenberg*

**(Editors Note:** This article is a reprint of an article by Ms. Muellenberg of the MetroWest Daily News, Framingham, Massachusetts. It is reprinted with permission of the Daily News)

More than six decades ago, Albert Vandette served with the U.S. Army during World War II. Yesterday, in front of his family as well as politicians from Main Street to Capitol Hill, the humble 87-year-old was presented with his much-deserved military medals, including the Purple Heart and Bronze Star.

"I kept thinking about it," Vandette said of why he decided to seek help in getting his military honors. The longtime Marlborough resident served as a private first class in the 164th Infantry, Americal Division. He enlisted in 1941 at the age of 22 and served until 1943. He was wounded on Guadalcanal in fighting against the Japanese in December 1942.

"He came to me asking about some medals he deserved and never received," said Marlborough Veterans Agent Gary Brown. Brown worked with U.S. Rep. Jim McGovern's office to get Vandette his medals after 60 years. "McGovern's office helped expedite the process, which can sometimes take up to a year", Brown said. "Its about time we did this. (And) this time we are going to do it right," Brown said at the ceremony held in the Walker Building Gazebo.

Vandette's distinctions include: the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star Medal, the American Defense Service Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with two Bronze Service Stars, World War II Victory Medal, Combat Infantryman's Badge (1st Award) and the Honorable Service Lapel Button, World War II.

The Purple Heart, which has Vandette's name inscribed on the back, is the oldest military decoration in the world in present use and the first American award made available to the common soldier. The medal was created by General George Washington during the Revolutionary War and is awarded to members of the armed forces wounded by the enemy.

"He is a hero. There is no other way to describe it," McGovern said of Vandette. "Our freedom was at stake in World War II. There is not a day that goes by that I don't wake up and thank God (my children) were born in this country."

City Councilors Arthur Vigeant and Maura Navin Webster, State Senator Pam Resor, D-Acton, State Rep. Stephen LeDuc, D-Marlborough, and Mayor Nancy Stevens joined in yesterday's ceremony. Each thanked Vandette for his sacrifice for the country's freedom in the world's largest and deadliest war.

Vandette was surrounded by his wife, Dorothy, and two daughters, Mary Ellen Moore and Dorothy Ann Vandette. His son Phillip lives in Maine and could not make it for yesterday's ceremony. "(This is) a concrete reminder of the sacrifices (service men and women) give everyday," Mayor Stevens said.

Vigeant thanked Vandette for his service in the armed forces as well as his dedication to the city for more than 50 years. "You are the type of person who has brought the city to what it is today," he said. Vandette also received a license plate with the Purple Heart emblem on it.

# My Grandfather - William George Kiker, Sr.

*By William Kiker III*

**(Editors Note:** William Kiker III, is a junior at Lake Highlands High School in Dallas, TX. An assignment required that he write a "Living Subject History Biography Paper". He chose his grandfather William Kiker Sr. as his subject. Kiker has been a long-time member of the ADVA and served 13 months with Company "E", 164th Infantry Regiment and then 11 months in Yokohama, Japan during occupation duty. He was discharged in 1946 as a First Sergeant and remained in the Army Reserve, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel in Civil Affairs. His grandson's biography below is edited only because of space limitations).

History is best shaped by those who have lived through specific events in it. It is the pattern that shapes the world. The old saying that history repeats itself can be a good or bad thing. We can learn how to keep the good coming and how to stop the bad from occurring from those who have experienced it personally. William George Kiker, Sr. was interviewed and asked about the points in history that he felt personally affected him. His response included facts about events as well as personal stories, about his days in combat.

Kiker entered the world on June 3, 1925 in Abilene, Texas. After grade school he started his freshman year at Abilene High School. Football and studies took up most of his time. Kiker remembers, "I knew all throughout High School that I was going to be drafted into the Army where most of my classmates were destined." On the day Pearl Harbor was attacked, Kiker came home from school and found his father glued to the radio, listening to what

**Americal Veteran Albert Vandette. Photo courtesy of Art Illman, Chief Photographer, MetroWest Daily News**





was occurring in the Hawaiian Islands. At the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor, he felt a considerable amount of determination – a determination that stayed with him, placing in his head the thought of survival in the war and getting through college to lead a "sort-of-normal life."

Kiker graduated in 1943 and on May 25, 1944, at the age of 18 he was drafted into the Army. After 16 weeks of infantry training he departed San Francisco for the Philippines, arriving on Leyte with assignment to Company E of the 164th Regiment of the Americal Division.

Kiker said that his most memorable experience in the U.S. Army was his first day and night that he spent in Leyte with his unit. It began with the briefing he received from Captain Charles H. Walker. He recalled remembering that Walker said if any of the troops became wounded that they would make every effort to get to them. They set off toward the hill where the rest of the troops were stationed and it was dusk before they arrived. Since there was no time to "dig-in", he was placed in a slit trench with two other riflemen. Around that time the "Japs" launched an attack on the forward slope of the hill. He recollected that the attack was repulsed, but also said there were casualties. He said the two guys in the trench with him correctly guessed that he was a "green" replacement and not likely to fall asleep on guard. Ironically, they were soon asleep. The light from the moon helped him notice three figures moving along the bottom of the hill. When they were fifty yards away he noticed they were "Japs" with rifles. He opened fire at the first "Jap" and then "fast fired" at the other two who had dived for cover. He didn't see any movement after that, not knowing if he hit any of them. The next morning he watched 3-4 of the dead being wrapped in "shelter halves" and carried away. While he was still scared he was no longer "green."

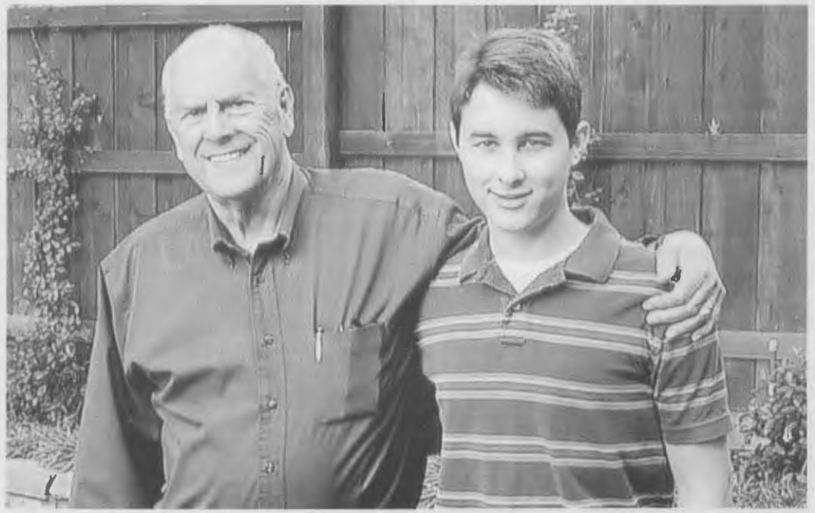
Kiker stated "war was a time of constant fear, anxiety and sadness; a period of firefights, night patrols, "booby traps", day patrols and attacking enemy in the valleys and hills". He thought it brought about some leadership that he was sometimes not certain he could handle. He recalled there was a very important fact to remember, "that no matter how scared you become you must continue to think and function!"

After Leyte came Cebu. While "mopping up" in Cebu, on the mornings of August 6th and 9th, 1945, two atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Six days later on August 15th Japan made its unconditional surrender. A debate over whether the bombs should have been dropped has risen over the years. At the time of the dropping of the bomb, Kikers unit was preparing to invade Japan. On one of the days he was training he said an officer told them a bomb had been dropped on a Japanese city and that, "the dust hadn't cleared yet." The officer said that the atomic bomb was "the last straw to make the Japanese surrender." The troops waited for about a week and then received notice from the "Japs" that flatly stated they were going to surrender. When asked if the bomb should have been dropped, Kiker retorted, it was estimated there would have been over one million American casualties had the U.S. gone on with the invasion of Japan and his unit was to be one of the first to "hit the beach" on the southern island of Manshu. He also stated in an undertone that he himself might not have been alive if they had invaded and in a very odd, ironic way, the atomic bomb had been more of a life saver than a life taker, contrary to the views of many people.

After the war Kiker remained in the Army Reserve and enrolled in college back in Abilene, in Hardin-Simmons University, then transferred to the University of Texas at Austin, majoring in Chemical Engineering, but returned to his home when his father became ill and re-enrolled in Hardin-Simmons, graduating in 1951. It was during his time in the service that Roosevelt signed the GI Bill. Kiker stated that the GI Bill helped him with college and was "the equivalent to four nine-month scholarships." He stated that if it were not for President Roosevelt's GI Bill, he probably would not have gotten to go to college. The GI Bill allowed more than eight million Veterans to have more education in college than they would have had. In 1950, about 496,000 college degrees were awarded - twice the number of a decade earlier.

Kiker joined an oil company, met his wife and was married in 1952. After that he worked in the vending machine business with his father-in-law. When the business was sold to R.C. Cola he started his own coffee distribution business, then went into the insurance business where he has worked for the past fifty years. He had three sons, Marion (1955), Bill Jr. (1957) and John (1959), and one grandson, William III (1989). He currently lives in Abilene, Texas with his wife Bonnie. They have been married for 54 years.

Through my interview with William George Kiker, Sr., one can easily concur that history is best understood by a person with actual experiences of what occurred, not a textbook definition of a battle or event. Through his bravery and determination, Kiker received medals, including a Bronze Star Medal while in combat on Leyte. Kiker's medals from the war are not just certificates and pieces of metal, they are symbols of determination and perseverance that this country was built upon and without which, would not otherwise have survived.



**William Kiker Sr. with William Kiker III**

# Mr. Tootsie Roll Man

*By Susan Jacob*

In 1970 Carl R. Jacob of Charles City, IA was in D/2/1, 196th LIB in Vietnam. The mother of one of his buddies sent a package of Tootsie Pops candy to his unit. The GIs wanted to have their photograph taken with the Tootsie Pops and Carl happened to have film in his camera.

Carl (far right) and Tootsie pops in Vietnam

Twenty-one years later (1991) members of the Vietnam Veterans Support Group of Charles City planned an all Vets Jubilee parade. Carl remembered the photo that he had taken in Vietnam. The group sent a copy of the photo to the Tootsie Company with a hope that the company would send them some Tootsie products to pass out to children along the parade route. The company responded and that started Carl's Tootsie Pop legacy. In 2003 Carl talked to the Veterans Administration Hospital in Des Moines about the Veterans History Project. A Google search of Carl's name had one hit on the Internet and that was to the Tootsie Roll Industries website. There on the website was the photograph of Carl and his buddies.

Carl sent an e-mail to the company indicating that he was the one responsible for the photograph in Vietnam. The company detailed its support of the U.S. military starting in World War II when Tootsie Rolls were part GI rations. The website is at **http://www.tootsie.com/memoriesVet.html.**

A former student of Carl's wife, Nick Raab, was deployed to Iraq in February 2003. Carl gave a package of Tootsie Roll Pops to Nick's mother. She included a camera and the candy in a care package for Nick. She asked him to take a photograph similar to the one taken by Carl in Vietnam.

When the Tootsie Pops arrived, Nick and his buddies were loading a plane at night and no photograph could be taken. But the unit really enjoyed the story and the Tootsie Pops from home. The Tootsie Roll Company also sent a case of Tootsie products to Carl and he sent them on to the soldiers in Nick's unit.

In May 2003 the Charles City National Guard Armory was the site of Military History Days. About 2,000 North Iowa high school students attended and Carl arranged for five cases of Tootsie Roll products to be distributed among the students.

When the 133rd Infantry guardsmen were deployed Carl presented two cases of Tootsie Roll products to them and their families. He also arranged for 1,000 Tootsie Pops to be sent to the members of the 1133rd National Guard Transportation Company from Mason City.

He then helped the VFW send a box of 100 Tootsie Rolls to each of ten Charles City active duty servicemen and women serving in the Middle East. Presently every member of the Iowa National Guard that deploys overseas receives Tootsie Company products through an arrangement with Lt. Col. Greg Hapgood, public affairs officer at Camp Dodge in DeMoines, IA.

Carl has become known locally for his connection to Tootsie Roll Industries and U.S. soldiers. Walking through the grocery store one day someone saw him and said, "Hey, there's Mr. Tootsie Roll Man." His photograph and story appeared in the Mason City *Globe Gazette* and the *Charles City Press*.

Carl provides a box of 100 tootsie Pops to each local service member deployed overseas, when requested. He has also assists the local support group called Moms of the Military. During the holiday's Carl hands out snack size Tootsie Rolls with a note, "Merry Christmas from Mr. Tootsie Roll Man. When you eat this think of the men and women who are serving in the Armed Forces and their families."

In the past years Carl and Tootsie Company have distributed many cases of Tootsie Pops at the national Elks convention for a free will collection and have raised several thousand dollars and increased awareness for the Homeless Veterans Project of the Elks National Veterans Service Commission.

Over the past two years Carl has distributed over 100,000 Tootsie Roll products in support of the United States soldiers and military veterans. He is a member of the ADVA. You may contact Carl Jacob by e-mail at **cjacob@rconnect.com.**

Carl and Tootsie Pops Today





## Still Serving: MSgt Dutch DeGroot

MSgt John "Dutch" DeGroot, United States Air Force Reserve, was deployed to the Middle East war zone in May 2006. He is a Past National Commander of the ADVA and recently joined the staff of the **Americal Newsletter** as Creative Director. Dutch served in Vietnam in 1969-70 with the third platoon, 23rd M.P. Company.

DeGroot won the coveted squadron Senior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Month Award in June 2006. This made him eligible for the wing SNCO award. Lt. Col. William "Sweet" Tart, commanding officer of the 379th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron (EOSS), made the award presentation. Dutch and his wife Jan live in Mt. Prospect, IL where he is employed as a graphics artist.

## Journal Entry 08 June 06

*By M/Sgt John (Dutch) DeGroot*

It is after 0130 and I go to the bus stop to return to my quarters. After midnight the buses only run every half hour. I see a guy in shorts and t-shirt, the normal off duty wear. He is about my age and pretty outgoing and we strike up a conversation (sometimes I am starving for communication).

Feeling each other out as old geezers do I say to him, "I go back a long way." Now only among competitive men do things like this come up. He goes "I probably been around longer then you". Now the gauntlet has been thrown! I say, "Okay, I started in 1968!" He says, "I started in 1967..." Damn, he got me!

He asks, "Are you a reservist?" and I reply in the affirmative. He explains that he was in the Army and active all these years. He is a WO5 and was in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot. I tell him, "Well, you won't believe this, but I was in the Army too" and I go into my shirt and pull out my ID holder which also has my Americal combat patch.

Dutch presents CW5 Jim Leech with ADVA Challenge Coin

He looks at it a big grin comes on his face and he says, "The Americal, that was my unit as well". It's a small war. He goes on to say that he wears his Americal patch on his greens but does not wear it on his BDUs/DCUs (battle dress uniform/desert camouflage uniform) as it goes above the American flag and nothing should do that. (I have to agree on this one).

Now the talk really starts up. A young lieutenant with an SUV pulls up and offers us a ride. We look at each other and say should we take it or continue our conversation and wait for the bus. We get in the SUV another young airman gets in the front with the LT.

We continue jabbering away and introduce ourselves. I mention the ADVA. We talk about Nam casualties in our units and on and on with little regard for the driver and other passenger. We get to my departure point and part ways telling each other were to find the other. The Lt looks at us and says "Sirs, it has been an honor to give you both a ride".

I guess it pays to stay and cover another guy's shift some time. I will try and go to WO5 Leech's shop and talk some more. The demographics are that there are only a few hundred Vietnam vets that have served in the Middle East this last war.

Dutch Receives SNCO of the Month Award

## Still Serving - Afghanistan

"A Gathering of "War Horses"

The below photo is of three Americal Division veterans who are continuing to serve in the U.S. Army. They recently served in Afghanistan with the 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix.

(Left to right): LTC Royster, CSM Reid, CW4 Moore. Americal Vets in Afghanistan

LTC Royster commanded an Embedded Training Team with Kandak 40. CW4 Moore was the S-4 for an Embedded Training Team with Kandak 43. Royster and Moore were with the 2nd Brigade, 201st Corps, at Gardez.

CSM Bill Reid was with the Training Assistance Group (TAG), Afghanistan National Army (ANA,) assigned to the Advanced Individual Training Brigade at Camp Alamo.

The Embedded Training Teams (ETT) are assigned to a Kandak (Battalion) and mentor their ANA counterparts as well as deploy down range with their Kandak to conduct operations, including offensive operations. The Training Assistance Group (TAG) is located at Kabul Military Training Center, and is charged with the responsibility of conducting Basic Combat Training, Advanced Individual Training, Officer , NCO and OCS training programs for the ANA .

CW4 Moore served with Co. D, 1/6th Infantry, 198th Lt. Inf. Bde. LTC Royster served with the 11th Lt. Inf. Bde. Both LTC Royster and CW4 Moore are from the Kentucky Army National Guard.

CSM Reid served with Co. A, 5/46th Infantry, 198th Lt. Inf. Bde. from November 1969 to November 1970. Reid is with the Florida Army National Guard and resides in Orlando, FL. He began his tour in Afghanistan on July 15, 2005 and was there for one year. He has a combined 37 years of active, reserve, and National Guard duty.

All of these soldiers are now back home in the United States after a job well done.

## Obtaining Records from the Archives

*By Bruce Flaherty*

I was and infantryman (11B) with Co. D, 4/3rd Inf., 11th LIB in 1968-1969. I am very proud to be a Grunt. I am also proud to know the people I served with.

I retired after 32 years with the telephone company in New York. I had nothing to do but get in my wife's way so I decided to find out what the big deal was about computers. I got on-line and typed "11th Brigade" in a search engine.

Some of Bruce Flaherty's Lost Brothers

From there it was all down hill. I went to different websites and started looking at the "looking for", "does anyone remember", "can someone tell me", etc., letters. I then looked through papers I had filed away when I was separated from the service. From there I began to find "lost brothers".

One brother I got to meet was Dan Beherns. Dan was not a member of our unit nor is he a vet. Dan's brother Tom served with D/4/3 and was KIA 31 October 1968. Because of Dan, our company has had three great reunions since 2003. Fifteen men and their families attended in 2003, fifty in 2004, and twenty-five in 2005. We meet again in September 2006 at The Wall in Washington, D.C.

Before our first reunion I found out about the National Archives and Daily Journals. I decided to make a trip to The Wall in Washington, D.C, and to stop in at the Archives and see what these daily journals were all about. But I did not make it to the wall on that trip. I instead spent four days at the archives photographing over 1,800 pages of records.

I put these records onto CDs and passed them out to any of the guys who might want them. These first pages covered mostly 1967-68. To date I have copied over 14,000 pages of records and I have seven months of reports to go.

At the second reunion Dan told me that Les Hines, ADVA Vietnam Historian, wanted to meet me. Les had seen the CDs and asked if I would be interested in doing the same for the Americal Division TOC Reports. I told him I would have no problem doing it. All I asked was that the Association cover the expenses. He had no problem with that and I have no problem giving my time.

In truth I do this in the hope that information found within these documents might in some way help a brother or the family of a fallen brother. This is not about me or you, it is about them.

I try to get in about four days of work when I go to the archives. I put in about 30 to 35 hours of copying time on each trip. When I started I was using a hand-held camera in the reading room on the second floor. I now use the camera stands that are available on the fifth floor.

I urge anyone who goes to Washington, D.C. to take time and visit the archives. The building that holds the Army papers is located in College Park, Maryland. Their website at **www.archives.gov** has all the information about. There is a shuttle bus between College Park and the Archive Building in Washington, D.C.

I am willing to help anyone who needs assistance with finding information on their unit. Contact me by e-mail at [redacted]. The catch? A flag. (I'll explain; you had to be there). WELCOME HOME!

*[Editor's note: ADVA Vietnam Historian Les Hines states that the Americal Division TOC reports from October 1967 through January 1968 have been obtained from government archives. Plans call for the remaining reports up to November 1971 to be obtained in the coming months. Task Force Oregon TOC reports for the period April 1967 through October 1967 will also be obtained.]*

## ADVA 2006 Reunion - Portland, Oregon Raffle Benefiting the Vietnam History Project

The raffle conducted by PNC's Ronald Ellis and Product Sales Director Wayne Bryant at the 2006 Portland reunion was a great success, raising in excess of $1,100 for the benefit of the ADVA Vietnam history project.

The Vietnam History project is currently headed by Les Hines, ADVA Vietnam Historian. Proceeds from the raffle will be used by Les and his staff to acquire Vietnam history documents as well as Americal Division Tactical Operations Center (TOC) Daily Reports.

Raffle prize winners were Ron Scroggins from Vancouver, WA and Jerry Washizaki from Powder Springs, GA.

Ron won a one night hotel accommodation and a Saturday night banquet ticket for the 2007 ADVA reunion in Buffalo, NY. Jerry won a Paid Life membership.

Congratulations to Ron and Jerry and thanks to all who contributed to the history project through raffle ticket purchases.

Photo: National Adjutant Roger Gilmore presents Jerry Washizaki with his Paid Life membership won in the raffle.





## DEATH VALLEY Revisited

*By: Harold "Harry" Thomas*

A few years ago I purchased Keith Nolan's book Death Valley. The book covered a series of fire fights that occurred in August 1969 and heavily involved my unit. I was a M-60 machine gunner in the second platoon of Co. A, 4/31st Inf., 196th LIB.

On pages 163 through 167 of Death Valley, Nolan describes a day-long firefight that began with Co. A walking into an ambush. He writes that shortly after the firefight began members of the second platoon pressed firmly against a dike and were too frightened to return fire. He ends the narrative by describing how at the end of the day Co. A "broke faith with two of their own" and left their wounded behind.

I remember things differently.

Co. A moved out about 7:00 AM with second platoon walking point and my squad in the lead. Prune was the pointman and Bill was walking next behind him. After crossing three or four hundred yards of rice paddies the trail wound to the right around a large dike. It then crossed thirty or so yards of open area to a number of smaller mounds. The NVA were waiting in ambush behind the mounds. The NVA would later be described in a unit citation as a reinforced rifle platoon.

Prune was a few yards from the mounds the NVA opened fire. Miraculously Prune was not hit and he was able to drop down in front of one of the mounds. Bill was wounded and was lying on the path behind Prune.

Doc, the second platoon medic, did not realize how close the NVA were. He advanced into the open area to assist Bill. Darryl, another squad member, volunteered to go with Doc to provide cover. The NVA suddenly opened fire and killed Darryl and Bill. Doc took a round in the jaw and fell close to where Prune was lying.

My assistant gunner and I were ordered to place our M-60 on the path approximately 25 yards from where Prune and Doc were lying. We applied suppressive fire to the top of the mounds. This began a day-long ordeal of squad members rotating on the M-60. We had to keep the NVA from leaning over the mound to shoot Prune or Doc and to minimize the number of times that the NVA could fire at us.

During this time members of second platoon's other squad began maneuvering around the far side of the dike to get at the NVA bunkers. Our lieutenant and Dan, a friend of mine, were both killed and another grunt was wounded. I heard that the lieutenant maneuvered close enough to toss a grenade into one of the bunkers and that when he and Dan attempted a repeat of the maneuver the NVA were waiting for them.

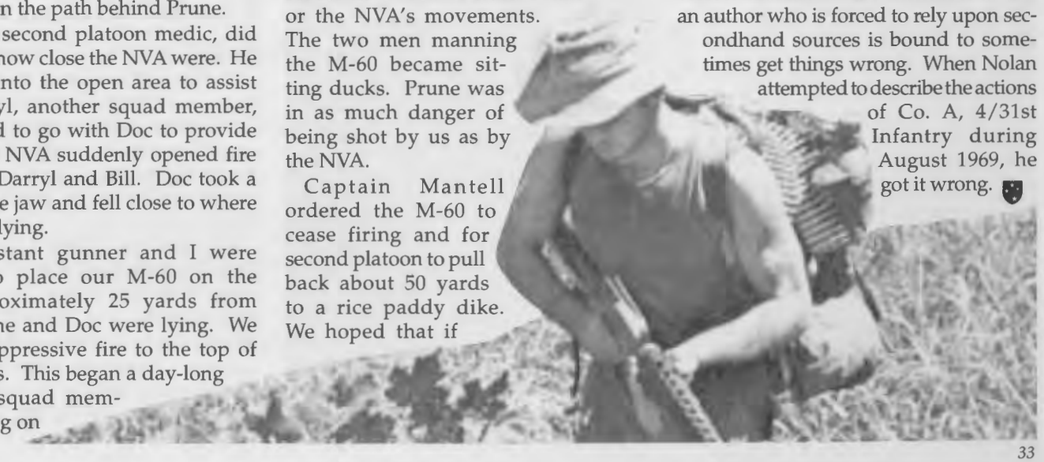
The temperature exceeded 100 degrees every day that week and the day of the ambush was no exception. There was absolutely no shade and for reasons that were never explained to me, no member of our squad received even a sip of water from beginning of the firefight until after sunset that night.

By 10:00 AM everyone served at least one rotation on the M-60. No member of the squad could form saliva. We began to put wads of green grass into our mouths to chew in order to get moisture. Sometime around mid-day my assistant gunner began to pass out. He was quickly replaced, but no member of the squad was in much better shape.

My only recollection after that was that one of our squad members discovered he had a can of fruit cocktail. He was promptly offered $20.00 – probably $100.00 by today's standards – but he elected to share his discovery. Each squad member received a small taste.

As darkness set in it became impossible for us to observe either Prune or the NVA's movements. The two men manning the M-60 became sitting ducks. Prune was in as much danger of being shot by us as by the NVA.

Captain Mantell ordered the M-60 to cease firing and for second platoon to pull back about 50 yards to a rice paddy dike. We hoped that if Prune or Doc were still alive the NVA would have as much difficulty seeing them as we were having in seeing the NVA. After the pullback we were given empty canteens and the opportunity to wait in line at the paddy to fill them with some of the most vile water imaginable.



All of a sudden Prune stumbled into our position. During the ensuing celebration he related that Doc was still alive but that he probably would not make it through the night. Mantell asked for two volunteers to crawl into the open area without weapons and attempt to drag Doc to safety.

He eventually got his two volunteers and they crawled single file the open area. They discovered an NVA soldier quietly removing things from the ground and the bodies. The two crawlers soon realized that Mantell had crawled out behind them and that he had an M16 with him. The M16 was passed up to the first crawler who opened fire on the NVA. The two crawlers and Captain Mantell swiftly crawled back to safety.

A little later the same trio crawled out to search for Doc again. The two crawlers eventually took hold of a GI boot and began dragging the person attached to safety. It was only when they heard a moan that they were sure that they were dragging Doc and not Bill or Darryl.

Doc was medevaced that night. The next morning Co. A discovered that the NVA had abandoned their bunkers.

The purpose of this article is not to dice Keith Nolan. It is to set the record straight. Death Valley contains a lot of correct information as I remember it. But an author who is forced to rely upon secondhand sources is bound to sometimes get things wrong. When Nolan attempted to describe the actions of Co. A, 4/31st Infantry during August 1969, he got it wrong.

## MAJOR GENERAL A. E. MILLOY

The Americal "Fighting" Commanding General

*By Gregory W. Sanders*

On May 18, 1970, Americal Division Commanding General Lloyd B. Ramsey was seriously injured when his command and control helicopter crashed enroute from LZ Bayonet to LZ Professional. Unable to resume his duties after a successful rescue, Ramsey was replaced by Major General Albert E. "Ernie" Milloy who was reassigned from his post as Commanding General of the 1st Infantry Division. According to knowledgeable military historians, the move made Milloy the only general officer in modern Army history to command more than one infantry division in combat.

In a recent interview Milloy reminisced about his brilliant and fascinating military career. For as long as he could remember, he wanted to be a soldier. In 1938, at the age of 17, he enlisted in a National Guard unit at Lake Charles, Louisiana. Aided by a First Sergeant who conspired with Milloy to alter his birth certificate to meet the minimum age requirement, he began training with World War II looming on the horizon.

Milloy wanted to go to war with a regular Army unit, so he took the only available route to transition from the National Guard – he volunteered for paratrooper training. Following graduation from parachute school at Fort Benning, Georgia, Milloy was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division.

Milloy soon found himself in Italy with the 504th Parachute Regiment (which he later commanded from February to May, 1964) and later in northern Europe. He participated in one amphibious landing and two combat jumps, including the airborne assault into Holland in conjunction with Operation Market Garden. This action is chronicled in the book **A Bridge Too Far**, by Cornelius Ryan, and the movie with the same title.

Milloy vividly recalls running off an amphibious landing craft into water over his head and the heavy combat and casualties suffered in Holland. Milloy's proudest World War II memory, however, is of his battlefield commission. Having been promoted to the rank of Sergeant near the end of the Italian campaign, Milloy's leadership skills came to the attention of his commanders in the field and he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant.

By the outbreak of the Korean War, Milloy had been promoted to the rank of Major. Milloy was initially assigned as an advisor to the South Korean Army, bunking with Colonel Chan, who eventually assumed command of the entire Republic of Korea Army. Later, Milloy was assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division, earning a Silver Star in combat.

(Left) Major General Milloy with Gregory Sanders

By the time Milloy returned to Vietnam for his second tour of duty, his 32 years of experience made him uniquely qualified to command an infantry division in the difficult combat environment of Vietnam. Colonel (Ret.) Richard F. Carvell, himself a legendary veteran of multiple tours in Vietnam with experiences ranging from special operations to Battalion Commander of the 1/46 Infantry, believes Milloy "was one of a kind as Division Commanding General. His experience and understanding of special operations, psyops and infantry rendered him unique among all of the combat commanding generals I was privileged to know, which was a considerable number."

At the Americal, Milloy made an immediate and lasting impression on the Americal's senior commanders and staff. Pondering the unique complexities of the Americal's area of operations, he weighed the future of the division. "We are going to reopen roads, put the enemy on the defensive and take back control of our area of operations," he pronounced. With that sweeping mission statement, Milloy set a tone of aggressive confidence. Working to carry out the mission he established, Milloy spent as much time as possible in the field, attempting to meet with every battalion commander every day, weather permitting. "I wanted them to know that 'big brother' was watching," he recently recalled. In **Sappers In The Wire**, an account of events at Firebase Mary Ann that occurred after his departure from the Americal, author Keith Nolan aptly described Milloy as "the fighting general."

Milloy was an innovator, too. In order to bolster special operations, he instituted the Americal Division Sniper School. He also created a psychological operations program to demoralize and hamper the effectiveness of enemy troops. By emphasizing special operations and psychological operations, Milloy felt he could cause the enemy to "do a double take" and use resources to "protect their own troops rather than prosecute the war." His mastery of the complex task of simultaneously prosecuting a counterinsurgency and fighting a conventional war reinvigorated the Americal Division and made Southern I Corps a safer place for American troops and Vietnamese alike.

Choosing to decline a promotion to Lieutenant General and an assignment at the Pentagon, Major General Milloy retired on August 31, 1978. His career spanned four decades and three wars, leaving a legacy of aggressive, confident leadership of which all Americal veterans can be proud.





## Task Force Oregon Flag Displayed

Oregon State Flag that flew in Vietnam

The Oregon State flag pictured above was flown by a member of the Americal Division at Chu Lai during the Vietnam War. The flag is currently on display at the Oregon State Department of Veterans Affairs in Salem, OR.

Task Force Oregon (TFO) was formed in Vietnam by Gen. William C. Westmoreland in April 1967. The task force consisted of five U.S. Army brigades and was headquartered in Chu Lai. In October 1967 TFO became the Americal Division composed of the 11th, 196th, and 198th Light Infantry Brigades.

The Area of Operations assigned to TFO was in I Corps in the northern part of South Vietnam. The Army forces were given the mission to counter the growing enemy activity in the area and to free the U.S. Marines to go further north in I Corps. Westmoreland appointed his Chief-or-Staff, MG William B. Rosson, to command the task force.

Several operational plans were developed to provide options for the introduction of ever increasing numbers of U.S. ground forces in Vietnam. These operations plans were named after states and included such names as Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Oregon. Operation plan Oregon was chosen and the formation of Task Force Oregon soon followed.

It is probably more than a coincidence that MG Rosson commanded Task Force Oregon and had strong ties to the state of Oregon. Although Rosson was born in Iowa he was raised in Oregon. He graduated from ROTC at the University of Oregon in 1940 and entered the military immediately. Rosson received the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) for heroism at Anzio, Italy. He passed away in December 2004 at the age of 86.

Several operations conducted by TFO were named for Oregon counties. These operations included Malheur, Hood River, Benton, Wheeler, and Wallowa.

### Bacon's Son Continues Army Tradition

ADVA Nick Bacon's (MOH) Son is assigned to 23rd MP Company. The 23rd Military Police Company was reactivated on October 21, 2005 at Ft. Bragg, NC. Among the soldiers now assigned to the 23rd M.P. Co. is SGT James Lee Bacon, 23, son of Nicky D. Bacon (MOH).

SGT James Bacon will depart for Iraq later this year. This will be his fourth deployment to the Middle East and his third tour to Iraq. At one time he and an uncle and three cousins were deployed to the Middle East at the same time.

Nick Bacon served in the U.S. Army for 21 years. He was an M.P. for the second half of his career which included a stint as a First Sergeant with an M.P. Company at Ft. Hood, TX. He is the former Director of the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs.

The elder Bacon is currently serving as one of the thirteen members of the Veterans Disability Benefits Commission. He was appointed by the Speaker of the House. The commission is independent of the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The purpose of the commission is to study benefits available to disabled veterans and survivors of veterans killed in action and to issue a report on the study. This effort is modeled after the Omar Bradley Commission established in 1954. See more information at **www.vetscommission.org**.

Nick also volunteers as the Chair of the American Board for Certification in Homeland Security (ABCHS) and as the Director of the Certified in Homeland Security Program's newest component, the CHS Veterans Corps. More information on this important role can be found at **www.acfei.com.**

MOH Recipient Nick Bacon speaks at Portland Reunion

## THE LAST SUMMER OF INNOCENCE

*By Dave Hammond*

Every soldier who has seen combat and lost friends in battle has no doubt asked the question. Why not me? Was it fate or luck that I made it home in one piece when others, sometimes only inches away, were not so fortunate? These feelings are usually felt about comrades with whom you served in war, but I have a special set of survivor's feelings that began in the summer of 1969, before I knew what war was all about.

Small towns in the nineteen-sixties always seemed to have a favorite local gathering spot for the restless teenagers of the time to get together and socialize. Springfield, Oregon was your typical small town and had two such places; Bob's Hamburgers was number one, and McKenzie Oil Company, the local discount gas station, was number two. In 1969, during my senior year at Springfield High School, I worked nights and weekends at McKenzie. The business was "built on service" and the three skinny teenagers that manned the gas pumps did their best. Oil was checked, windshields were washed, and tires were checked.

When Friday and Saturday nights rolled around, it was also the stop-off point to get a couple dollars worth of "Ethyl" before heading over to "drag the gut" across the river in Eugene. Even if it was a little out of the way, teenagers from around the area made this their pit stop. Tom Farmer, Tim Ownby, and I enjoyed working together on these busy and social nights. Tom was from Sheldon High in Eugene, and Tim went to my high school's rival, Thurston High. Tim was a tall, lanky kid who always had a joke to tell or a girl to tease. Tom was short and stocky and had a more serious outlook on life. And I was always up for a good time or some sneaky practical joke to pull on the other two. We all drove Chevs; Tom drove a yellow fifty-seven, Tim had a white fifty-five, and I drove a blue fifty-six. When no customers were at the station, we would have burn-off contests to see who could lay the longest patch of rubber across the parking lot. Kind of a dumb contest since we could barely afford tires at the time. Another regular event on slow nights was an impromptu drag race on Main Street in front of the station. One of us would be the starter and the other two would race. There would always be cheating at the start and lying at the finish as to why someone won or lost.

Another benefit of working at the station was the girls. When a pretty girl would pull up to the pumps, it was a foot race out to the car to wait on her. It was an even bigger fight to see who got to wash the windshield. This was the era of mini-skirts and I'm sure most of them knew what was going on when they saw the three of us wrestling for the window washing sponge in the soap bucket. Even when one of us had a night off and nothing going on, we'd come down to hang out with the other two. We were friends and it was a good summer.

Near the end of August, things at the station were a bit more serious. Vietnam, war protesters at the University of Oregon, and the draft were all over the nightly news. Young men our age had two choices; college or the military. Tim announced one hot afternoon while under the hood of a customer's car that he had volunteered for the draft.

"You what?" exclaimed Tom in disbelief.

"Volunteered for the draft. Two years and get it over with," Tim replied.

"Not me. They're going to have to come and get me if they want me," Tom said.

It was Tom's final comment on the subject that day, and Uncle Sam did come and get him the following year.

Tim left for the Army the following month, and after some minor thought on my future, I too decided on the military and passed on college. I joined the Army after my recruiter Sergeant Stamper showed me a full color picture of a Sheridan tank and told me about "shake n' bake" NCO School. I could just see myself wearing sergeant stripes and riding on top of one of those big green machines blasting away with a cannon and machine guns. I had seen a lot of John Wayne movies and it looked pretty glamorous. I was to leave for Fort Knox, Kentucky the following November.

Late one cool October evening while Tom and I were pumping gas at the station, we both looked up to see a familiar white fifty-five Chevy driving into the lot. It stopped, revved its engine, laid a short patch of rubber, and pulled up to the pumps. There sat Tim with a GI haircut and a pretty girl sitting next to him.

"I'm off to Fort Lewis to be a bad ass! Infantry AIT!" He told us proudly, giving us both the thumbs up.

Tim grabbed a soapy sponge from the washing bucket and Tom and I each took one ourselves to give our friend a hand.

"I think I can take care of this myself," Tim said with a wink to us and a smile through the glass at his pretty companion.

"Just like old times, right Tom?" I said as we both hit Tim in the back with the soggy sponges.

We made small talk while he checked his oil and the air pressure in his tries. I told him about my joining the Army, and he gave me some good-hearted verbal abuse for it. Tom still maintained he would only go kicking and screaming. We all laughed, shook hands, and promised to keep in touch. It was the last time I saw Tim Ownby.

I began my military journey in November and headed to Vietnam the next June. While home on leave, I heard from Tim's brother that he was with a mechanized unit along the Cambodian border and was doing fine. Hopefully, he would be riding most of the time, unlike myself, who wound up in the infantry when I reached my duty assignment with the Americal Division. Assigned to a straight grunt unit. Not a tank in sight. Where was Sergeant Stamper when I needed him now?

***Dear Dave,***

***I'm afraid I have some bad news. Tim Ownby was killed while his unit operated in a place called Dinh Doung...***

Mail call in the mountains outside of Chu Lai on a rainy October afternoon in 1970 brought a letter from my friend, Tom. I quickly tore the wrinkled envelope open to catch up on the latest happenings back home and read the first paragraph. I let the letter drop to my side and walked off to find a place to sit alone. Unfolding the letter again, I began to read.

I let the letter drop to my side again and tried to remember Tim's face and what his voice sounded like. I just couldn't picture it. The rest of the letter had more bad news. Tom had gotten his draft notice and would be reporting for duty soon. He didn't go kicking and screaming, but he did make them come and get him.

Like Tim, Tom went to Fort Lewis and infantry training. And like Tim, he was assigned to a mechanized unit in Vietnam and became a tank driver. Tom and I kept in touch through letters and had a chance meeting at the hospital in Chu Lai once when he had a bout with malaria. We saw each other one last time while we were both on leave back home in May of 1971. It was the last time I would see Tom Farmer. He was killed only two weeks after reporting back to Vietnam when his tank hit a land mine near Quang-Tri.

As I walk along the winding gravel pathway at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington Park, I pause at the dark granite panels marked 1970-1971 and think of those three skinny teenagers racing their Chevys up and down Main Street. I wish I could see their faces, shake their hands, and talk over the old days, but I'm standing alone. Only their names are etched in the smooth reflective stone. There's no sign of their smiles, jokes, or the youthful attitudes we had in the summer of 1969. I run my fingers slowly over the names of Tom Farmer and Tim Own by and still wonder why.

## SURVIVOR'S GUILT

*By Dave Hammond*

Sitting in front of my computer the other night, I noticed an email message from Fred, a Vietnam veteran friend with whom I spent time incountry some thirty years ago. With a click of the mouse I began to read the message from an old comrade.

*Dear Dave,*

*Really enjoy reading all the emails going back and forth among the group. Sorry I don't contribute much, but I feel like such a pussy sometimes because I was out of the field when we lost so many guys. It was a bad time for us all. Keep in touch.*

*Your Friend, Fred*

I was saddened by what I read, but I understood. Fred has what most veterans with the guts to admit it have—survivor's guilt. I think Fred's feelings are somewhat unjustified, though. He had been hit by a blast of shrapnel from a mortar round early in his Vietnam tour in 1969. Not severe enough wounds to send him home, but he was fortunate to be assigned the company clerk job with Charlie Company to finish out the rest of his twelve months. Fred did his job as a grunt. He earned his Combat Infantryman's Badge and deserved his Purple Heart. So why does he feel like he is not worthy to join the chatter among the other grunts from our family of aging comrades? It's a question each vet and civilian must answer for himself or herself.

While visiting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Portland last year, I was approached by a local reporter to answer a couple of questions for television. He appeared to be close to my age, but was more "clean cut" and polished with his trench coat, short haircut, and clean shave. He stood out from the gray-haired, overweight group of vets wearing their black caps, medals, and tattered fatigues from three decades earlier. Some limped or pushed a friend in a wheel chair up the memorial trail to view the names etched in the black memorial wall. The reporter standing out from the rest of us reminded me of a comment my wife, Christie, made

when she attended her first Americal Veterans Reunion.

"You guys all look the same."

She was right. We are all different shapes and sizes, but we have the same "look."

"It will be just a minute while we get the camera set up," the reporter said, holding a silver microphone at his side. "Did you see some action over there?" he asked, still making small talk off the air.

I responded with my usual reply, "Yeah, a little," knowing if I gave him any details he wouldn't have any idea what I was talking about and couldn't relate anyway.

"My lottery number was two hundred sixty-five, so I didn't have to go," he continued, waiting for a response.

*So?* I thought, while nodding my head. I wasn't about to give him the answer I think he wanted to hear. This guy, like others I have met in the past, seemed to want me to say, ***"That's OK. Good for you. It was a bunch of shit."*** I wasn't going to say it. Let him justify to himself why his name wasn't on the surrounding somber black granite walls with the seven hundred ninety-one other young men from Oregon whose names are etched in the cold lonely stone. Let him justify why he looked and felt out of place among the quiet war veterans milling about in the rain, some with tears in their eyes, paying tribute to their fallen friends.

The reporter waved at the cameraman, put the microphone in my face and the interview began.

"In your own words, what does this day mean to you?" he asked.

This may sound like a simple question to some, but it wasn't. Looking at the microphone, the bespectacled reporter, and the young cameraman, I felt they wouldn't understand. If my veteran friend, Bob, who was standing in the rain nearby or any other aging warrior on the hill would have asked the same question, I could have rambled on for an hour. They would understand.

I got myself focused and gave the same old line I thought he wanted to hear.

***"This is a time to remember those who gave their lives for the rest of us..."***

It was good enough to get a couple of seconds on the tube that evening, but I held back what I was really feeling and wanted to say, which they surely wouldn't have aired. I really would have liked to have said something like this:

***"That's really a tough question for me to answer, but let me ask you and your viewers a couple of questions. Walk over to the wall marked 1970 with me."***

I would walk the dapper reporter and youthful cameraman through the crowd of graying vets over to the granite wall and begin pointing at names.

***"Where were you when Ed Whitton's body lay in a bloody heap after being blown up by a booby-trap and we needed help getting all the dead and wounded in the medivacs? And where were all of you when my friends Tom Farmer and Tim Ownbey were killed while serving their country near the Cambodian border? Tough questions to answer, aren't they?"***

I would pause for a brief bit of silence for effect, then give one last comment looking into the camera.

"This is for all of you draft dodgers out there, none of which are here in the rain paying respect to these fallen heroes. Fuck You. You're not worthy to walk even near this memorial. Thank you, that's a wrap."

Survivor's guilt ranges from vets who never set foot in Vietnam, to how much actual combat one experienced, to time incountry among Vietnam vets. My old squad member, Henry Napier, told me once. "I only lost my legs, but I made it back."

He is thankful he wasn't killed, but feels remorse for those less fortunate who came home in a flag-draped coffin. Henry is now retired from his successful law practice in Georgia.

A few years ago while talking to Bob Amass, my favorite lieutenant, he told me about how he still carries so much guilt for being on "R&R" with his wife in Hawaii when our company suffered six dead and twenty-seven wounded to one booby-trap. He felt he should have been there in our time of need. Little does he realize how many lives he probably did save while leading a bunch of teenagers in the jungle at a time of war during the rest of his tour.

There is survivor's guilt for those REMFS, rear area soldiers, who never saw combat in Vietnam. There is survivor's guilt for those who spent less time in the field than others. There is survivor's guilt for those who received early outs from Vietnam while others remained behind. There is survivor's guilt proportionate to the nature and degree of wounds one may have received and survivor's guilt for those who came home without a physical scratch.

Out of the five hundred plus vets who attend the annual Americal Reunions every year, only a very small number didn't see combat. Cooks, clerks, and REMFS in general don't attend. It's not that they're not welcome, but I'm sure there is an underlying feeling of unworthiness for not seeing action they still carry.

How each veteran or civilian deals with survivor's guilt is totally a personal issue. I'm sure most people, like the reporter in this story, don't even understand why they try to justify missing the war. They only need to remember some of us don't care to hear it. We had to go, those on the wall had to go, so why not them?

For me, I put myself in the middle of the survivor's guilt ladder. On one end are the draft dodgers and people who hid behind college deferments. On the other end are those fifty-eight thousand whose names are on the wall in Washington DC.

**See AMERICAL PX at www.americal.org**

**Phone** [redacted]

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# Application For Membership
# Americal Division Veterans Association

PNC Ronald Ellis
[redacted]
Henderson, Texas 75652

### *Eligibility for Membership*

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

| | |
|---|---|
| World WarII | 1942-1945 |
| Korean War | 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 Americal Division and is pledged to foster true American patriotism, social and welfare activities for all members, allegiance to the United States Government, and its flag, and to perpetuate the traditions and history of the *Americal Division of the United States Army.***

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Street: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Americal Unit: _____ (Other): _____ (Associate): _____

Dates of Service: _____ Station: _____

Name of Spouse: _____ Occupation: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sponsored By: _____ DD 214 (Optional):

**Please enclose dues: 1 year $15**
**(WWII Vets pay $12/year)**
**Life Dues: 75 years & over = $75**
**Under 75 years of age = $165**

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David W. Taylor
[redacted]
Medina, Ohio 44256-2908

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