



FOUNDED 1945

AMERICAL NEWSLETTER

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

APRIL – MAY – JUNE 2004

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Vietnam Editor:

Gary L. Noller

Contributing Editor:

David W. Taylor



FREEDOM ROCK – RURAL IOWA

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Richard L. Scales
[REDACTED]
Oakley, IL 62501
[REDACTED]

Sr. Vice-Commander
Jon E. Hansen
[REDACTED]
Ormand Beach, FL 32174
[REDACTED]

Jr. Vice-Commander
William S. Bacon
[REDACTED]
San Antonio, TX 78250
[REDACTED]

Finance Officer
Spencer M. Baba
[REDACTED]
Kinnelon, NJ 07405
[REDACTED]

Adjutant
Bernard C. Chase
[REDACTED]
So. Yarmouth, MA 02664
[REDACTED]

Editor-in-Chief
James C. Buckle
[REDACTED]
Harwich, MA 02645
[REDACTED]

Exec. Council Chairman
Leslie Hines
[REDACTED]
Des Moines, IA 50312
[REDACTED]

Asst. Finance Officer
Ronald R. Ellis
[REDACTED]
Henderson, TX 75652
[REDACTED]

Judge Advocate
Mike Twomey
[REDACTED]
Tallahassee, FL 32310
[REDACTED]

Sergeant-at-Arms
Carlo Pola
[REDACTED]
Sandwich, MA. 02563
[REDACTED]

Product Sales Director
Wayne M. Bryant
[REDACTED]
Greensboro, N C 27405
[REDACTED]

Exec. Council Member
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[REDACTED]
Portland, TX 78374
[REDACTED]

Exec. Council Member
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[REDACTED]
Panama City, FL 32401
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[REDACTED]
Jones, MI 49061
[REDACTED]

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Donald A. Shebesta
[REDACTED]
Woodbridge, CA 95258
[REDACTED]

Exec. Council Member
Terry D. Babler
[REDACTED]
New Glarus, WI 53574
[REDACTED]

Exec. Council Member
Ronald R. Ellis
[REDACTED]
Henderson, TX 75652
[REDACTED]

Exec. Council Member
John (Dutch) DeGroot
[REDACTED]
Mt. Prospect, IL 60056
[REDACTED]

Exec. Council Member
Paris Tognoli
[REDACTED]
Isleton, CA 95641
[REDACTED]

Exec. Council Member
John A. Murphy
[REDACTED]
Yonkers, NY 10710
[REDACTED]

Exec. Council Member
William J. Bruinsma
[REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]

Service Officer
John P. Hofer
[REDACTED]
Cross Plains, WI 53528
[REDACTED]

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Rev. William T. Elliott
[REDACTED]
Hope, MI 48628
[REDACTED]

Chaplain
Rev. Perry M. Woerner
[REDACTED]
Fredericksburg, TX 78624
[REDACTED]

Chaplain
Rev. Richard J. Shannon
[REDACTED]
Lemont, IL 60439
[REDACTED]

WWII Historian
David W. Taylor
[REDACTED]
Medina, OH 44256
[REDACTED]

Vietnam Historian
Leslie Hines
[REDACTED]
Des Moines, IA 50312
[REDACTED]

Vietnam Editor
Gary L. Noller
[REDACTED]
Kerrville, TX 78028
[REDACTED]

Museum Curator
Arthur G. Cole
[REDACTED]
Wakefield, MA 01880
[REDACTED]

Contributing Editor
David W. Taylor
[REDACTED]
Medina, OH 44256
[REDACTED]

Scholarship Chair
Robert G. Short
[REDACTED]
Kalamazoo MI 49009
[REDACTED]

Webmaster
Anthony E. Greene
[REDACTED]

Webmaster
Kevin M. Sartorius
[REDACTED]

Website
www.americal.org/

Chapter Commander
Northwest Region
David E. Hammond
[REDACTED]
Beaverton, OR 97005
[REDACTED]

Chapter Commander
Southeast Region
Paul C. Stiff
[REDACTED]
Port Charlotte, FL 33949
[REDACTED]

Chapter Commander
New England Region
Arthur G. Cole
[REDACTED]
Wakefield, MA 01880
[REDACTED]

Chapter Commander
South Midwest Region
Cameron F. Baird
[REDACTED]
Stonewall, TX 78671
[REDACTED]

Chapter Commander
Great Lakes Region
John L. Mathews
[REDACTED]
Verona, WI 53593
[REDACTED]

Chapter Commander
Far West Region
Richard A. Merlin
[REDACTED]
Riverside, CA 92503
[REDACTED]

Chapter Commander
East Region
David D. Eichhorn
[REDACTED]
Fleming, OH 45729-9643
[REDACTED]

Chapter Commander
Central Midwest Region
David A. Chrystal
[REDACTED]
Centralia, MO 65240
[REDACTED]

NOTICE

Send new applications and dues renewals to Ronald R. Ellis, Asst. Finance Officer.

Do not send any mail to the former P.O. box in Boston. It is no longer in use. Send mail for general delivery to Richard Scales, National Commander.

TAPS	TAPS	TAPS
182 Infantry AT Anthony R. Andre Brookline, MA Date Unknown	182 Infantry Hector R. Begnoche Lunenburg, MA January 30, 2004	
245 Field Artillery Harvey T. Bryant Dodgeville, WI October 28, 2002	182 Infantry C Co. William J. Daley Somerville, MA Date Unknown	
182 Infantry Hq/2 George W. DeGrange Burlington, IA Date Unknown	164 Infantry G Co. Clayton W. Hewes Sr. New Castle, DE Date Unknown	
223 Field Artillery George Kost Union, NJ December 20, 2003	164 Infantry H Co. Howard Lauter Easton, PA March 26, 2004	
132 Infantry Robert C. Muehrcke Waterloo, WI November 9, 2003	164 Infantry William M. Parker El Cajon, CA December 24, 2003	
132 Infantry E Co. William E. Pritchett Las Vegas, NV December 6, 2003	198 LIB E/1/6 Inf Boyd Rader Middletown, PA Date Unknown	
247 Field Artillery Robert E. Smith Jr. Jackson, TN Date Unknown	182 Infantry D Co. Lionel St. Pierre Haverhill, MA Date Unknown	
245 Field Artillery Millard E. Tanner Lehigh Acres, FL January 4, 2004	101 QM 3142 Ord Joseph N. Testa Wayland, MA January 10, 2004	
182 Infantry Thurman O. Weathers Escondido, CA November 9, 2003	246 Field Artillery Norbert B. Wilson Mount Olive, NC March 4, 2004	

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

NEW MEMBERS

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Mr. Joseph R. Barber Jr. 196 LIB C/1/46 Quad Toledo, OH #PNC Ronald Ellis	Mr. Frank R. Benham 198 LIB HHC Tipp City, OH #Mark Deam

Mr. Daniel E. Brasher 198 LIB HQ/46 Inf Champmansboro, TN #Blirgerger	Mr. Harry Bressler 196 LIB 569 MID Dubois, PA #Jim Swanson
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Mr. Charles S. Papa 723 Maint C Co. Hagerstown, MD #Self	Mr. John R. Pfaendtner 196 LIB B/4/31 Inf Stanwood, MI #Internet
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Mr. Alois R. Straessle 16 F.A. C/3/16 El Cerrito, CA #Hugh S. Fitts	Mr. Mark O. Sweeney 198 LIB H/17 Cav Pleasanton, CA #Internet

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Hokessin, DE
#Dan Young

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#Dan Young

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196 LIB A/1/46 Inf
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82 Arty Bat A
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#R. Castrovo

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#Vance Van Wieren

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198 LIB A/1/52 Inf
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#R. Castronova

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#Dan Young

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#R. Castronova

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Mesa, AZ
#Self

Mr. John L. O'Neil
101 Med Band
Medford, MA
#Self

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#R. Castronova

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Brentwood, NY
#R. Castronova

Mr. Charles R. Stirling
198 LIB B/1/52 Inf
Cleveland, OH
#Membership Committee

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HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES?

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#Self

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#Dan Young

Mr. Jan Duster Bear A. H
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#Dan Young

Mr. Neal G. Paulshock
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Fleetwood, PA
#Wade Rodland

Mr. Thomas E. Williams
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Falls Church, VA
#Self

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Ridge, NY
#Conrad Steers

Mr. Jon Geranen
196 LIB B/2/1 Inf
Hayward, CA
#PNC Gary L. Noller

Mr. William T. Honjiyo
11 LIB HHC/1/20 Inf
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#Gary L. Noller

Mr. Harold W. Thomas
31 Infantry A/4/31
Louisville, KY
#Joseph R. O'Bryan

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ANNUAL BUNKER PARTY & WATERFORD PARADE
July 3-4, 2004

Meet at Bunker 10 A.M. - Parade begins at 11 A.M.
Huey, Tanks, Guard Towers, VC in the Woods, etc
After Parade-Festival on the grounds of the Bunker

Contact for more info:

Michael Iverson
Waterford, WI 53185
Telephone [REDACTED]

ANNUAL VIETNAM VETERANS REUNION

Kokomo, Indiana
Sept. 16-17-18-19, 2004

Unit reunions, Issues Tent, Speakers, Vendors

For Info:
Dick Forev 765-628-0297
Fax: [REDACTED]

Camping Info
E-mail [REDACTED]
or check
website: www.hcvvo.org

Terry Babler, Adjutant for the Great Lakes Chapter
will be set up in the main tent for the Americal
sign-in from 11 A.M. - 2:30 P.M.

ATTENTION - ATTENTION - ATTENTION

Please check the dues date following your name on
the address label on this Newsletter. If you do
not agree, please contact The Editor:

James C. Buckle
East Harwich, MA 02645-1470
Telephone: [REDACTED]
email: [REDACTED]

DO IT NOW!!

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

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David Eichhorn
Fleming, OH 45729
Tel: [REDACTED]

VICE COMMANDER
Jay Flanagan
Cranford, NJ 07017
Tel: [REDACTED]

SECRETARY
Joe Tunis
Lake Ariel, PA 18436
Leo Orfe - Sergeant-At-Arms
Everitt Williams - Chaplain
Visit our web site at:
<http://home.woh.rr.com/sidneyalum/advaerc/>

This year our chapter is celebrating the 20th
anniversary of being incorporated into the
Americal Division Veterans Association. We will
salute the charter members with certificates of
appreciation. It was through the special efforts
of Robert Hock that the Chapter was founded. Our
membership has grown from the first group meeting
of 12 to 45 members, to over 600 at the present
time.

This year we will carry on the tradition of an
annual reunion. We will meet in Bowling Green,
Kentucky, October 7-10. Reunion Chairman Wendall
Strode has sent out reservation forms to all the
members.

The events scheduled over three days will include
a VIP Tour of the Corvette Museum including
dinner. A Musical Tribute to America's Americal
by "Company B".

Also scheduled is a bus trip and a guided tour of
Fort Knox, a guided tour of the Patton Museum. Bus
trips to Abraham Lincoln's birthplace and a
Thorough Horse Farm.

Bowling Green, Kentucky is located one hour north
of Nashville, Tennessee and 1 1/2 hours south of
Louisville, Kentucky on Interstate 65.

All Americal members and guests are invited to
join this celebration. Chairman Wendall Strode
can be reached by phone: [REDACTED]. Email
address - strode@corvettemuseum.com

Visit our Chapter website for all the latest
information about Chapter activities:

<http://home.woh.rr.com/sidneyalum/advaerc/>

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

COMMANDER
John Mathews
Verona, WI 53593

ADJ/FIN OFF
Terry Babler
New Glarus, WI 53574

The Great Lakes Chapter would like to thank
everyone that attended the 18th Annual Winterfest
All Veterans R&R All Veterans Reunion in New
Glarus, Wisconsin. We had about 350 in attendance.
We had people from 21 States. Next years
Winterfest will be on January 13-14-15-16, 2005.
It's time to reserve your room for next year. If
the Chalet Landhaus Inn is full, get on the
waiting list right away and the phone number is:

. Say it's for Winterfest 2005.
Also, our next Great Lakes meeting will be held
during the Winterfest on Saturday morning at 9
a.m. at the Chalet Landhaus Inn.

Have you got your reservations in? Rich Merlin has
a great National Reunion planned in Reno, Nevada
on June 24-25-26, 2004. The Great Lakes Chapter
will definitely be at this one!

We will again be set-up at the Kokomo, Indiana
Reunion again in the big tent. The dates for
Kokomo are September 16-17-18-19, 2004. In 2003
we had close to 100 sign in for the Americal in
attendance. About 30,000 attend their reunion
every year. A very good time!

Also, our Service Officer, Mike Iverson of the
1st/20th Infantry has a Great Lakes Chapter
entered in the annual Bunker & Waterford Parade on
July 4 Weekend. The Bunker, holds a get-together
after the parade. The Bunker, owned by three
Vietnam veterans has had this event every year and
attracts a very good crowd.

For those of you that may NOT BE a member of the
Great Lakes Chapter yet: the dues are \$5.00 a year
which covers two Newsletters a year. One
Newsletter in the Spring and the other in the
Fall. For all current members, please check your
mailing label. If your dues expire by April 2004,
your dues are due now. If you prefer, go ahead and
pay for two years. Dues may be going up in 2005
so paying for two years now will save you later.

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

COMMANDER
Paul Stiff
Tampa, FL 33615
SEC/TREAS
Allen Feser
Lindenhurst, NY 11757

The South East Chapter is being reorganized and is
looking for volunteers and new members.

The new Chapter Commander is Paul Stiff and the
Sec/Treas is Allen Feser. Are you willing to help
out? Please contact Paul at the address above,

Many thanks to Bob Kapp for his work in keeping
the Chapter together these man years.

NORTHWEST CHAPTER
AK WA OR ID MT WY

COMMANDER
Dave Hammond
Beaverton, OR 97005
email [REDACTED]

NATIONAL REUNION-JUNE 22-25, 2006-NATIONAL REUNION

The 2006 National Reunion will be held in
Portland, Oregon. A water front hotel has been
booked in the heart of the city. Tours and
planning are underway.

For further information or if you can help with
the Reunion please contact Dave Hammond at the
above address.

COME AND SEE THE BEAUTIFUL PACIFIC NORTHWEST!!

CENTRAL MID WEST CHAPTER
ND SD KS NE MO IA

CHAPTER COMMANDER
David A. Chrystal Sr.
Centralia, MO 65240

email [redacted]

LATE BREAKING NEWS!

The Central Midwest Chapter has six (6) new members this month. We will be holding a Chapter meeting and election of officers at the Reunion in Reno.

The planning for the 2005 Reunion in Kansas City is coming along nicely. The host hotel is the Kansas city Marriott with a \$89.00 room rate.

Some of the possibilities for tours are:

- 1. A Harley Davidson Assembly Plant.
- 2. Independence and the Truman Presidential Library.
- 3. Fort Leavenworth, and if it is open by then, the Old US Army Disciplinary Barracks
- 4. Highlights of Kansas City to include a Riverboat Museum with the largest collection of pre Civil War artifacts in the States, the Fountains, Union Station, Hallmark Crown Center.

KANSAS CITY WE ARE TRULY AT THE HEART OF IT ALL!

We are second to Rome, Italy in the number of Fountains. We have a lot to see and do for the entire family!

Won't you join us June 15 - 19, 2005

KANSAS CITY HERE WE COME!!

David A Chrystal Sr.
Chapter Commander

VIETNAM VETERANS OF BREVARD - ANNUAL REUNION

I have just returned from one of the top Veteran Reunions in the country. The Vietnam Veterans of Brevard just hosted the 17th Annual Veterans Reunion and the 1st All veterans Reunion in Melbourne, Florida. What a great time we had visiting with old and new friends. Terry Babler and John Mathews brought in a group from Wisconsin and other areas for his famous LZ Oceanside. Rich Merlin was there from California, pumping us up for Reno. Dave Chrystal came in from Missouri. Dutch DeGroot and lots of 23rd MP buddies. Jerry Anderson from Atlanta, Ron McMillan from Dover, Florida, Bill Bacon (Jr.Vice Com.) from Texas and Dave Taylor from Medina, Ohio, just to name a few. There were about 40 Americal vets who signed in and about 25 more that didn't.

And of course Bob Kapp, The South East Chapter Commander, and his wife Jeanne had their motorhome set up in the camping area as our gathering place, with snacks and refreshments. Bob has been setting up a tent in Melbourne since before I met him back in 1998. He is a great guy and his service to the ADVA is greatly appreciated. He really out did himself again with flags, buntings and signs. Bob decided to step down as Commander of the South East Chapter this year and we elected

new officers at a Chapter meeting. He will be missed as Commander but I hope he will still be here every year.

I would like to say "Thank You" Bob for all of your years of dedication to the ADVA and the SE Chapter.

Jon Hansen
Sr. Vice Commander
ADVA

FROM THE NATIONAL COMMANDER

It is nice seeing the South East Chapter moving along. After many years of hard work holding the Chapter together Bob Kapp has stepped down. I just want to say 'THANKS BOB', for all you have done keeping the Chapter going and I know if the new officers need any help that you will step forward and give a hand.

Thanks again,
Rich Scales
NC ADVA

ANNUAL BUNKER PARTY & WATERFORD PARADE
July 3-4, 2004

Meet at Bunker 10 A.M. - Parade begins at 11 A.M. Huey, Tanks, Guard Towers, VC in the Woods, etc After Parade-Festival on the grounds of the Bunker Contact for more info:

Michael Iverson
[redacted]
Waterford, WI 53185
Telephone [redacted]

ANNUAL VIETNAM VETERANS REUNION

Kokomo, Indiana
Sept. 16-17-18-19, 2004

Unit reunions, Issues Tent, Speakers, Vendors

For Info:
Dick Forey 765-628-0297
Fax: [redacted]

Camping Info
E-mail [redacted]
or check
website: www.hcvvo.org

Terry Babler, Adjutant for the Great Lakes Chapter will be set up in the main tent for the Americal sign-in from 11 A.M. - 2:30 P.M.

NATIONAL REUNION UPDATE

Adrian Cronauer, (Who Robin Williams played in the movie, "Good Morning Vietnam") will have a pre-sentation Saturday afternoon on POW/MIA Accounting. He will also be our guest speaker at the Saturday night dinner. His Saturday night talk will be more on the entertaining side.

On Saturday from 10am until 3pm there will be a Military Vehicle and equipment display outside the hotel main entrance.

(Sent in by Terry Babler)

Southeast Region Votes New Slate of Officers At Melbourne Vet Reunion
The 17th Annual "Vietnam & All Veterans Reunion", Melbourne, Florida Provided The Back Drop For The Southeast Region and Americal Vets Throughout The Country To Come Together Again



(Left to right) Previous Southeast Region Chapter Commander Bob Kapp passes the gavel to the new Commander, Paul Stiff, 23rd MP Company, Vietnam. Standing to the right of Stiff is Jerry Anderson, Medic, 11th LIB, Vietnam, who is the new Chapter Sergeant at Arms and, far right is Allen Feser, 23rd MP Company, Vietnam who is the newly elected Chapter Secretary & Treasurer.

On April 24, 2004 at the Annual Meeting of the Southeast Chapter of the ADVA a change of command ceremony took place. At the Melbourne, Florida 17th Annual Vietnam & All Veterans Reunion, Bob Kapp, who held the chapter together for a decade, passed command to Paul Stiff. Jerry "Doc" Anderson was elected Sergeant at Arms and Al Feser was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

Paul will now lead the next campaign to increase membership and put together an event or two annually to recruit new members and have

all Americal Vets in FL, AL, GA, NC, SC and TN regroup in comradeship. A newsletter will be sent out shortly to all ADVA members who reside within our chapter AO. If we detect any of you Yankee "Snow Birds" infiltrating this AO in the winter you will be getting one also. Please have patience with the chapter while we reorganize, regroup and resupply. There is a Southeast Chapter Yahoo Group planned for the future as well. In the meantime Paul Stiff can be contacted at [redacted]. — Al Feser



Some of the numerous Americal vets at the Melbourne, Florida reunion gather at Bob Kapps "traveling home" for a group photo after the Southeast Regions Annual Meeting.

Southeast Chapter Meets With Other Americal Vets In Florida (continued)

Over 20,000 Vietnam vets and vets from all wars gathered in Melbourne, Florida for the 17th Annual "Vietnam & All Veterans Reunion" on April 21-25, 2004. This event also provides the opportunity for the ADVA Southeast Chapter to conduct its annual meeting as well. The Melbourne reunion featured continuous musical entertainment on Saturday and Sunday at the main stage, vendors of military memorabilia and food concessions of all types. The Traveling Vietnam Veterans Wall (Memorial) was also on display at the park.

Adding to the Americal presence at this event was a group from the north, many of whom were Americal vets, who staged their second annual "Operation LZ-Oceanside II", with their "tactical headquarters" at the Holiday Inn Oceanside, Indianatlantic, Florida, a short distance from Wickham Park where the Melbourne event took place. Operation LZ-Oceanside II was sponsored by, The 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Association, 23rd Military Police Company, Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Chapter 3, The Great Lakes Regional Chapter, Americal Division Veterans Association and the Vietnow national organization.

The Operation LZ-Oceanside II group, in addition to attending the Melbourne reunion, had their own schedule of events which included a pool deck party, "Gator Patrol" at night, Deep Sea Fishing, visiting a Blues Bar and visiting Daytona-area attractions.

(Right Photo) veterans placed numerous displays in front of their camp area as reminders of the Vietnam War that will always be a part of them.

(Photos Below) Saturday night's main attraction was a presentation: "The Lost Patrol" which simulated a combat operation in Vietnam. These soldiers are part of the group waiting to begin their presentation.



THE FOLLOWING NAMED MEMBERS DONATED MORE THAN TEN DOLLARS TO THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Esther Feeler in memory of Joe Feeler	Arline Begnoche in memory of Hector Begnoche
---	--

Rich Merlin in memory of PNC Daniel Merlin	Everett Goudy in memory of Peggy Goudy
--	--

Irene Brooks in memory of Charles Brooks	Henry Barton in memory of Dr. Robert Muehrcke
--	---

Ethel Thornton in memory of Robert Thornton	Dorothy Sullivan in memory of Maurice Sullivan
---	--

Margaret Dullivan in memory of Maurice Sullivan	Elizabeth Pariseau in memory of Maurice Sullivan
---	--

Jim & Ellen Doherty in memory of Hugh Doherty	Imelda Driscoll in memory of James G. Driscoll
---	--

Gary Noller
in memory of
Larry O'Boyle

Paul Grice
in memory of Fallen Brothers
11 LIB A/1/20 Infnatry

Edwin Symonowicz	-	James Milano
John Shea	-	Michael Piazza
John Smith	-	Carlo Pola
D.E. Murphy	-	Albert Simms
Herman Stephenson	-	Elbert Fuller
Chester Carlock	-	David Hammond
Douglas Burnett	-	Robert Kasting
Leonard Johnson	-	Terrance Siemer
Verner Pike	-	Raymond Fox
Patrick Merten	-	Howard Terry
Col Richard Stephens Ret)	-	James Stein
Roger Luckjohn	-	Raymond Wahl
Spencer Bumgardner	-	Bill Bacon
James Lewellen	-	Chuck Sterling
Harold Hansen	-	Gerald Widiker
John Fleck	-	Malcolm Cate
M.G. Lloyd Ramsey (Ret)	-	Tim Vail
David Eckberg	-	Leslie Martinson
H.J. Logsdon	-	Norman Gravino
Daniel Holly	-	Don Shebesta
Jim McFarlen	-	Windell Naylor
Earl Cook	-	PNC Ronald Ellis
Kenneth Harpe	-	Stan Grimes
Marion Doyle	-	Robert Miller
Col. John Gasper (Ret)	-	Claude Mook
Steven Reisdorff	-	James Wark
CW4 Nicholas Shealy (Ret)	-	Thomas Bradbury
John Isam	-	Herbert Page
PNC Bernard Chase	-	Jerry Comer
Ann McGee	-	Bruce Sexton
Dale Meisel	-	Victor Lander
Lewis Mayfield	-	Anthony Galgano
MSG Warren Reed (Ret)	-	Leonard Graham
Gerald Butler	-	Russell Smith
Salvatore Vinciullo	-	Leonard Oliver
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Andrew Ash	-	Richard Bush
Richard McLennan	-	James Haworth
Robert Simpson	-	George Eckhardt
Vernon Allen	-	William Maack
William Hawkins	-	Thomas McGreevy
Col Robert Acton (Ret)	-	Laurence See

Sgt Gary Weaver (Ret)	-	Claude Morris
Dan Vaughn	-	Howard Burroughs
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Sarah Dunn	-	Jim Stringham
Benjamin Kelly	-	George Tuttle
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1SG James Johnson (Ret)	-	Charles Bell
Michael Vitelli	-	James Thomas
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Vic Jasinski	-	Miller King
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Toribio Sonora	-	Reese Jackson
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The Americal's First Home

The U.S. Army's only named division was formed on a French colonial island, New Caledonia

David W. Taylor



Noumea, "Nouvelle Calédonie" -New Caledonia (Photo courtesy of Howard Burroughs)

The Destiny of a Division

History is very often born of twists of fate; circumstances not readily apparent at first glance, which lead events to unfold in unique ways. Such is the case for the creation of the Americal Army Division and its origins on a colonial French island, known as New Caledonia.

The island of New Caledonia is located approximately 850 miles northeast of Brisbane, Australia. Prior to World War II it had been and still was a French colony since 1854 and its capital, Noumea, near the southwest end of the island, had been known as "the Paris of the Pacific."

Although agriculture played a part of the islands economy, mining was its chief industry. The island was rich in deposits of chrome, cobalt, nickel, iron, maganese and various ores. Agricultural products included coffee, copra, cotton, corn, tobacco, bananas and pineapples.

The destiny for the Americal Division began in France with its fall to Germany in June 1940. Marshall Philippe Pétain took the top position in the newly formed government at Vichy. General Charles DeGaulle however, formed a "Provisional Free French" government-in-exile in London, with designs to fight against the Germans in any way possible.

French possessions around the world were faced with a quandary. To which side should their allegiance belong? Leading the islands government in New Caledonia was Governor George Policier, who attempted to sit on the

fence with this dilemma. But on September 5, 1940, the commander of the island's militia, Lieutenant Colonel Denis, a pro-Vichy supporter, took over control and became the island's governor. DeGaulle, however, was not to have it. Later in September he sent Henri Sautot, the French Resident Commissioner in the New Hebrides to take over the governors position in New Caledonia. Denis and his followers tried to block this move but failed in their efforts and were deported by Sautot.

The move, while good for the Free French and their allies, presented another dilemma. Had the New Caledonia government remained pro-Vichy, which represented an alignment with Germany and by implication the axis powers of Italy and Japan as well, Japan's interest in New Caledonia may well have been one of "limited occupation". With New Caledonia squarely on the side of the allied cause all bets were off as to what Japan's designs might be.

DeGaulle, concerned about Japan's growing power in the Pacific, offered New Caledonia as an advanced naval base for the United States. The attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941 made negotiations between the Free French and Washington more urgent.

Prior to Pearl Harbor the Free French had hoped that forces in Australia and New Zealand could be called upon to help defend New Caledonia in time of an emergency. Pearl harbor changed that, with Australia concerned about its own defense and New Zealand with the protection of its own

territory and the Fiji Islands, which were of key interest to the Japanese.

In early January 1942 the War Department in Washington began setting up its priority list for troops and equipment to be sent to the South Pacific. High on that list was New Caledonia. While the War Department's Task Force 6814 – the precursor to the Americal – was being formed, the Free French in New Caledonia were panicking. Japanese submarines were reported in waters near New Caledonia, presumably on reconnaissance for suitable landing beaches for their troops.

In an effort to force Washington to look closer at the situation in New Caledonia, the Free French, not aware of Washington's secret development of the Task Force for the defense of the island, threatened to discontinue work on an airfield if troops and equipment were not immediately sent. The U.S., fearful that notice of the Task Force being sent would leak out to the Japanese, tried to assure the French in general terms that every effort was being made to send support.

As the ships of Task Force 6814 sped to the South Pacific, the French continued to state and restate their fears of a pending Japanese invasion and that it would discontinue its preparation for an American force without the promise of American troops to arrive shortly. General Alexander Patch, Task Force commander had remained behind in Washington while his troops sailed to the South Pacific. After recovering from an illness he flew to Suva, Fiji where he boarded a Navy patrol plane to Noumea, the capital of

New Caledonia. He arrived on March 7, 1942, the day after his Task Force had left the docks of Melbourne, Australia on its final leg to Noumea.

The concerns of the Free French in New Caledonia were not unfounded. Since their attack on Pearl Harbor the Japanese had aggressively pursued its aims of domination in the Pacific. The garrisons at Guam and Wake Island were attacked and fell; the Philippines were attacked, Hong Kong was taken under siege and Singapore fell. The Japanese pushed on to the Solomon Islands and began an ariel bombing of Australia at Darwin and Port Mosby, from their newly conquered bases in New Guinea.

Task Force 6814 arrived on March 12th, 1942 as the first six ships carrying the bulk of the troops moved into Noumea Harbor from the Coral Sea. While the harbor was wide and deep, the dock facilities were lacking. The principal docks, Grund Ouai and Nickel could only handle smaller ships. The larger ships had to unload troops and cargo at anchor in the bay.

In combination with small garrisons of French and Australian forces, the Task Force would undertake many weeks of hard labor to build up a credible defense. When they first arrived they had no naval or air support, only two regiments of infantry, the 132nd and 182nd, and two artillery battalions – plus an odd assortment of support troops to defend a cigar-shaped island 250 miles in length and some 30 miles across.

The geography of New Caledonia presented the biggest challenge to its defense. The "Central Chaine" was a multi-peaked mountain chain that ran the length of the island, which made cross-island (coast-to-coast) travel and communication difficult.

was the islands' completed airfield at Tontouta, thirty-two miles above Noumea and the partially completed airfield at "Plaine des Gaiacs", 120 miles further to the northwest. These fields were to be "defended to the last".

The island was split into two main areas and assigned to one of the infantry regiments. The 132nd Regiment took over the northern sector covering approximately two-thirds of the island with its command post near Bourail. The regiment was to defend the Plaine des Gaiacs airfield and another at Koumac, Bourail Bay, and the cross-island roads in their sector and key harbors/inlets on the north coast. Assisting the regiment was the Australian 3rd Independent Company; a company of commandos who knew the island well and had prepared to fight as guerrillas in the island's rugged interior had the Japs attacked before help arrived.

The 182nd Regiment established its headquarters, a short distance north of Noumea, and took over the southern sector. Their responsibilities included Noumea Harbor, Tontouta airfield and the cross-island Boulouparis-Thio road. The Free French militia forces on the island were to support the 182nd.

On April 9th the 164th Infantry Regiment arrived which allowed Patch to lighten the geographic load on the 132nd and 182nd. The arrival of the 164th and additional artillery, engineer and other reinforcements allowed Patch to divide the defensive burden equally among the regiments. The Australian



In advance of the Task Force arriving in New Caledonia, Brigadier General William I. Rose, who had nominal command of the Task Force in transit and Lieutenant Colonel Sebree, Chief of Staff flew to Noumea. They joined General Patch to complete arrangements for the arrival of troops and prepare basic defense plans for the island. Patch issued his own mission orders for the Task Force: "In cooperation with the military forces of the United Nations, hold New Caledonia against attack."

Much of the narrow coastal plain was swampy and almost impenetrable. The principal highway at the time of the Task Forces arrival was one narrow road, which ran up the western coast. There were several secondary roads, which crossed the island to the eastern coast through breaks in the mountain chain, but the road network on the east was extremely poor and virtually impassable for military traffic.

Patch drew up his defensive plans. The city of Noumea and its important harbor had the highest priority. Close to its importance

Company was given control of the northern tip of the island from Quaco on the West Coast to Oubatche on the East Coast. The 132nd Infantry covered the sector from the Australians south to a cross-island line

running from Bourail to Houailou. The 182nd covered all the territory between the Bourail-Houailou road south to a line passing from the mouth of the Ouenghi River eastward to Thio. The newly arrived 164th Infantry took the sector between the 182nd's boundary to a line from Paita to Ounia. The Free French controlled the southern end of the island below this line.

While the arrival of American troops was met with warm gratitude from the French and New Caledonia natives, care had to be given to cultural sensitivities and local customs. Adding to General Patch's diplomatic challenges was a simmering dislike by the local French officials (French "Colonials") of the French "Metropolitans" who had been sent by DeGaulle to wrest control of the island from the Vichy supporters. Numerous street demonstrations and other unrest appeared from time to time, but Patch kept a neutral position, allowing the two political forces to try to work things out.

Settling in ...on a Island Home

The soldiers of Task Force 6814 made themselves as comfortable as possible on their new island home. Although the mosquitoes were plentiful, malaria was not found on New Caledonia, probably due to the large number of Naoli trees, a member of the Eucalyptus family. Each day the rain came down in torrents for several hours. The mosquitoes multiplied in droves and were particularly bothersome in the evening. Eventually the rain soaked Army blankets attracted large green flies, the flies settling in the woolen blankets and laying hundreds of eggs. The larva hatched into thousands of maggots. These pests ruined many woolen blankets.

American ingenuity solved many problems on New Caledonia. In one camp of the 132nd Regiment bamboo was used to pipe water for a distance of 1,200 feet. Refrigeration was designed from packing cases, and discarded cork from life belt vests was used for insulation.

One company from the 132nd became tired of the limited rations of canned meat such as Spam or Beef Hash. Their camp was bivouacked in a hollow called "Mosquito Junction" located on a farm owned by a Mr. Bonaparte. During a night raid by several men, a "beef steer" was shot, skinned and delivered to the company cook for preparation. The next morning Mr. Bonaparte came to the company mess area complaining about the Vichy French stealing his prize cow, whereupon the company cook made him a steak dinner to offer the company's condolences.

Relationships between the American troops and the French "colonials" were on and off depending on location, events and circumstances. After one month in New



Headquarters Battery, 70th Coast Artillery, Outside Noumea, New Caledonia
(Photo courtesy of Howard Burroughs)

Caledonia a company of infantry camped near the town of Bourail had an amusing incident. Three soldiers decided to visit a "bistro" located in the area to relieve the monotony of Army life. Upon their arrival they began imbibing French wine, California Port and a local liquid dynamite known as "Butterfly Brandy". The Bistro owner was delighted to take the money from these American soldiers but as time elapsed and the drinking continued, the "fellowship" moved from contentment to happiness, to boisterousness, and finally to destructiveness.

At this point the now unhappy owner politely suggested "finis" to the celebrants who considered this rebuff an insult to the valiant – although untested – soldiers who had arrived to protect the lives, liberty and prosperity of an unappreciative ally. After continuous loud "finis" with appropriate Gallic gestures from the bistro owner, the soldiers felt they were being cut off. The soldiers decided to demonstrate to the Gaul what happens when international diplomacy fails. Three M-1 rifles simultaneously vented the bistros corrugated tin roof with the fervent hope that whenever it rained the owner would remember his treatment to these gallant allies.

On their way back to camp they halted for a nap and thereby missed roll call. They were issued picks and shovels to dig a garbage pit. Shortly after, when the Bistro owner came into the camp to complain, a formation was called so he could pick out the perpetrators. As he walked through the ranks he was met with more than a few smiles of soldiers who had learned of the incident and knew their three buddies were digging a

pit, well out of sight. Just as the inspection was to conclude with negative results the soldiers in the garbage pit happened to glance at the formation and thought it was mail call. They leaped up from the pit and, despite covert hand and arm signals from their buddies in the formation, the trio double-timed toward disaster. Hearing a disturbance the inspection delegation turned towards the three and the bistro owner went into a frenzy of recognition.

After a loud and lengthy conference in English and French, a compromise was reached. Apologies were tendered by the trio to the bistro owner, and payment was made for the vented tin roof, in a sum several times its actual value. A promise was made by the soldiers to never again darken the bistro's doorstep. The restoration and honor of the great Franco-American alliance was once again intact and satisfied.

Howard Burroughs was assigned to the 70th Coast Artillery Anti-Aircraft (AA) battalion. His unit had an AA gun position above the Nickle Docks on top of a mountain that had at its base, the Noumea slaughter house. This was where he recalled, "they 'humanely' slaughtered the pigs by whacking them over the forehead with a club, which took about 40 whacks and all the while the pig voiced his displeasure at the proceedings by releasing the most God-awful squeals imaginable". He continues, "The meat cutters then went to work disemboweling them, and while we sat around eating our chow in a tin shack that was a bus stop on the road, the Javanese natives that worked in the mines in back of us would go to the slaughter house and drag the entrails along the road in front of us, to their abodes".

Lieutenant Jim Watson was with the 72nd Field Artillery Regiment (105mm's) which arrived in New Caledonia on April 23rd. There it was broken up into three battalions and Watson was assigned to the 246th Battalion, which was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Sewell. Watson remembers intensive artillery training, target practice and he gave additional chemical warfare training to the battalion and hospital personnel in the area.

For recreation Watson and his buddies would take day trips to the beach for fishing and fish fries. His unit was housed in tents in a pasture owned by a Monsieur Sulard. He hunted deer with Sulard's son and occasionally had the chance to go to Noumea and have dinner at the Grand Hotel – a meeting place for Officers in the division. He also attended dances at the 9th General Hospital.

Joe Ritz was assigned to the 22nd Ordnance Company (Medium Maintenance). Their workshops were in Noumea. Ritz remembers the city of "red tiled roofed houses, small and unpretentious, set on the hillside, one behind the other in rows, almost like a terraced garden. Each house had an outhouse and the 'honey wagons' came once a day to collect the contents of the buckets. This was then used as fertilizer on the local farms. I refused to eat any uncooked vegetables there."

Ritz remembers the "locals" trying to take advantage of the arrival of the Americans. "The only imposing structure in the city was the Catholic Cathedral, sitting on the crest of a hill overlooking the harbor. On the road up this hill was a very good bakery and an ice cream parlor with very reasonable prices. During the first week the Americans were there ice cream soared in price from 5 cents to 35 cents. At that point General Patch sent a contingent of Military Police to the establishment with 'Off Limits' signs and instructions to see that no U.S. personnel entered the store. Within a half-hour the price dropped back to 5 cents a cone. Every Sunday each occupant of our tent chipped in 15 cents and someone made the bakery purchase for the day. The 75 cents total gave us enough cookies to last the day with some left over."

The 22nd Ordnance Company's machine shop and instrument repair shop were in two school bus-size trucks; each fitted with workbenches. The small arms, artillery and automotive shops were housed in what had once been a warehouse. On occasion Ritz and his fellow soldiers were sent up the island to do field work. He remembers the smaller towns as "nothing more than localities of shacks and mud huts."

Ritz recalled, "news was hard to come by in our area. We had Armed Forces Radio (if someone had a radio) and now and then we would get a copy of the Armed Forces Newspaper. Coverage was not extensive. At

one point we were to go to the northern end of the island to service some shore batteries but suddenly the trip was called off. We were placed into 'combat training'. We did some target practice with our Lee Enfield rifles and dug air raid trenches. We learned defense tactics (but not a lot) and suddenly realized that we would be ill prepared if we met an enemy. This program lasted three days and then one of the crew of the shore defenses visited us with news that there must have been something happening out in the ocean: much floating wreckage, life rafts, many bodies were washed up near their camp. Later we found out about the Battle of Midway."

Howard Burroughs, with the 70th Coast Artillery, felt "things picked up a bit after six months on the island. The Governor put up a 'Cat House' in the middle of Noumea, which we could see great from our gun position. Business was great too, lines extended around the block every day. Our binoculars did come in handy during that period."

Burroughs remembers, "our gun position atop the hill had four openings for our 50 caliber machine guns which were interconnected by tunnels and covered over by boiler plate and dirt, so you could very easily travel underground to each position. This tactical position came in handy at times. One time the Javanese girls, who took exception to the Cat House, had their own trade going. A few would come up the back side of the mountain and show our platoon that there were better times to be had than in town."

"One of our Lieutenants was Lt. Truscott whose father was General Truscott in the European Theatre of Operations. The LT became very suspicious of how good the morale was atop the hill on night surveillance. The word had gotten out quick and there was much activity in the tunnels. As the LT would go in one gun position a girl would come out the other and streak down the hill to home. When the LT emerged from the last gun position he said nothing but ambled down the side of the hill to his tent. I'm sure he suspected something."

As General Patch continued to prepare his soldiers to defend New Caledonia and increase their training for war. War Department plans called for the formation of a division from a Task Force. But outside of having the standard three infantry regiments, the table of organization for Task Force 6814 did not resemble the standard triangular infantry division organization of the day. Accordingly the War Department sought to give Patch's "division" a name instead of a number. From Washington came the tentative name, "Necal Division" taken from an early code designation for New Caledonia. General Patch suggested it be called the "Bush" division. But he decided to give the soldiers of the Task Force the opportunity to name the organization they were to serve in.

An enlisted man in the 26th Signal Company, PFC David Fonesca, of Roxbury, Massachusetts, subsequently offered the name, which was approved by General Patch and the War Department: "Americal Division" ... "American Troops on New Caledonia."

During the months that had passed since the arrival of Task Force 6814, the normal rate of attrition had taken place and on September 23, 1942 the first group of replacements had arrived. As the war in the Pacific had progressed for the allies, Task Force units were sent to other islands to help garrison against a possible Japanese attack. On September 19th the Americal underwent a full-scale reorganization designed to streamline the division for combat. Shipment alerts became commonplace. On October 9 the 164th departed from the Noumea docks for Guadalcanal. By November 3rd the 182nd Regiment had been shipped out to reinforce the effort in the Pacific. On November 6th the first elements of the 43rd Infantry Division docked at Noumea to begin taking over the defenses of the island and on December 8th the last echelon of ground forces of the Americal, with the exception of the 221st Field Artillery, departed from Noumea.

New Caledonia, through the efforts of the Americal, had been improved greatly with strategic airfields at Koumac, Plaine des Gaiacs, Oua Tom and Tontouta, with many smaller emergency fields and a seaplane facility at Ile Nou. The strategic harbor of Noumea had been improved tremendously and ranked as a principal base in the South Pacific. Task Force 6814 and its offspring, the Americal Division, sailed off for other islands and other missions, its long journey in war having begun on a nondescript French colonial island known as New Caledonia.

Contributing Editors Note: Grateful appreciation and acknowledgement is given to the followings sources: personal correspondence (undated) from Howard Burroughs and a variety of photos from his personal collection. A booklet titled, "The Life and Times of Jim Watson" contributed by William Tomlinson (both Watson and Tomlinson were Americal artillery officers); "Orchids In The Mud – Personal Accounts by Veterans of the 132nd Infantry Regiment" (edited by Robert Muehrcke) and "Under The Southern Cross", Francis D. Cronin.



GUARDSMEN AMONG THE FIRST TO ENGAGE THE ENEMY
Sunday Eagle Tribune - November 9, 2003
By Barney Gallagher

This coming Tuesday is Veterans Day, and I'm glad I am among those to whom this day is dedicated.

The reason I'm glad is this day is for those who have survived military service in times of war.

The other military holiday, Memorial Day, is for those who did not survive, who were killed in the line of duty.

It is my good fortune, and that of millions of others, that we came through the big wars successfully, many with wounds, but most without physical injury.

In your branch of the military service, you were on the front lines, those who were in actual combat, face to face with our enemies, with both sides trying to kill the other.

Then there were those who were not in actual combat, who did not face direct death on battlefields but were essential to victory. They carried supplies, they kept machinery running, they compiled information or they trained troops that faced fire.

With that in mind, I am constantly grateful I did not engage in actual combat, although there were a couple of scary times.

However, I will always be mindful of, and grateful to, the people I knew who were in the infantry, the people with the rifles and machine guns, in the jungles in the Pacific or behind the hedgerows in Europe.

Every time I pass by the former state armory on Kenos Avenue, now the home of the Haverhill Fire Credit Union and the new fire museum, I remember the National Guard guys from Haverhill and nearby who marched off to World War II, and I thank them for their work.

You see, those infantry soldiers were among the first Americans to take part in real warfare, when they engaged the Japanese on the island of Guadalcanal in the southern Pacific. They were sent into combat as soon as plans could be made following the Pearl Harbor attack of December 7, 1941.

This was raw combat, soldier against soldier in the jungle, a far different type of warfare from the desert battles of the current campaign in Iraq.

One of the big differences between then and now is that the National Guard of 1941 did not get back to the States on furloughs for years. I met men who had been away from home for two or three years, moving from "One Damn Island after Another." (that was the title of a column in our Army newspaper in that section of the war.)

I was among the more fortunate members of the armed forces in that war. I did just what I was doing as a civilian, writing stories and taking pictures, for a long time in the States, in a pilot-training organization.

When I got overseas, I saw people in combat, I saw dead and wounded men after battles and I watched warplanes fly off, many never to return.

So there are people with whom I share emotions on

Veterans Day. We survived, we came home, most of us to raise families and work in our various fields to help build the country.

We were the lucky ones, those who had the honor of serving, doing what we were told to do, going where we were told to go, and coming home.

Each Veterans Day (which used to be Armistice Day, celebrating the end of World War I) there are fewer and fewer of us, but those who are left can share the memories that go with active military service in time of war. Nothing can take that away.

I am always proud to shake the hands with the men of Company A, 182nd Infantry, Massachusetts National Guard, who are still with us after combat in the big war. Those are the guys who deserve the credit for victory.

Happy Veterans Day to them.

(Barney Gallagher is an Eagle-Tribune reporter who has covered Haverhill for more than 60 years - from crime and politics to school and business. Each week he gives his views on Haverhill issues.)

CAVALRY CALL

Soldier Recalls Training With Horses On Cape
By William J. McLaughlin

In 1937, when I first came to Camp Edwards at age 17 with my regiment of horse, the 110th Cavalry, Massachusetts National Guard, the area was nearly virginal. It had opened for military training the previous year, but little had been done beyond clearing the area for pyramidal tents and erecting a huge corral at one end of the area with a long water trough at the side.

Since no two troops drilled the same night at the Commonwealth Armory in Boston, there was no need of a horse for each man; only when he went to summer camp.

We staggered the camps with other cavalry regiments. We would send our horses off to them--the 101st New York, the 102nd New Jersey and the 104th Ohio--as they would to us. I was detailed with a few others to ride these horses down from the loading platform at the rail junction in Bourne near the old iron bridge. Saddling one and leading two others, we came down Route 28 (now 28A) on a long and grueling ride. Since we hadn't been able to ride while our horses were away for a month or more, it was a painful experience, creating huge welts on our thighs.

At 5 p.m. each day, the bugler would blow "water call" and we on stable guard would ride one horse bareback while leading two others toward the corral. Since we rode without saddle or bridle we had little control of the animals crazed with thirst. My mount, Chocolate, bolted for the corral a quarter-mile away, brushing a pile of hay bales forcing me to drop the ropes leading the other two.

As we roared toward the corral, my heart sank at the sight of the 6-foot fence around it. But Chocolate veered at the last minute through the gate and up to the trough, busting his way through the maddened horses willing down water.

I went sailing over his head into the trough.

"Get outta there; you're frightening the horses," growled the old sergeant.

HOWITZERS IN TRURO DUNES

As the war in Europe threatened to involve us, National Guard units, including ours, were "federalized" all over the country. Men were drafted and carpenters by the hundreds built barracks on Army forts and new camps like Edwards. By 1941, we had been turned into field artillery units and had new leaders from regular Army and Harvard ROTC.

Since the range at Camp Edwards was too short for our big howitzers, the lieutenant colonel devised a new way of firing. We drove to Truro, siting our howitzers in the dunes, while the Coast Guard would tow a target offshore for us to fire on.

Unlike today, the area was sparsely populated. Overnight we huddled in canvas tents, fully clothed, shivering in the cold. From time to time, there would be simulated fire missions.

Since we used indirect fire, only the officers directing it could see the target. Using geometry, they would devise angles and give orders based on aiming stakes.

Unfortunately, in the dunes, especially at night, we could not always see the aiming stakes. "Aim for the center of Highland Light," I told the gunners on my piece as the beam swept overhead. The gunner picked the center spot of the rotating beam, and it worked. In the morning, our piece was one of the few right on the button. We learned to adapt, and perhaps this was the strength of the Americans in that war.

We eventually spent three months on maneuvers in the Carolinas and returned to Camp Edwards on December 6, 1941. The next day, Pearl Harbor was bombed and we were at war. After a short 10-day leave, we boarded a ship from Brooklyn to Australia--a 37 day cruise. It turned out to be nearly five years and five campaigns, from Guadalcanal to the Philippines, before we returned to civilian life.

Ed Note: The above story is put in the Americal Newsletter in memory of Bill McLaughlin. It was written by Bill and was carried in the Cape Cod Times on Sunday, May 12, 1999.

Bill was a prolific writer and one of the early editors of the Americal Newsletter and later edited and published the 'Canooner'.

Bill McLaughlin passed away on July 12, 2002.

ATTENTION - ATTENTION - ATTENTION

The address labels have been updated for the coming fiscal year. Please check you address label on the cover of this issue. Your dues are paid up until the date shown after your name.

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East Harwich, MA 02645-1470

Or email--

PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER
IT NEED YOU!!

JAPS KNEW BETTER Bad But Not Stupid

With the passing of the former NRA President, Joe Foss, I am reminded of a story that few know about but every American should take heed to. Joe Foss, naturally, as a good, realistic American, believed that the private citizen should maintain his constitutional right to "keep and bear arms."

Here is something to think about when you hear those short memoried politicians and Hollywood Liberals start talking about "gun control".

This story originally appeared in National Federation of Republican Assemblies. It seems that in 1960, 15 years after the end of World War II, Robert Menard, then Commander of the USS Consellation, took part in a meeting between U.S. Navy personnel and members of the Japanese Defense Forces. Most of the attendee at the meeting were World War II Veterans. One American took the opportunity to inquire why, after Pearl Harbor, with the fleet crippled and the Mainland defenses in what must have been obvious disarray - the Japanese had not simply invaded the U.S. West Coast? Robert Menard recalled the response of the Japanese Commander. "You are right," he conceded, "We did indeed know much about your preparedness. We knew that probably every second home in your country contained firearms. We knew that your country actually had state championships for private citizens (many NRA sponsored) shooting military rifles. We were not fools to set foot in such quicksand."

(Taken from the Guadalcanal Echoes)

"NOW IT'S OUR CHANCE"

Just think of the stand MacArthur is making and how the hearts at home are breaking.

To know they're fighting tremendous force and keeping straight upon the course. Never retreating from their foe, fighting from the one word "go"

The first World War was fought in France, now in Japan we'll get our chance

To do the same as MacArthur did. We can do it; can't we kid?

(Pvt. J.D. Moore - Btry F 244 Coast Artillery)

This was taken from the Transport Reporter, dated February 4, 1942. The Transport Reporter was a paper put out aboard the Santa Rosa and sent in by Howard Burroughs, H/70 C.A., Howard was one of the compositers for the Transport Reporter.

TALISAY - PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
132nd Infantry

Has anyone heard of a plan to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the 132nd Infantry landing on Talisay on March 26, 1945?

If you have heard of any plans please contact:

Warren B. Huck

Hilton Head, SC 22926
email

223rd FIELD ARTILLERY

Your letter of March 8th arrived along with your recent Newsletter. It is strange to me that I only recently found out about the Americal Division Veterans Association.

It made me feel bad when I read of your visit to New Caledonia in 1992. I have always yearned to make a return visit. Due to the fact that I am 85 years old in June I suppose that will never happen.

If you use any of the enclosed information I would appreciate you giving my name and address in the off chance that some of my old friends are still alive.

I thought upon reading your letter that you would like to have what information I have kept all these years.

My outfit left New York January 23, 1942 aboard the "Kungsholm" renamed the "John Ericsson". This was a sister ship to the "Gripsholm", a refugee ship I had heard about. In later years the "Kungsholm" was destroyed by fire.

There were 6600 troops aboard this ship, and it took all day to serve two meals. My aluminum mess cup acquired a brown film from the tea I drank. The only drink available.

One evening we were fed lamb stew which was found to be spoiled. You cannot picture this many men with dysentery all at the same time. Some were passing out and the litter bearers were not in much better shape.

Thirty four days later, February 26, 1942, we arrived in Melbourne, Australia. The Japanese were bombing Darwin, and so we left the ship and stayed over night in a park. The next day we entrained to Bendigo and were placed in private homes. This was 100 miles north of Melbourne. The Aussies were very nice to us.

On March 3, 1942 we left Melbourne in a convoy. some distance away, and out of sight of land, our ships engine developed trouble. The convoy went ahead to New Caledonia and we sat for three days, by ourselves, while the engine was being repaired.

We had an "A" and a "B" duffle bag with one of them on one of the other ships. This bag was never returned to us. I had heard that we were thought to have been sunk. The "John Ericsson" arrived in New Caledonia on March 15, 1942. We were aboard for 43 days.

Your Newsletter mentioned a cemetery in Noumea. This was known as "Trucker's Paradise". This island is very mountainous with narrow roads. It was a common thing to have side mirrors broken by another passing truck.

I was a member of the 223rd FA - 2nd Battalion Hdq Battery, with 3 years, 1 month and 20 days foreign service.

Jack M. Boyer Sr.
Manchester, TN 37355

HAVE YOU CALLED THAT BUDDY YET?
TROMORROW MAY BE TOO LATE!

MEMORIAL DAY

By Pattey Meyers-Wilkens
The Exponent-Brooklyn, Michigan

With the upcoming Memorial Holiday, there is more to think about other than what to do with the extra day off from work. Sadly it seems, for too many people, the reasons why we observe Memorial Day have gotten lost somewhere along the way.

Those of us who are lucky enough not to have first-hand experience living with the reality of war need to be reminded of this day's significance because those who have been involved with war, don't need any reminders. Their memories are quite vivid.

Memorial Day is a day to recognize how fortunate we are to experience the many freedoms offered in our great country, but more importantly, we need to remember how we came to acquire these freedoms.

There is a history which has brought us to this point in time and it is that history, and the people responsible for creating that history, that deserve to be honored and recognized, particularly at this time of year.

It is these people, the people that fought in battle, as well as their wives, mothers, fathers, "sweethearts", brothers, sisters and friends, who were effected by war and asked by The Exponent staff to share their memories with our readers.
(Sent in by Leonard Owszarzak)

Ed Note: This article is then followed by personal experiences sent in by readers. This is only one of many articles that I have read asking veterans to get their stories down on paper.

The committee that has established the Memorial in Washington, DC, to all veterans of WWII has asked all veterans to register and send in their stories.

Have you sent your story in yet?

AMERICAL MUSEUM

I would like to thank Mary O. Olson of Saugus for the donation of Americal items from her father's war days, PNC Santo J. Ravagno.

I would also like to thank the widow of Joe Anderson for the many items she brought to our last meeting.

I spent my entire time at the last meeting arranging the articles that these two ladies were kind enough to donate.

Anyone wishing to donate articles to the Museum may send it to me and it will be put on display.

You are invited to attend our meetings at the Museum. The meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month. Weather permitting in the winter and meetings are not held during July and August.

The Museum is open Tuesday through Friday from 9 to 4 by Armory personnel.

Art Cole
Curator

GUADALCANAL CAMPAIGN VETERANS

REUNION - Sept, 8-9-10-11-12, 2004 - REUNION

Radisson Plaza Hotel
Kalamazoo, Michigan

The Guadalcanal Campaign Veterans organization is for members of all services who served on Guadalcanal from 7 Aug 1942 until 7 Feb 1943.

For more info:
Past President Gene Keller
Kalamazoo, MI 49002-4482
Tel: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

GUADALCANAL AND THE SOLOMON ISLANDS 2004

Fly from Los Angeles to Guadalcanal and board our Solomon Islands WWII cruise expedition. July 31 to Aug 13, 2004

\$4,500 per person, twin share includes air fare from Los Angeles, accommodations, all sightseeing, entrance fees, most meals, tipping, local guides, transfers, travel/cancellation insurance coverage. Escorted from Los Angeles by Bob Reynolds.

Commemorate the anniversary of the landing on August 7, 1942 at the American Memorial commanding Iron Bottom sound. Cruise up to Seghe and Munda airfields, PT Boat bases in Rendova, swim to Plum Island where Lt. J.F.Kennedy was rescued, be serenaded by school kids at Vira Harbor, visit Purvis Bay, the Florida Islands. Opportunities to dive or fish, and so much more!

GUADALCANAL FLY AND STAY

Fly from Los Angeles and stay on Guadalcanal August 3 to 14, 2004

\$2,950 per person, twin share included air fare from Los Angeles, accommodation, all sightseeing, entrance fees, some meals, local guides and drivers, transfers, travel/cancellation insurance.

Commemorative service at the American Memorial August 7, 2004

Visit Henderson Field, Red Beach, Mt. Austen, Edson's Ridge, Matanikau River.

VALOR TOURS

Sausalito, CA 94965
Tel: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

VETERANS OF UNDERAGE MILITARY SERVICE

If you served in the military at least one day while younger than the minimum legal age of enlistment, please contact:

Maj. Robert Thorne
Clinton, WI 53525
Tel: [REDACTED]

Or THE VETERANS OF UNDERAGE MILITARY SERVICE INC. (VUMS) Toll Free [REDACTED], also visit the web site www.oldvums.com for more information

DID YOU KNOW THIS MAN?

T/5 Martin J. Edwards - 164 Infantry

I am looking for any member that might have served with my father on Bougainville, Leyte, Southern Philippines or the occupation of Japan. He served with the 1st Battalion, 164th Infantry, but I do not know what Company. Please contact:

Dr. Lance J. Edwards
[REDACTED]
MT Tech - University of Montana
[REDACTED]
Butte, MT 59701

DID YOU KNOW THIS MAN?

I am trying to locate someone that knew my father during World WarII. His name was Arthur B. Johnson. He was inducted into the Army in December 1941 and he attended Artillery School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina after being inducted.

I believe he was in an artillery unit in the Americal and saw service on New Caledonia, Guadalcanal and Bougainville.

If you knew my Dad please contact me:

Douglas Johnson
[REDACTED]
New Milford, CT 06776

DID YOU KNOW THIS MEN?

Stanley Boeskool
Company I - 132nd Infantry

My grandfather, Stanley Boeskool, passed away in April of this year at the age of ninety-five. A veteran of the 132nd Infantry attended the funeral and told some of my grandfathers experiences in the war. I am most anxious to meet other buddies and learn more of my grandfather's war experiences. Please contact me:

Will Greeley
[REDACTED]
Midland, MI 48642

ATTENTION - VETERANS OF NEW CALEDONIA - ATTENTION

Our friend, Paul Paturel, who has established a museum on New Caledonia honoring the Americans that served there during World War II, is in need of some information.

At present he is doing research on the airfield that was built at Plaine des Gaiacs. He seeks plans, photographs of work, and planes.

Also, he is searching for a copy of the book, "The Island of Fire", written by Robert Lawrence Ferguson and it is about the 347th Fighter Squadron on Guadalcanal.

If you have any such materiel please contact me, Jim Buckle, and I will advise you as to how to forward any information to Paul.

Americal Division Veterans Association
2004 By-law Change Results

1. To further define the taking of the Oath of Office.

I.8.C.(New) The Oath of Office shall be taken orally or in writing by each elected officer or member of the Executive Council for each term of office. The Oath of Office shall be taken no later than July 31 following the election. The Oath of Office shall be administered and documented by the Nominating Committee or its designee(s). Such documentation shall be submitted to the National Adjutant upon completion.

870 FOR 13 AGAINST

2. To further define the installation of officers.

II.5.C. (Old) All officers, when duly installed, shall serve during the period which elected or appointed until the next election and installation of officers.

II.5.C. (Amended) C. All officers, when duly installed, shall serve during the period which elected or appointed until the next election and installation of officers. Officers shall be considered duly installed when they complete the Oath of Office.

880 FOR 7 AGAINST

3. To further define the responsibilities for conducting elections and modify the schedule of the election to allow balloting until the end of June.

IV.1.D. (Old) The annual balloting for the election of officers shall be held between March 1st and April 15th. The results of the ballot count shall be posted to the National Adjutant no later than April 30th of said year.

IV.1.D. (Amended) The biannual balloting for the election of officers shall be at the direction of the Nominating Committee and shall be held between March 1st and June 30th. The results of the ballot count shall be posted to the National Adjutant within seven (7) days of the tabulation.

772 FOR 108 AGAINST

4. To define the beginning date of terms of office.

IV.1.G. (New) The term of office for elected officers and Executive Council members shall begin on July 1 following the election. The term of service for appointed officers shall begin immediately upon appointment by the National Commander.

853 FOR 22 AGAINST

5. To define Nominating Committee duties with regard to certain notifications

IV.2 (New) Notifications

IV.2.1. (New) The Nominating Committee shall notify each nominee of the intention of placing the nominee on the ballot. The Nominating Committee shall ascertain that the nominee agrees to be on the ballot and will serve the post if elected before placing the nominee on the ballot.

IV.2.2 (New) The Nominating Committee shall notify each nominee, the National Commander, and the Chairman of the Executive Council of the results of the ballot count within fifteen (15) days of the tabulation of the ballots.

873 FOR 8 AGAINST

All five by-law changes were adopted.

Americal Division Veterans Association
2004 Officer Election Results

National Commander

Jon Hansen 913

Sr. Vice-Commander

Bill Bacon 918

Jr. Vice-Commander

Don Shebesta 486
Larry Watson 477

Executive Council Members (11)

Ron Ellis 762
Les Hines 722
Jim Buckle 715*
John Murphy 705
Don Shebesta 666**
Joe Mullen 656
Rich Scales 610
Bill Bruinsma 594
Don Ballou 572
Lloyd Morrell 571
Larry Gilmore 554
Richard Flowers 538***
Wayne Johnston 510****
Carlo Pola 508****
John Hofer 497****
Larry Watson 486****
Paul Stiff 472****
Terry Wyrick 449****

Jr. Vice-Commander results

A total of 997 completed ballots were returned for counting. Due to the closeness of the count for Jr. Vice-Commander the votes for this post were counted three times. Ballots will be available for inspection and possible recount at the reunion in Reno in June. Of the 997 ballots, seven were voided for the Jr. Vice Commander count due to a vote for both candidates. Twenty-seven ballots were returned with no vote for Jr. Vice-Commander.

Notes on Executive Council results

* By-laws state that the Chairman of the Executive Council is the member receiving the most votes in the election. Ron Ellis declined the post as Chairman due to his present duties as Asst. National Finance Officer. Les Hines, second in the voting count, also declined the post as Chairman so he could focus on his duties as Vietnam Historian. Jim Buckle accepted the post and will serve as Chairman beginning on July 1, 2004.

** An officer cannot hold two elective posts at the same time. Since Don Shebesta was elected to the post of Junior Vice-Commander, he will not serve on the Executive Council.

*** All members move up in order due to Don Shebesta moving off the Executive Council list. Richard Flowers will serve on the Executive Council as the eleventh member.

**** Paul Stiff was elected to the post of Chapter Commander for the Southeast Chapter. He will automatically be on the Executive Council. His name will be removed from the list of alternates to the Executive Council.

*****The remaining nominees will serve as alternates to the Executive Council. They will fill any vacant positions that may occur before the next election. They will be selected in the order they appear in the above list.

HANGING VINE SAVES LIFE OF PORTLAND INFANTRYMAN

How life in the jungle may hang on a vine or depend upon a body's reflex in a fleeting moment is related in a letter written by Sgt. Jack Morton of Portland, a member of an infantry unit known as Roy's Raiders and which suffered severe casualties in battles on southwest Pacific islands.

Death has spattered dirt in the face of Sgt. Morton, but otherwise has left him untouched, save for the memory of harrowing experiences.

With a group of others, he had gone on patrol 4000 yards into Japanese territory. When the men had deployed for the night he was with three others, quite some distance from the main group. As they stretched out to get some rest, the jungle noises stirred their imaginations. They had seen no Japs, but knew that they were near, probably waiting in ambush.

While Morton and his companions lay on the jungle floor, a Jap silently climbed a nearby tree.

Scout Hit in Groin

A shot rang out! "It hit our best scout, Tiger, in the groin, causing such pain that he leaped into the air, sending forth a horrible scream of agony which I'll never forget," Morton wrote.

A second shot killed the wounded man. Morton and his two remaining companions crawled into a small depression, hoping for concealment. Morton was now in command, and he detailed one of the men to crawl back and notify the patrol leader of their predicament, but the rest of the patrol withdrew, leaving Morton and the other man to get out as best they could.

Snick of a Gun Heard

"We didn't know that they had left us, so we waited for what seemed hours for the protecting fire that would possibly pin the enemy down while we made a run for it," Morton wrote.

"The sickening feeling brought on by what seemed endless waiting was forgotten when a more terrible feeling came over us, caused by the sound of a bolt from a Jap machine gun being slammed home, not over 40 feet away"

"I knew then that, if we didn't get the machine gunner he'd get us, so I slowly raised my head, trying to find his location. And I found that he had the same idea for our eyes met at the same time".

"By the time I got my rifle up, he was down, and since I knew what would follow, I also ducked. Seconds later the first burst of that .31 caliber machine gun tore up the ground about an inch from my face"

Slight Move Saves Life

"Without thinking, I moved my body back about a foot from the original spot, and thank God I did, for the next burst of about thirty rounds completely covered the spot where my head had been seconds before. Some came so close that I ran my hand over my face to see if it had been nicked".

"I guess he figured he'd got us, but he threw a grenade to make sure. I heard it pop and watched it come and I knew that God was still with me, because it hit the only vine in front of me and bounced off to my right, exploding harmlessly".

"I told the other guy with me that this was our best chance and we'd better take it, so we both raised up and cut loose with a BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) and a rifle.

Silent Prayer Uttered

"By then it was almost dark and we knew we better make a run for it or die trying, so he (Morton's companion) jumped up and ran back into the jungle about 25 yards, and luckily wasn't fired on. I knew then that if we hadn't knocked out the machine gunner, he'd be waiting for me to make a run for it, and if I didn't get the breaks I'd get about 50 slugs in the back before I'd gone two feet".

Morton said that he prayed, then made a break. No shots were fired.

"It now was too dark to see the trails, so we plowed right through the jungle until we came to an old Jap bivouac area that we hoped wasn't occupied. I expected any minute to see some heads pop out of the many pillboxes we had to go by, but luckily none did. We knew we would get lost if we kept on going, so we decided it would be best to stay there until morning.

Fingers Kept on Trigger

"I found an old shell-hole that would conceal us fairly well, so we crawled in and hid among the vines and leaves. We didn't sleep much that night for we were in constant fear of them springing another ambush. I sat there with my finger on the trigger all night long".

"I said enough prayers to keep a dozen churches going for a year".

"When morning came, we waited until the sun came up so we'd know what direction to go and then sneak back to our own lines. After a while we came to the bank of a certain river. We then knew where we were, so continued on our way to our lines, which we reached safely a short time later. (Taken from the 'Oregonian'. Portland, OR).

Jack Morton's covering letter states:

The location of the story was on the island of Bougainville in late February 1944.

Much was left out of the newspaper article. It involved a mission that extended 4 to 5 thousand yards behind the Japanese lines. G-2 Intelligence officers had come to G Company, 182nd Infantry, to seek the talents of Noah Tiger who at the time was considered to be the best of the 1st scouts. They also needed a 2nd Scout. That would have been Clayton D. Brown, who had just gone through surgery in his neck. He and I were good friends so I volunteered to take his place.

The mission consisted of 27, officers, non-coms and enlisted men. Most were Signal Corps men. The Signal Corps men were to string communication wire deep into Japanese territory and tap into enemy lines. With the G-2 interpreters listening in, they could learn about any big Japanese counter attack. Later on we learned that the Jap plans were to capture Hill 260 and push the Americal and the 37th Division off the island.

The mission went smoothly that first day but they were unable to find or make a tap into Japanese lines. Late that day we formed a perimeter of 3 or 4 man outposts with the Signal Corps officers and non-coms in the center with all of their

equipment.

It was at best a very spooky situation. When the shots rang out, we learned later, they somehow panicked and ran. Noah Tiger was with my outpost group near a forward trail. The first shot came from above and struck Tiger in the groin.

He yelled and groaned very loud. We couldn't get him to be quiet or stay down while we fumbled around trying to get sulfa powder and a bandage on the wound. A little later a second shot hit him in the heart. We had been expecting any moment to get supporting fire from the main group, but none came. I sent one man back (can't remember his name) to alert the others to our situation but still no supporting fire, and he didn't return.

Getting ahead of the story. We spent the night in a shell hole. At day break the next day, getting our directions from the sun, Pfc. Durvin R. Green and I started back from our forward position. We were about 5000 yards behind enemy lines in dense jungle so we moved very slow. At times we would crawl or just take a step or two then stop, look around and listen. We could hear them but they were no encounters which we, of course, were trying to avoid. Our lookouts and Clayton Brown spotted us coming in under a white flag.

Lt. Richard L. Roy, with some of the 2nd platoon men were at the rear area gate when we came in. He didn't believe the stories that were told and was coming out to rescue Green and I if he could find us. Lt. Roy was my platoon leader and he and 1st. Lt. John T. Murphy, our own Company Commander, and Lt. Col. Dexter Lowry, our Battalion Commander, were angered by the reports they heard. Some of which reported us dead.

The entire group, with the exception of Green and Morton had been ordered to go out again not and to come back until their mission was fully accomplished. They were to leave at 5:00 the very next morning.

The mission was suddenly canceled and we learned later that Division G-2 had obtained the information they needed, some other way.

Pfc. Green didn't make it much longer. He died while being carried off of Hill 260 with a leg wound.

Jack Morton
G Co. 182nd Inf.

SANBORN NATIVE SAW SOME OF THE WAR'S WORST
164th INFANTRY - GUADALCANAL

The Forum, Fargo North
by Steven P. Wagner

Bernie Wagner doesn't like to think about the fighting that took place on Guadalcanal in 1942.

The battle was one of the toughest during World War II, and the United States was dangerously close to losing it. Wagner survived the intense heat, lack of nutrition and loss of close friends in the jungle battlefield.

He grew up near Sanborn, N.D., and joined the guard in 1938 to help pay for college. Wagner, a member of the 164th Infantry Regiment, also remembers the horrific combat on the island.

President Franklin Roosevelt began preparing the

country for possible military action in early 1941, and inducted the North Dakota National Guard into federal service in February of that year. The 164th Infantry Regiment numbered 1,640 enlisted men, 108 officers and one warrant officer.

The Guard began training and by March 1942, boarded a ship, the President Coolidge, bound for Australia. In May 1942, the 164th Infantry Regiment was organized as part of the Army's Americal Division on the island of New Caledonia, and less than six months later, found itself at Guadalcanal

For the 164th, the terror started on October 13, 1942, the units first day on the island.

"When we moved in, we got indoctrinated into the shelling almost immediately," Wagner said. "The first night, the Japanese navy shelled our positions. We were all scared - the noise, trying to dig your foxhole deeper."

Guadalcanal marked the United States' first offensive attack during the war. He still sheds tears when remembering a close friend who was gunned down. Wagner was standing next to him and the Japanese shot his friend several times.

Wagner's helmet was split open during the action. He lost his helmet and saved his friend who survived the bullet barrage. However, soldiers later found Wagner's helmet, with his wallet stuffed inside for dry and safekeeping, and assumed he was killed. The thought still makes Wagner break down.

Wagner knows he was lucky to survive and doesn't like to recall those painful memories. Instead, he remembers the friendships, card games and teasing the cooks about the food.

Wagner, who served as a platoon leader, said most of the officers fought and worked alongside the soldiers. He always insisted the men change their socks after trudging through water, and soldiers were always cognizant of keeping their weapons clean. He still feels the effect of malaria at times.

During the 164th's Pacific campaign, Wagner lost more than 40 pounds in the sweltering heat. "The heat was unbearable, especially for North Dakota boys," he said.

The food didn't help and Wagner remembers the scarce rations. "We didn't eat very good on Guadalcanal," he said. "Our rations weren't very good. We ate a lot of rice."

Before going on a patrol mission, Wagner said the soldiers were served one pancake and orange marmalade. He often traded his canned rations for a ration D bar, which often made up his only meal for the day.

During the Regiment's Pacific campaign, which later included combat at Bougainville, 325 men were killed in action and 1,193 were wounded in action.

During World War II the 164th spent nearly 600 days in combat.

Wagner doesn't claim to be an extremely religious man, but it helped to have faith during the battles. Soldiers also relied on one another to take care of the wounded. Wagner remembers the wounded trying to stay alive in hopes of not dying

on foreign soil.

"I think that (faith) helped a lot of us to come through, and knowing that if you got hurt, someone would take care of you and not let you lay there and die," Wagner said.

For the men the most feared assignment was patrol duty. "You were deathly afraid when you went on patrol of getting ambushed," Wagner said. "I went on patrol a lot."

He also remembers listening to 'Tokyo Rose', a propaganda woman de jay who aimed to break the morale of soldiers. She played popular songs from the United States, occasionally spoke about specific men and their home towns and mostly told soldiers that their girlfriends had found other men back in the United States.

In February 1943, the Japanese began a sneak evacuation, calling Guadalcanal "the island of death". The 164th moved on to Bougainville and continued to serve with distinction.

Memories of the fighting still upsets Wagner, who remains active in veterans' organizations. He hesitates to share wartime stories, even with old comrades. He prefers them to tell their stories.

"I don't like killing. It was kill or be killed," Wagner said. "When I go to reunions, I don't talk about war stories. I'm not strong enough for that."

In 1992, many men of the 164th went back to Guadalcanal for the 50th anniversary of their landing there. At first Wagner was reluctant to go, but he's glad he did. "We saw places you lost some of your best friends," he said. "I can remember the good times."

Every Memorial Day, he and his wife Mary visit the cemetery near Mandan in central North Dakota. "I have a lot of good friends there," he said.

The 164th received the Presidential Unit Citation, (for action on Guadalcanal) and its roll in World War II was crucial to the American victory in the Pacific. "When you look at Guadalcanal, if the Japanese had gotten (reinforcements) in there before the 164th arrived, they would have wiped out the Marines, Wagner said. They were tough."

It wasn't until after they returned home that they found out how close the battle really was in the Pacific. "We didn't know how close we were to defeat," Wagner said.

For the United States, Guadalcanal was the turning point in the Pacific. It was a real life struggle for survival, one that cannot be portrayed in movies or books. It can only be retold by those who lived through the horrors.

In "the Thin Red Line," the 1998 movie about the battle, Hollywood portrayed fictitious wartime events. Wagner visited with film maker when they did research for the movie, which he does not endorse.

"We never had the insubordination the show showed. We had respect for our leaders," Wagner said. "Nobody led us into death. They tried to keep you busy, keep you occupied."

FREEDOM ROCK (The Cover Story)

It is an inspiration to anyone who feels the surge of pride when the American Flag is raised, or the National anthem plays for one of our Olympians on the medal stand.

Every year for the last five years, a talented artist, Ray (Bubba) Sorenson II, has done a Memorial Day tribute to our servicemen and servicewomen, both past and present, a stirring tableau painted on a large granite boulder which stands next to Highway 25. The huge granite boulder came out of Schillberg Rock Quarry and it weighs 56 ton and is 12 feet high.

"I love my country and I do it out of respect for the veterans. It's my way of thanking those who have protected the freedoms I enjoy today. God bless the USA," says Sorenson.

For years this boulder was known as "graffiti rock" and was decorated for high school rivalries, love interests, etc. Since the Memorial Day paintings began, the "Rock" has remained with the annual tribute intact, until the artist himself paints over it, in preparation for the next year's tribute. The rock has only been "defaced" once since Bubba started this project, causing a local stir. The vandal, got a punch in the face from a Vietnam War veteran for his trouble, and vandalism has never again been a problem.



Sorenson, who is 24 years old and from Greenfield, Iowa, draws a sketch of his idea on paper and then draws the design free hand on the rock. This takes him anywhere from one to three weeks to paint. He says he is interested in military history, gets his ideas from books, movies, and previous artworks and images by other artists.

Visitors from every state and many foreign nations have come to view the rock. It was featured last 4th of July on the nationally televised Boston Pops Concert, as well as many Network news presentations.

If you are anywhere close, you shouldn't miss the opportunity to see what is truly an American treasure.

Staff Sergeant Danny Jacks ... Americal Vet Who Left No Man Behind

Stephen Johnson and Tom Nash

A Call to Service

Danny Lee Jacks was born to R. L. Jacks and Betty Jacks on September 13, 1948 at the Hot Springs Army and Navy Hospital in Arkansas. Because he spent his formative years as an "Army Brat" at a variety of bases, including Japan, where he attended Kindergarten, military tradition and patriotic values were instilled in Danny at an early age. After his father left the service, his family settled on a farm in south central Arkansas - home to Danny ever since. Danny spent the next 12 years in the Woodlawn, Arkansas school system, graduating in 1966, just in time to be confronted with the specter of Vietnam.

While many of Danny's peers avoided the draft by any means during the Vietnam era, Danny joined that small group of patriots who responded to their country's call by enlisting in the Army. Danny took his Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Polk, Louisiana, where he was nominated to subsequently attend the NCO Instruction Course at Ft. Benning Georgia, and later the Airborne School. Danny shipped out to Vietnam in April 1969.

Destiny Calls ... As A LRRP

Danny began his tour of duty in Vietnam by again answering the call for volunteers. While at the Americal's Reception Center in Chu Lai, he responded to a challenge from two LRRP representatives searching the newly arrived troops for volunteers for their unit. He immediately volunteered and became a member of Company G (Ranger), 75th Infantry Regiment. Danny graduated from the Americal's Recondo School with honors and was sent to the MACV Recondo School, conducted by Special Forces in Nha Trang, which he also completed.

The Vietnam story of Danny Jacks is inextricably linked with the story of Staff Sergeant Robert J. ("Bob") Pruden, the posthumous recipient of the Medal of Honor and a member of the Ranger Hall of Fame. Danny was greatly influenced by his close friendship and association with SSG Pruden, his LRRP team leader.

On November 29, 1969 Sergeant Jacks, acting as Assistant Team Leader to Pruden's Team Oregon, was engaged in a LRRP mission when he witnessed the heroic and selfless act of courage of SSG Pruden, which resulted in his death and award of the Medal of Honor. During this encounter, SSG Pruden knowingly exposed himself to enemy fire to draw attention to him and to protect his men. After SSG was mortally wounded SGT Jacks assumed command of the LRRP Team.

The time Danny Jacks and Robert Pruden shared together and the life-altering circumstances of watching his friend die in his arms, shaped Danny Jack's awareness of the true meaning of courage and leadership. From the life lessons learned from this experience, and a deep personal sense of loyalty, Danny became a prototypical model for LRRP leaders, fully living the Ranger Creed. His leadership and courage subsequently earned him the Silver Star, two Bronze Stars, 2 Purple Hearts and the enduring respect and admiration of his teammates and comrades.

Duty-Honor-Country

One example of SGT Jack's courage and commitment to his teammates occurred on December 20, 1969. For his actions on that date, SGT Jacks, acting as team leader was awarded the Bronze Star for heroism in connection with a ground operation against a hostile force in Quang Ngai Province. As his team was being inserted into the designated landing zone, Jacks became aware of an enemy force to the teams' front. With five members of the team having exited the insertion helicopter, Jacks, with complete disregard for his personal safety exposed himself to the enemy attack and laid down a base of fire in conjunction with the choppers door gunner under heavy fire directed at the aircraft. He continued firing exposed until his team boarded the chopper and took off. After evacuating the LZ he selected another LZ and continued the mission.

Another example of his devotion to duty occurred in August 1970. Now a Staff Sergeant, Jacks was assigned the mission of leading his Team Oregon to conduct an area reconnaissance southeast of the mountainous area of Tra Bong with a secondary mission of executing a prisoner snatch. While on the patrol the team became aware of a hostile force in the near vicinity. Jacks team watched the enemy force walk by, which consisted of more than the actual 130 NVA they were able to see and count as they passed in front of the team's concealed position.

The team's plan was to allow the NVA to pass, picking off a straggler or two at the end of the long enemy column. But, just as the plan was being executed, the team came under heavy fire as a result of a counter-ambush. Reacting to the urgency of the situation and recognizing his team would soon be assaulted by the larger force that had passed them by, Jacks immediately and unhesitatingly led a counter assault against the enemy ambush position. He maintained a highly accurate barrage of fire that eliminated two of the attackers and routed the other

NVA. Recognizing the urgent need to regroup immediately, Jacks led his men across a small stream when the team came under another barrage of intense fire. Although he was wounded, he repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire while marking their positions for gunship fire support. Despite the continued pressure by the NVA, he remained in his vulnerable position by the smoke marking his location, until the NVA were routed. For his heroism Danny Jacks was awarded the Silver Star.



SSG Danny Jacks, August 1970, just prior to the Tra Bong action. (Photo courtesy of Danny Jacks)

Leave No Man Behind

Danny's commitment to his teammates did not end when he left the Army, as Le Thanh Giai, a former South Vietnamese soldier who served with Team Oregon during the war, recently discovered. Through contacts, Danny found out about the plight of his former teammate back in Vietnam and the privations he suffered as a result of his support of the Americal's effort to help the Vietnamese during the war.

Together Again:
(Left to Right):
Le Thanh Giai,
Danny Jacks,
Marcell Jacks
and Danny's
family



Danny, exemplifying the admonitions of the Ranger Creed, "never shall I fail my comrades" and "I will never leave a fallen comrade to fall into the hands of the enemy", made arrangements for Mr. Giai's visa. In his letter of support Danny wrote:

"My friend was a South Vietnamese soldier during the Vietnam War. After the war he served several years in labor camps. He has been persecuted and discriminated against every day of his life. Since he has no hope for a future in his native land, he is seeking a life free of persecution and to be allowed his freedom. I have offered Le Thanh Giai a job here, where he can pursue his freedom and livelihood."

Americal vet Danny Jacks has been the frequent subject of stories and articles published in books, newspapers and periodicals and on the History Channel. Vietnamese newspapers in the United States have also documented his contributions in helping his former teammate become an American Citizen.

Americal vet Danny Jacks has been married to his wife, Marcell, for 33 years. They have a son, Greg, a daughter Cindy and several grandchildren. The Jacks attend the Center Missionary Baptist Church and have a chicken farm in the Rison, Arkansas area. Several years ago his farm raised over 80,000 chickens but he lost half of them in a freak snowstorm and decided to "slow down some". He now has "only" 40,000.

Contributing Editors Note: This article was contributed by Steve Johnson, Editor and Publisher of the LRRP/Ranger Quarterly Newsletter, and Tom Nash, President of the same organization, The 196th LRRP - E/51st and Company G/75th Rangers Organization. Their LRRP web site is: www.lrrpranger.org.

We Remember ... We Keep Faith

The abbreviated remarks of Colonel Ralph Tildon (USAR-Ret) at the annual E-51st & G-75th LRRP Ranger Reunion - 2002.

As we stand here to honor the LRRPs of the 196th Infantry Brigade, the LRRPs of E Company, 51st Infantry & the Rangers of G Company, 75th Infantry, Americal Division, what do we remember about our fallen brothers ... those who lived with us, soldiered with us and died an early death? All of our memories ring with the motto we lived by, "SUA SPONTE ... Of Their Own Accord."

We remember March 4th, 1968 when two teams of LRRPs - 12 brave young men - fought an enemy battalion through the night. Why had they gone out? What had been their mission? To liberate South Vietnamese and US soldiers from a prisoner of war compound in Quang Nam Province. When the fighting stopped, six of our brothers lay dead, six lay wounded. One of the dead on the battlefield had been a sole-surviving son and therefore was not supposed to be exposed to grave danger. Besides, he was due to return soon to the World. But our brother had conned someone in letting him go on that mission. He had wanted to help free the POWs and he had gone. One of our wounded from that battle returned to the United States and there succumbed to the effects of his wounds.

We remember May 12th, 1969, when three Ranger teams faced the brunt of a major sapper attack on LZ Baldy and fought through the night and into the morning. When the fighting stopped, among the many wounded, a brother soldier, age 20, lay dead.

We remember November 20th, 1969 when a Ranger team leader, age 20, realizing that his team could be destroyed, charged into the face of death and saved his men before he fell mortally wounded.

What do we remember? We remember April 23rd and October 13th, 1970, when two of our brothers who were married, went on a mission and did not return alive. One of them had just returned from extended leave in Pennsylvania, where he played for 30 precious days with his daughter. He had assured his wife that they would be a real family when he returned in six months back to the world. But for now, he had to go back to do his duty, to soldier alongside "the men with the painted faces." He was 21. His daughter today is in her early 30's, perhaps with a family of her own. She was too young to remember her dad. But we do.

We remember January 10th, 1971, when a helicopter crash in Quang Ngai snuffed the lives of two of our brothers. We remember another brother, a point man, who eluded death in the mountains of Quang Nam but did not survive the unforgiving undertow of the South China Sea. In the bush we were glad he was on our side. His family in the mid-west may never have learned that about him. But we remember.

What else can we say of all these men who did not return with us? "Greater Love Hath No Man Than This; That He Would Lay Down His Life For His Friend."

So brothers, as we remember these men, let their deaths and their memories remind us that some things ARE worth fighting for, even worth dying for. To honor our fallen brothers, let us use the time we have remaining to us on earth, to do good and to serve others, in memory of those who served us so well.



Vietnam veterans 1SG Kenneth Everett and SFC Clarence Kugler, 478th Civil Affairs Bn., Baghdad

Still serving

Dear readers,

It is not easy to determine how many Americal Division veterans are still in uniform. The number is probably only a hundred or so. Most of them are in reserve or guard units and had a break in service after their Vietnam duty ended.

The war on terrorism has resulted in the activation of many reserve and National Guard units. This is causing some Americal veterans to go to war once again.

An article in the *South Florida Sun Sentinel* featured a story with the title of "Oldest enlisted U.S. soldier in Iraq takes pride in his military service." The story was written by Robert Nolin and was published on April 19, 2004. The story was about an Americal Division veteran, SFC Clarence Kugler.

Kugler, of Ft. Lauderdale, FL, is 59 years old. The Army says he is the oldest enlisted soldier in Iraq. The following is taken from the newspaper article:

"To me, it's become a badge of honor to stay in," Kugler says from the coalition's secure Green Zone sector of Baghdad. "I appreciate the Army treating me like the other guys."

But Kugler is hardly like most other guys. The Army reservist is a triathlon athlete, an Iron Man competitor who jogs daily and rides a mountain bike around base ("The best \$80 I spent over here"). A member of the 478th Civil Affairs Battalion from

Miami, Kugler takes more pride in helping the locals than carving notches on his rifle.

Projects Kugler has been involved in include establishing a clothing center for women. He's currently trying to obtain hearing aids for deaf kids. "These are big steps," he says.

Local reaction has been positive. "When you go out there, people are waving at you, they're friendly," he says.

But the realities of war are never far off. "We get mortared every night."

Kugler's posting is a distinct departure from his initial entry into the military. He joined the Army in 1968 and during three years' service saw combat as a lieutenant in Vietnam. "Unfortunately, I remember the days when the commander said we had to destroy the village to save it," he says. Given the resounding criticism of the war, Kugler feared to wear his uniform in public.

This era is different. "It's nice to be in the Army when you've got the American people behind you," he says, "where I can be somewhat of a hero in the public eye."

Kugler returned to civilian life, then joined the reserves as an enlisted man for a brief stint in the mid-1980s. After landing a job as a whistleblower investigator with the U.S. Department of Labor in Fort Lauderdale in 1989, Kugler stayed in the

reserves full time.

Kugler's wife, Ali, is a fifth-grade teacher in Boca Raton. His oldest son Kyle, 18, is a three-letter varsity athlete at Deerfield Beach High School. His second son Colin, 16, attends Monarch High School in Coconut Creek.

SFC graciously agreed to be interviewed for the following *Americal Newsletter* story. He tells in his own words of his experiences in Vietnam as well as his current duties in Iraq. He draws comparisons and contrasts to his involvement in these two wars.

I am sure I speak for all veterans of the Americal Division is expressing our appreciation to SFC Kugler and all current members of our military for their service to our country. We wish them safety and success.

Vietnam Editor

Badge of Honor

Assigned to the Americal, 1971

I was a 1LT graduate of Infantry OCS at Ft. Benning, GA and a Signal Officer School graduate of Ft. Gordon, GA when I departed for Vietnam. I left on a Tiger Airline flight from Travers Air Force Base in July 1971. The first stop on my flight to Vietnam was in a snowstorm in Alaska to pick up more troops. We made another stop

in Hawaii before finally landing in Saigon. At 3:00 AM the next day I was on a flight to an unknown destination. It turned out to be the Americal Division in Chu Lai.

I was assigned to the 23rd Supply and Transportation Battalion at Rosemary Point. I never saw a radio. I became the battalion S-1 and Headquarters Company Commander. This came with about a half a dozen extra duties ranging from paying civilians on base, running some convoys, to climbing 30 foot guard towers around the perimeter of the base once a week as officer in charge of the guard.

One day while on duty as the S-1 a soldier from Pittsburgh came to me and asked me to help him write a letter to the president of Iron City Beer in his hometown. The soldier loved the beer and wanted to buy some from the company and have it sent to Vietnam.

I wrote the letter and mailed it with a check from the soldier to the beer company. The Iron City Beer president wrote back saying the company tried every way to accommodate the soldier but it was against the law to send beer in-country. The president said since the soldier liked Iron City Beer so much he could use the president's letter as a letter of introduction for a possible job when he returned home.

I forgot about the letter. But two months later I received a long envelope in the mail. I pulled a long photo out of the envelope and before my eyes was a familiar face standing in a civilian uniform at the door of an Iron City Beer truck. Thirty-one years later I visited Pittsburgh with my family and I finally got to taste an Iron City Beer.

Typhoon strikes Chu Lai

We were told in late 1971 that the Americal was going to close down and I had to prepare all the personnel records for transport to new locations. I was working 18-hour days trying to accomplish the mission. Suddenly one afternoon the roof of our building blew off in what turned out to be a typhoon of extraordinary strength. As we fled out of the building to a commo sandbag bunker I saw the battalion safe tumble down the street. The commo bunker was four sandbags thick and the walls of the bunker were swaying. We were located right on the ocean and there was nothing to break the wind from hitting us.

The officers club's roof flew over our bunker position. In perhaps my bravest moment of military service, I low crawled from the commo bunker to the roofless club and filled up a trashcan with beer and assorted bottles of liquor. I then returned to the bunker with my treasure.

I think anyone who went through that typhoon could tell you that it was pretty terrifying and a beer was helpful at the time. The typhoon obliterated all the buildings in

our area and pretty much tore apart the Americal before it closed down in November 1971.

I was moved to DaNang where I worked in the Information Office until I received an early out in February 1972. I had been drafted out of University of North Carolina graduate school in communications and I returned to the University of Denver graduate school in communications.

Return to service at age 40

I had no intention of doing any more military service until I turned 40 and married. I soon had two children and a wife who returned to college to become a teacher. I found myself driving a cab and working for the US Dept. of Labor in the late 1980s. A friend of mine suggested that the military might be a safer second career and suggested I look into it.

At first, no one in the military could find my records. I was told the building burned down in St. Louis. One day in 1989 I went to the office of E. Clay Shaw, my local congressman in Ft. Lauderdale, to seek assistance. A week later my records were found and I was back in the military as an E-5.

I joined a civil affairs outfit in Miami in 1989. I have been on 13 overseas missions in Central and South America. I have done diverse things such as helping in the aftermath of an earthquake in Panama, working as a vet assistant providing animal care in Ecuador, serving as an instructor in civil affairs in Hungary to the Free Iraqi Forces, and helping to build roads in Honduras.

Assignment to Iraq, 2004

I landed in Iraq on 2 February 2004 and I expect to be here a year. The big difference between Vietnam and Iraq is the ability to contact home. In Vietnam I felt like I was on Mars. Here you can reach home via e-mails and phones on almost a daily basis. I went weeks sometimes waiting for a letter in Vietnam.

In the Iraq War the soldiers made the decision to be a soldier and there is much more of a can do positive attitude than we had with a great many people in Vietnam who just wanted to do their year and return to the world. Where I was located in Vietnam I would see a female soldier once in a blue moon and she was normally a nurse. In Iraq you see female soldiers every day and they are carrying weapons. In Vietnam we had babes, bullets, booze and we were young. Now I have no liquor, no loving and no leaving and I am old.

I still wear my Americal patch even though there was a stigma with the patch after My Lai that perhaps every person who

wore the patch feels to some degree. I like to wear the patch on missions that are directed towards helping civilians through civil affairs. I wear the patch because it was my first unit in combat and will always have a place in my heart.

There is not a week that goes by where I don't give an explanation of the patch to a young soldier that asks. I remember standing in the chow line a few weeks ago and being approached by a young captain that said that his father was in Vietnam. He shook my hand and said he wanted to thank me and other veterans who served in Vietnam.

That sort of respect helps me get up every morning and run or bike. I try to stay in good shape to keep up with the younger soldiers and not force them to make any accommodations for me.

Iraqi Assistance Center

I am presently assigned to the Iraqi Assistance Center at the Baghdad Convention Center. My day starts at 5 AM with an hour run or bicycle ride. Then I go to an office where I work all day with Iraq civilians trying to put some fires out in their lives. We provide them with information on where to go to solve their problems.

I am the NCOIC of the office that assists citizens on a wide range of social issues to include detainees location, claims, protest permits, health care issues, and every problem that a citizen might have during the coalition administration. I feel I am helping people on a daily basis.

We oversee ten other information centers in Baghdad. Hopefully, if we provide quick solutions to problems, we can keep unrest down. My hope is that a lot of Vietnam veterans will see a different twist in Iraq from the past standard operating procedure in dealing with civilians.

I usually get back to my room at 8:00 PM where I read the Stars and Stripes. I hit the bed about 9:30. It is not very exciting but time goes by fast.

Reflections

I turn 60 in February 2005 and you can catch me catching fish in the Keys during drill weekends after that. I enjoy fishing with my teenage sons.

During my time in Vietnam I really never felt appreciated by the American public. I told very few people where I had been when I returned home. In this opération, I do feel that the American public appreciates the efforts of the soldiers even though some of the public does not agree with the reason for the deployment.

My address is SFC Clarence Kugler, 478th Civil Affairs Battalion, APO AE 09348.

23rd Administration Co.

I was in Vietnam from April 1969 to November 1970. I served as a postal clerk with the 23rd Admin. Co. I have searched all over the internet for Vietnam vets who served in the rear. I would like to find other veterans who served in the 23rd Admin. Co. We were there for all the fighting men.

Charles Porter; [REDACTED]

523rd Signal Bn.

I was with the 523rd Signal Bn. in Chu Lai from September 1969 to September 1970. I would like to contact veterans of this unit who may remember me and my service.

David Kendrick; [REDACTED]

Co. C, 3/21st Infantry

I am looking for information on SGT Paul Leonard Yost, KIA May 2, 1968 in Quang Tri Province. I believe he was in the battle at Nhi Ha. Units of the 196th LIB fought along side of the U.S. Marines in this battle.

His son, Paul, was born shortly after his father was killed. Paul, Jr. is desperately seeking any information on his father. He can be contacted as follows: Paul Yost Jr., 984 Meadow Lane, Vinton, OH, 45686. Or contact me if you like.

I have visited Paul, Sr.'s gravesite in Pine Grove Cemetery, Bidwell, Ohio. Casualty information originally listed him as 101st Abn. Div. so he is not on Americal Division or 196th LIB casualty lists. We are trying to get this corrected.

Charlie Brewer; [REDACTED]

Co. B, 1/52nd Infantry

My cousin, Paul Vincent Nelson, was with Co. B, 1/52nd Inf., 198th LIB, when he was Killed-in-Action on May 31, 1969. I was five months old at the time. I have created a webpage in his memory:

http://www.1965v8.com/archives/cat_paul_vincent_nelson.html.

Nelson received the Silver Star for his actions on the day he died. His unit came under intense enemy attack while operating near LZ Stinson. Despite exposure to withering enemy fire, Nelson helped evacuate wounded Americans and directed gunship fire on the enemy. He was from Belleville, NJ.

Peter Schleck; [REDACTED]

Co. C, 1/46th Infantry

I recently acquired about thirty photos of a soldier who was KIA on March 28, 1971 at FSB Mary Ann. I didn't realize at first what this was all about until I set out to do some research. I purchased the book *Sappers In The Wire* at a local Barnes and Noble store and finished reading it within three days. It shed a great deal of light on my research.

The soldier's name is Richard V. Knight. I have Identified him Captain Knight, Lt. Col. Doyle, Col. Hathaway and Jerry Sams. There are many others that I can't put a name to but am guessing they are guys from company C. Some of these photos appear to be taken at FSB Mary Ann while others seem to be "in the bush". One thing I found interesting about these photos is that a few are written on back and dated Mar 71. These must have been taken shortly before the sapper attack.

The photos are available on my website at <http://members.aol.com/akrontiger>. I would like any help possible to identify the soldiers in the photos. It would be a shame to have these photos passed along with nameless faces.

Roger Brewer; [REDACTED]

Co. C, 4/21st Inf., 11th LIB

I'm with the National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning, GA. We have a gentleman looking for information about Company C, 4/21st Battalion, 11th Infantry Brigade. He is looking for individuals and morning reports. If you have any information you can either e-mail me or send mail it directly to him. His name and address follow: Mr. Horace L. Blankenship, [REDACTED], Phenix City, AL 36869, [REDACTED].

Rebecca Pennington; [REDACTED]

Co. B, 123rd Aviation

My brother, Bruce W. Wright, was KIA on September 1, 1970. He served with Company B, 123d Aviation Battalion. We had a letter that he had been accepted to sniper school and was doing OJT in that area before he was killed. I'm looking for any information on my brother and the men he served with. I located the medic in his platoon and the SSG who was in charge of the platoon that recovered my brother's remains. Any direction you can give me would be greatly appreciated.

Joseph W. Wright; [REDACTED]

27th Chemical Det. 196th LIB

I was with the 27th from January 1968 to June 1968. I'm trying to locate our CO, 2LT Gary Campbell. I left Vietnam by Medivac and never received my CIB. There was no information in my records regarding combat flying missions or being fired upon or mortar attacks while at LZ Baldy. I hope you can help.

Ricardo Rodrigues; [REDACTED]

4/3rd Infantry

I was in the 9th Engineer Bn., 1st Marine Division and was temporarily assigned to the 4/3rd Inf., 11th Infantry Brigade, in 1967-1968. I have been trying to locate LTC. Albert L. Russell Jr. He signed my letter of appreciation. I would like to contact anyone who might be able to verify that I was wounded and awarded a Purple Heart and Bronze Star.

I applied for disability a few years ago and my military records are a mess. I am lousy about remembering names and dates so I need to find someone who could verify this information for me.

Zane E. Ward; [REDACTED]

160th Engineer Detachment

I am trying to find members who served with 160th Eng. Det., Chu Lai. We were a support group of carpenters, electricians, and five-ton diver graders. We did work on the CPO around the compound.

Billy Newsome; [REDACTED]

Co. B, 1/6th Inf., 198th LIB

I lost a friend on September 2, 1971. He was John Freil Webb with Co. B, 1/6th Inf., 198th LIB. I would like help to determine the name of the operation he was on or the name of the hill or location where he died. It was in the vicinity of Kham Duc. I would also like to know where to locate any photos that might show that hill or perhaps that area.

Mark Germino; [REDACTED]

If you wish to respond to these requests but do not have e-mail availability you may write the Vietnam Editor instead. See the directory in the front of the newsletter for contact information.

Memorial planned for city park

I started planning a project three years ago to honor veterans of The Americal Division, the 3rd Infantry "Old Guard", the 11th Light Infantry Brigade "Jungle Warriors", and Task Force Oregon. The plan is to erect a memorial to these veterans in a city park in John Day, OR.

Two years ago I asked a local artist to create a rendition of the ideas that have for this memorial. She came up with the following: A color scheme of red, white, and blue; a red brick slab measuring 14 ft. by 14 ft.; on one side of the slab the Americal patch approximately 8 in. by 10 in.; across from the patch a circular retaining wall in the slab to form a planter for a tree; the sides of the retaining wall will feature the crossed rifles of the infantry and the American flag. Additionally, two white triangular pyramidal monuments on square bases measuring 3 ft. by 3 ft. will be located in the back corners of the slab. The twelve surfaces on each monument will bear historical information about the Old Guard and the Jungle Warriors. Two park benches in the front corners will complete the design.

In 2002 I received permission from the parks and recreation district to construct the memorial in a city park. The tree has already been planted and the search is on for talent and materials to construct the memorial. This year I plan to install the red brick, Americal patch, pad for retaining wall, and the pads of the pyramids. Additional work will be completed in 2005 and 2006.

Dedication of the memorial is planned for 2008 in the presence of veterans of the Old Guard, Jungle Warriors, and Americal. I am committed to this project and I will bring it to completion. I would like your support. I would like you to be there for the dedication in July 2008. Please let me know what you think. I can be contacted at 204 NW 7th St., John Day, OR, 97845, tskiens@ortelco.net, 541-620-4409.

Tommy J. Skiens; Co. C, 4/3rd Inf., 11th LIB

Vietnam convoy duty; 23rd S & T

I was in Co. B, 23rd Supply and Transportation Bn., next to the hospital at the front gate of Chu Lai. I read the article about the 23rd MPs and convoy duty in the JUL-AUG-SEP 2003 issue of the Americal Newsletter. Most of that article talked about convoy duty down "Mine Alley" to places like LZ Ross and LZ Baldy. It hit hard. I loved it but it hurt.

I did convoy duty from March 1968 until March 1969. My unit had five-ton trucks fitted with lots of steel plate and sandbags and extended steering. They were built by our motor pool. The name of the truck that I was with was the "Abortion". I was the first driver of that truck. You should have seen people running from the "driverless truck" as it went down the road.

We ran south to Quang Ngai and to Ross and Baldy most of the time. I have been over that route hundreds of times. The "Abortion" hit its first mine on that road. It was a seven-day a week run. When I left Vietnam in March 1969 the truck was back on the road after hitting its third mine.

We lost Rip Van Resor on that road one day. He had about three days left in-country. He volunteered to run lead truck on his final day. This is after the tanks had quit running in front of us.

I also volunteered to stay on the road until I only had three or four days left to go. I manned the M-60 machine gun on our convoy lieutenant's jeep on my last convoy. I almost extended for six months. They promised me a Staff Sergeant's stripe to stay but I did not want to push my luck.

I was in Vietnam for a year with no R & R. I have always wished that I had stayed. I have felt that I deserted my friends. I would like to hear from anyone who would like to contact me. My address is [REDACTED], Reidsville, GA, 30499-9700. Thanks and God Bless.

Jerry Blaine Calhoun; Co. B, 23rd S & T

Update on Vet Connect

I just received copies of the pages from the Americal Newsletter regarding Veterans Day 2003- "Making a Connection". I want knowledge of Vet Connect to get out. Vet Connect held its very first reception at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) on April 21, 2004. VVA Chapter 641 in Silver Springs, MD has dedicated much time, energy, and money to make this happen. Rick Weidman has been a Godsend in getting this off the ground. He is a member of Chapter 641 and was a medic with the 196th LIB in Vietnam. He and his fellow VVA chapter members, Sandra Spatz-Wisznaukas, Guy Hayslett, Mike Najarian, Dave Gudes, Mike Keating, Jim Devlin, Roland Kauffman, Ed Chow, Mokie Porter and others have put forth a great effort.

All I did was going to them with an idea. This group took the cause up and ran with it and made it happen. All the credit goes to them. I am just so proud to have gotten to know them, to work with them, and now to be able to call them friends.

I will be moving to Tennessee to be closer to my family. I know now how all of you must have felt when your tour was up and you were called home and had to leave your brothers in your units behind. Albeit you were leaving them in a war zone, but I am not leaving my buddies at WRAMC in harms way. I KNOW that the troops at WRAMC will have great care from the volunteers at Vet Connect and the caring nurses and doctors at Walter Reed.

But I feel that I am deserting them. I love them all. We have a bond, the troops and their families and I. It will be almost too much to bear to say goodbye to them. It helps to know that vets will look them after. I plan to stay in close contact with and assist the troops at WRAMC through e-mail. I just will not be the boots on the ground anymore.

Regina Talley; sister of Floyd Talley; Co. D, 1/46th Inf., KIA

Americal vet supports returning Iraq War wounded

Hal Koster was assigned to the 174th AHC as a crewchief from May 1967 until June 1969. He service taught him about war at a young age. He now has an important role in supporting young wounded Americans returning from the war in Iraq.

For the last eight years Koster has co-owned Fran O'Brien Steak House in Washington, D.C. In October 2003 he and Jim Mayer teamed up to provide Friday night meals for wounded soldiers from Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC). Mayer, an infantryman with the 25th Inf. Div., was wounded in Vietnam.

Koster describes how the effort began, "Jim is a volunteer at WRAMC. He felt the troops needed to get out occasionally and start being in normal society instead of hospital society. To that end, he suggested dinners where the troops could come and not be conspicuous with their new physical changes. They and their families would be a real restaurant with other real customers."

Of the wounded veterans, Koster says, "The vets appreciate the chance to get out. They are very glad to see someone cares. They come in bad shape and progress rapidly to a good state. They are great people with a very positive attitude about life and how the rest of their life will go."

Mayer has been employed by the Veterans Administration for 26 years and is currently Executive Director of Leadership VA. He has been a volunteer amputee peer visitor at WRAMC since April 22, 2003. He first began visiting wounded soldiers in January 1991. Of his own wounds he says, "Stepping on a land mine changed my life forever- all for the better, although I didn't really think so at first."

When asked to describe Iraq war vets, Mayer says, "They are much more mature for their age, in better physical shape, very unit oriented - the soldiers train together, deploy together, fight together and try to come home together - very close to "Band of Brothers"

Division commanders listed

I am C.J. Reed, a researcher with the Army Force Management School at Ft. Belvoir, VA. I work for Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Trefry and Maj. (Ret.) Scott Wilson. I am the system/network administrator. My office is in Springfield, VA where we maintain and research information for the MOAC Database- "The Mother of All Charts". For more information you can visit our website at <http://www.afms1.belvoir.army.mil/flashindex.htm>.

I am researching lineage information and listings of all commanding officers of all U.S. Army divisions to include the Americal Division. I am attempting to locate the information starting at 1940 to the present. I am searching for the commander's name, rank and date (mm/dd/yr) served. This is what I have so far:

Start Date- End Date Rank Name

5/24/1942- 1/31/1943 MG Alexander M. Patch
1/31/1943- 5/31/1943 BG Edmund B. Sebree
5/31/1943- 4/30/1944 MG John R. Hodge
4/30/1944- 11/30/1944 MG Robert B. McClure
11/30/1944- 12/12/1945 MG William H. Arnold

Americal Division inactivated 12 Dec 1945

Redesignated Hq 23d Division (RA)
Activated at Ft Amador, Canal Zone
12/2/1954- 9/24/1967 TBD

9/24/1967- 9/25/1967 Redesignated as Hq & Hq Co 23d Division
Activated in Vietnam
9/25/1967- 6/1/1968 MG Samuel W. Koster
6/2/1968- 6/1/1969 MG Charles M. Gettys
6/2/1969- 3/18/1970 MG Lloyd B. Ramsey (WIA)
3/18/1970- 11/30/1970 MG Albert E. Milloy
11/30/1970- 7/31/1971 MG James L. Baldwin
7/31/1971- 10/29/1971 MG Frederick J. Kroesen
Americal Division inactivated 29 Oct 1971 at Ft Lewis, WA

I have no information on commanders during the Korean War era. Any assistance will be greatly appreciated. Please let me know if you have corrections or additions to make to this list.

C. J. Reed; [REDACTED]

Co. D, 4/3rd Inf. reunion

Veterans of Co. D, 4/3rd Infantry will have a reunion on September 17-19, 2004 in Des Moines, IA. The reunion will be held at the Heartland Inn near the Des Moines Airport. A meeting room will be reserved for maps, photos, memorials, etc. The banquet will be held on Saturday evening.

Call [REDACTED] for room reservations. You must mention at you are attending the Vietnam veterans reunion in order to get the special rate of \$50.00 per night. Contact Dan Behrens, [REDACTED] What Cheer, IA, 50268, [REDACTED] for more information.

178th ASHC "Boxcar" reunion

The Boxcar Association will have its 14th reunion on September 17-19, 2004 in Ocean City, MD. Reunion headquarters is at the Nassau Motel, 6002 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, MD, 21842. [REDACTED] Enjoy deluxe accommodations on the beach at off-season rates.

Contact Robert "Bougie" Criswell [REDACTED] Frankford, DE, 19945, [REDACTED] for more information. You can also visit the website at www.theboxcar.org.

Nolan plans book on 1/1st Cavalry

Keith Nolan is in the beginning stages of a new book on the 1/1st Cavalry in Vietnam, 1967-1972. He recently finished a book about the 9th Division's street battle in southern Saigon during the so-called Mini-Tet Offensive of May 1968. He will be talking with veterans of the 1/1st Cav. as he prepares his new book.

Nolan has written several books on Vietnam. They include Death Valley, The Magnificent Bastards, Sappers in the Wire, and others.

Kokomo Vietnam veterans reunion

The 22nd annual Howard County Vietnam Veterans Organization reunion will be held on September 16-19, 2002 in Kokomo, IN. This is one of the oldest and largest Vietnam veteran reunions in the country. The event will feature live music, speakers, unit reunions, issues tent, military displays, vendors, camping, helicopter rides, veteran's information, and much more.

Additional information is available from Dick Forrey at [REDACTED]. Camping is allowed for a fee of \$10 per night per space. An entry fee of \$10 per person covers the entire weekend.

The Great Lakes Chapter of ADVA will have an information tent on Friday and Saturday. Be sure to stop in and sign the registration book. Americal veterans are also encouraged to gather at the Americal tent to meet and mingle. A photo of all Americal veterans will be taken at 3:00 PM on Saturday at the main flag.

196th LIB Locate-A-Brother

Over the past fifteen years or so the 196th Locate-A-Brother has maintained a database of 196th LIB veterans, conducted several reunions, located current and former 196^{ers}, and provided useful information to veterans and friends. The system is still alive and well. We are pleased to continue our efforts as long as there is a need for the 196th Locate-A-Brother family.

Dues are not charged but donations are accepted. For more information contact Mr. Tony May [REDACTED], Phoenix, OR, 97535, [REDACTED]

Notes from the Vietnam Historian

1/1st Cavalry casualties cataloged by Richard Coffelt

Les Hines, ADVA Vietnam Historian, has received a file containing the names of members of 1/1st Cavalry who died in Vietnam. Richard Coffelt provided the list as part of his efforts to catalog all Vietnam veterans who were killed-in-action. The Coffelt Database includes information to the company or troop level.

1/20th and 11th LIB records received

Mr. Charles S. Seketa recently provided a large collection of information on the 1/20th Inf. Bn. and the 11th LIB to Les Hines, ADVA Vietnam Historian. These items include records pertaining to named operations Vernon Lake II part 1, Vernon Lake II part 2, Show Low, Finney Hill, Champaign Grove, Iron Mountain, Logan Field, a historical summary of Delta Co., 1/20th Inf. Bn., and a document on the unit commanders of the 1/20th. This information has greatly expanded the content in the historical database for these units.

Vietnam history available on computer diskette

Contact Les Hines, Vietnam Historian if you would like to purchase a computer diskette of Vietnam history files. Please include your unit and dates. Let him know if you have copies of rosters, daily reports, operation reports, unit newspaper and magazine articles, etc. pertaining to the Americal Division. See the directory on the front cover for contact information.

The Final Journey Home

If you're not familiar with "America's Huey, The Final Journey Home," you can read about it at <http://www.americashuey.org/>. A Vietnam veteran UH-1H helicopter from the 173rd Assault Helicopter Company "Robinhoods," tail number 65-10091, is being donated to the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC. It will be used in a new permanent display about the United States military in conflict. The display will cover all conflicts from the Revolutionary War to Iraq. The display will be called "The Price of Freedom."

Steve Reilly, Bob Tredway, and I are on the Huey 091 committee. All three of us were at the landing on the Mall as the Robinhood completed its "Final Journey Home." As committee members we were invited to the reception in the American History Museum that evening, hosted by the Smithsonian and Bell Helicopter. It was a great event and a great evening.

"Huey 091" (as it's being called) will be but one part of the new display -- but it will be the largest artifact in the display and will be the centerpiece of the Vietnam portion. The entire helicopter will be displayed intact. It sports the Robinhood nose art from Vietnam.

It was an emotional time hearing those blades broadcast its approach on a cold and windy day. You should have seen the flags at the base of the Washington Monument as that old bird came winging around at about 100 feet. The chopper made a couple of passes over the crowd, then landed directly in front of the American History Museum. We watched her shut down for the last time.

I have heard some people object to putting a recently restored Huey helicopter in perfect flying condition in a museum, never to fly again. My take is that she's had a long and proud life. We've all got to go some time. I think this is a fitting way for her to go.

I took quite a few digital photos during the landing and the acceptance ceremony inside the museum following the landing. My photos are not the best, but I've put them up on the 174th webpage. If any of you wish to take a look you may see them at <http://www.174ahc.org/Huey-091-DC-Mall/Huey-091-Mall.htm>. There are many more photos on the "Americas Huey" website listed at the top of this column.

Jim McDaniel; 174th Assault Helicopter Co.

Warlords and Animals history

I received a letter from Thomas Rowe that provides an interesting piece of history for the Aero-Scout infantry assigned to B Company, 123rd Aviation Battalion.

The infantry section of the Warlords started on March 6, 1968 by selecting 10 experienced volunteer infantrymen from each of the three brigades; the 11th LIB, the 196th LIB, and the 198th LIB. These later became the first squad, second squad, and third squad of the Animals.

Tom Rowe has provided his orders that support his explanation. The Aero-Scout infantry were also referred to as the "Animals". Their company, B/123rd Avn. Bn., was known as the Aero-Scouts or "Warlords". The Aero-Scouts were supported by a team that included a light observation helicopter, gunships, and the slicks that carried them in and out of the field. The Warlord Aero-Scouts distinguished themselves throughout their service in the Americal. Although small in number these men accomplished more than many larger units. Every day they were put into hot spots within any of the three brigades tactical areas.

A primary mission of the unit was to engage and fix enemy located by their observation helicopters until an air assault from the regular infantry could be brought in. A number that really impressed me was found in Americal Division historical documents. A mission the Aero-Scouts performed was the capture of enemy soldiers for intelligence (a "snatch" mission). The aero-scouts were credited with

over 500 enemy captured within a six-month period. This is incredible if you understand how difficult it is to set up a successful snatch mission, the small number of Aero-Scouts involved, and that successful snatch missions usually netted only one enemy.

Les Hines; 123rd Avn. Bn.

178th Assault Support Helicopter Co.



The following is taken from the winter 2004 edition of The Boxcar.

Our current veteran membership is now up to 295 and with associates our mailing list is well over 300.

Who are we? Veteran membership is comprised of veterans of the 178th ASHC and 440th TC. Several members were in other units Vietnam but served in the 178th ASHC at Ft. Sill in the 1970s. Associate members include relatives and survivors of Boxcar veterans, vets of other units who have a connection to us, and veterans associations.

What is our mission? In a word, the answer is communication. The reunions are great, but not everyone can get to them. The roster includes contact information on members so you can stay in touch whether you can attend reunions or not.

How often are our reunions? We discussed this topic at length and decided that we would have reunions every year. That way, if one cannot attend in one year, he can always count on next year.

Are there membership dues? No! We have also discussed this topic at length. The feeling is that we all paid our dues between 1966 and 1972. We do need voluntary contributions to the treasury in order to cover expenses like the newsletter. No Boxcar vet will ever be cut off for financial reasons.

How long will the association last? We will continue to hold reunions as long as we have willing hosts and veterans who want to get together. The Boxcar Association has been growing for fourteen years so far. We will last as long as we can.

Brief history- the 178th Assault Support Helicopter Company was formed at Ft. Benning, GA in 1965 and arrived in Vietnam in March 1966. The unit left Phu Loi for Chu Lai in April 1967 and shipped back to the United States from DaNang in March 1972. The 178th was active at Ft. Sill, OK until our colors were furled in 1984.

Several former Boxcar Chinooks are still flying with the U.S. Army as CH-47D and CH-47E models. They have seen combat in Nicaragua, Panama, Grenada, the Gulf War, Afghanistan, and currently in Iraq. Anyone interested in tracing the history of a specific aircraft should contact associate member Dan Hatcher, Boeing rep in Huntsville, AL.

For more information contact Dean C. Nelson, Secretary; [redacted], Mounds View, MN, 55112, [redacted].

The Men With Painted Faces ... The Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols

The LRRPs of Company G (Ranger), 75th Infantry, were the eyes and ears of the Americal Division. Their motto, "Sua Sponte" (Of Their Own Accord) reflects their spirit, commitment and unique mission.

David W. Taylor

Silent Warriors

Vietnam ... a new kind of war requiring new tactics. "Front lines" do not exist and terrain varies extensively from coastal rice paddies to thick jungle and steep mountains. One of the key innovations in this new kind of war was the silent warrior of the Long-Range Reconnaissance Patrols, known as "LRRPs" and designated as Rangers. In one of the first "Vietnam Studies" published by the Department of the Army in 1974, Lieutenant General John H. Hay, Jr. wrote, "the way in which the long-range patrols were used was one of the most significant innovations of the war".

LRRP's - An American Legacy

Vietnam's division LRRP companies were eventually designated under the 75th Ranger Regiment. The concept of long range patrolling and ranger operations goes back to the birth of the nation. Colonial America consisted of thick virgin forests with game trails and Indian footpaths penetrating the thick foliage, as the usual means of movement. Roads capable of easing the way for marching formations of soldiers were virtually nonexistent.

The first enemy of the colonials was not the British Army but Indians. To thwart Indian attacks small groups of frontiersmen "ranged" over large distances in pursuit of their enemy. From the reports of their movements they became known as "Rangers".

The history of American rangers is long and storied. The most early innovator was Major Robert Rogers whose long range expeditions in the French and Indian Wars are legendary. Always in trouble with the law when he was not on campaign fighting an enemy, Washington distrusted him and he never made his mark in the Revolutionary War. However, his brilliant campaigns of "out-Indianing the Indians" characterized the operations for rangers / LRRPs that were seen in Vietnam: Missions marked by extreme hardship, extraordinary attention to detail, absolute professionalism and uncommon bravery. In fact, many of Rogers "Standing Orders" were emulated in general by successful Vietnam grunts in the bush.

Standing Orders - Rogers Rangers 1759

- Don't forget nothing.
- Have your musket clean as a whistle, hatchet scoured, sixty rounds powder and ball, and be ready to march at a minute's warning.
- When you're on the march, act the way you would if you was sneaking up on a deer. See the enemy first.



Americal LRRP Team Illinois with a souvenir found on patrol (Left to Right): Gary Gentry, George Beach, Jose Velasquez, Sam Day and Young (Photo courtesy of the lrrpranger.org web site).

- Tell the truth about what you see and what you do. There is an Army depending on us for correct information. You can lie all you please when you tell other folks about the Rangers, but don't ever lie to a Ranger or officer.
- Don't ever take a chance you don't have to.
- When you're on the march we march single file, far enough apart so one shot can't go through two men.
- If we strike swamps, or soft ground, we spread out abreast, so it's hard to track us.
- When we march, we keep moving till dark, so as to give the enemy the least possible chance at us.
- When we camp, half the party stays awake while the other half sleeps.
- If we take prisoners, we keep 'em separate till we have time to examine them, so they can't cook up a story between 'em.
- Don't ever march home the same way. Take a different route so you won't be ambushed.
- No matter whether we travel in big parties or little ones, each party has to keep a scout twenty yards on each flank and twenty yards in the rear, so the main body can't be surprised and wiped out.
- Every night you'll be told where to meet if surprised by a superior force.
- Don't sit down to eat without posting sentries.
- Don't sleep beyond dawn. Dawn's when the French and Indians attack.
- Don't cross a river by a regular ford.
- If somebody's trailing you, make a circle, come back onto your tracks, and ambush the folks that aim to ambush you.
- Don't stand up when the enemy's coming against you. Kneel down, lie down, hide behind a tree.
- Let the enemy come till he's almost close enough to touch. Then let him have it and jump out and finish him up with your hatchet.

Captain Daniel Morgan's unit of five hundred frontiersmen known as Morgan's Rifles and referred to by General Washington as "The Corps of Rangers", were known both for their ranger tactics and expert marksmanship in the Revolutionary War. Also, Francis Marion, "The Swamp Fox", operated out of the South Carolina lowlands harassing British communications and supply lines. The early influence of Rogers Rangers was to make a permanent impact on the American military. Successful Colonial Generals John Stark and Israel Putnam, who commanded at Bunker Hill and other major engagements, learned their war-fighting skills serving with Rogers Rangers during the 1750's.

Other Wars - Other Rangers

In 1823 Stephen F. Austin established "Ranging Companies" of part-time soldiers to defend American settlements in the Spanish Colony of Texas, which eventually led to statehood in 1845.

During the Civil War both the North and South formed "long-range" units to help the fight for their cause. John S. Mosby, the "Grey Ghost" was the most famous for the South. Another Southerner was Colonel Turner Ashby. The defense of familiar homeland led more credence to Southern ranger-type units whereas few Union units were formed or successful, no doubt in part due to the Union's lack of risk taking on unfamiliar territory.

The post-Civil War years of Indian fighting, particularly in the Southwest, honed the American experience in irregular warfare. Indian Scouts who were "brothers" of the very enemy they hunted taught key lessons to soldiers. Captain John G. Bourke's book titled, *"An Apache Campaign in the Sierra Madre"* made observations about his Indian scouts, which bear a similar resemblance to Vietnam's LRRPs: "Approaching the enemy his vigilance is a curious thing to witness. He avoids appearing suddenly upon the crest of a hill, knowing his figure projected against the sky can at such time be discerned from a great distance ... (He) has no false ideas about courage; he would prefer to skulk like a coyote for hours, and then kill his enemy, or capture his herd, rather than, by injudicious exposure, receive a wound, fatal or otherwise. But he is no coward; on the contrary, he is entitled to rank among the bravest."

After the Indian wars in the early 1890's no Ranger-type units existed for nearly 50 years, including World War I, where trench warfare did not require the type of long-range patrols characterized by LRRP operations. World War II brought back formal Ranger units, patterned after the British "Commando's" which not only included the reconnaissance mission, but also most often included raids and direct combat in support of line units. In all, six Ranger Battalions were formed during the war. Their motto, "Rangers Lead the Way" was gained on D-Day on the beaches of Normandy. The 6th Ranger Battalion gained fame in the Pacific Theatre, most notably their rescue of over five hundred veterans of the Bataan Death March at the Cabanatuan Prison Camp in the Philippines.

Although the LRRPs in Vietnam were eventually designated part of the 75th Infantry (Ranger) Regiment, their origin would be more closely be traced to the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) serving the Chinese-Burmese-Indian Theatre, which was to gain fame as "Merrill's Marauders."

Ranger units were formed during the Korean War, with the objective of one Ranger Company per infantry division. Six trained companies assigned to the 8th U.S. Army were attached to assigned divisions. The Rangers conducted raids behind the

lines, recon missions and frequently fought as conventional infantry, which resulted in casualty rates of forty to ninety percent killed or wounded.

In July 1951 the ranger units were deactivated but in October 1951 it was recognized that ranger-type training would benefit the Army as a whole and the Army's Ranger School was thus formed at Fort Benning, Georgia. The goal, which was never fully met, was to have one ranger-qualified officer per infantry company, and one ranger-qualified NCO per platoon.

In the early 1960's a major army-wide reorganization was undertaken known as Reorganization Objective Army Divisions (ROAD-65). The "65" was added to indicate the planned date of implementation. As part of this reorganization came CONARC Directive 525-4, dated May 25, 1961, titled, "Combat Operations ROAD-65 Training Literature, Long Range Reconnaissance Patrolling." This document, albeit short (5 pages) opened the first reference to the term "LRRP". Under "General Principle" the document stated that, "long range reconnaissance patrols (LRRP) are small detachments of specially trained combat forces employed for extended periods to seek and report expeditiously, detailed, accurate, and timely information concerning the enemy and the area of operations."

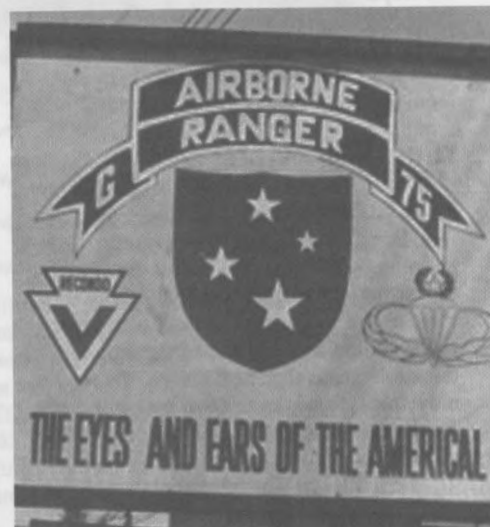
Field Manual 31-18, "Long Range Patrols, Divisions, Corps and Army" expanded the instructions from Directive 525-4 on LRRP missions, organization, training and conduct of operations.

Vietnam - A Different War

Shortly after assuming command of the Military Assistance Command-Vietnam (MACV) in June 1964, General William C. Westmoreland became convinced of the viability of LRRP operations in Vietnam. Since conventional units had not yet been sent to Vietnam the LRRP missions fell on Special Forces with their trained ARVN and/or Montagnard teams.

Although the doctrine for LRRP operations had been published in the early 1960's, of the fifteen U.S. Army Divisions and separate brigades that saw action in Vietnam, none arrived in country with a LRRP unit structure already formed. This included the 173rd Separate Brigade (Airborne) which had trained extensively in jungle operations in Okinawa prior to its deployment. They were the first to learn only a few days after arriving in Vietnam, that "small units could get out and get information much better than large search-and-destroy type operations."

Combat units, which arrived in country, would piggyback off the training and experience of the 173rd Brigade, or Special Forces, or other divisions that had arrived earlier to establish their LRRP capability. LRRP teams came under many names initially, depending on the division and its culture. The 173rd had "Delta" Teams, the 101st Division had "Tiger Force" teams while some of its brigades and battalions had their own designations, such as "Hatchet" Teams, "Recondo's" or "Hawks." Gradually as more and more combat units arrived, the term "LRRP" became the preferred title.



LRRP Headquarters by the Combat Training Center - Chu Lai Beach (Photo courtesy of the lrrpranger.org web site)

Americal LRRPs

The Americal Division was fortunate to have at its formation, the well-developed LRRP organization of the 196th Light Infantry (Separate) Brigade. Many of the Americal LRRP protocols, tactics and procedures were pioneered by the 196th.

Ralph Tildon was a LRRP platoon leader on LZ Baldy in 1969, commanding two LRRP teams, "Arkansas" and "Alabama". Each brigade had 2-3 teams under the control of the Brigade S-3 while company headquarters and 7-8 teams resided at division headquarters in Chu Lai, on the beach next to the Combat Training Center. These teams were the assets of the division G-3 (operations).

Tildon notes that a LRRP Team's organization was fairly standardized and based on field experience. There was, however, flexibility to tailor a team based on any special mission requirements. "Our teams normally were composed of 5 or 6 men", he recalls. "In the line of movement first was the point man, then the team leader, two LRRP's, the assistant team leader and rear security."

Sometimes the leaders carried the radios themselves based on their preference."

Most missions were point or area reconnaissance missions, which generally would cover a square area of four grid squares. LRRPs searched for indications of enemy presence such as troop movement, land lines or other means of communication. At times LRRP teams were tasked for "Hunter/Killer" missions, which were common for grunts throughout the division, although the LRRP teams ranged further from friendly forces. For those missions LRRP teams usually doubled-up to 10 soldiers.

LRRP's usually were deployed for five-day missions then rested for 2-3 days in the rear. Tildon recalls, "the insertion was the most critical. Standard SOP was to insert and run off the LZ, then sit silently while the birds circled away from the immediate area. Then, if everything was clear we'd radio the birds to take off. Sometimes we'd insert as close as 1 to 1 1/2 grid squares from the target areas." Tildon continues, "generally we liked to insert in the early afternoon, between 12PM -2PM when the NVA were taking naps. We didn't always get a lot of intelligence prior to the mission. We were always told, 'this is what we need'."

Up Close and Personal

SSG David "Chief" Moncada arrived at the Americal Combat Training Center in March 1969. A graduate of Benning's NCO course and the airborne and ranger schools he volunteered for LRRP duty. After being evaluated by another team leader on a number of missions, he was appointed the leader of Team Hawaii and found himself with three other teams operating off of LZ Baldy. The LRRPs and the tracker dog unit housed next to them, were becoming very effective operating against the NVA.

In early summer Moncada's team and another LRRP team were taking some down time on Baldy while two other teams were on missions. Their hooches were near the perimeter's edge next to the dog tracker unit. Confident of Baldy's perimeter security the scantily clad LRRPs settled down for a good night of sleep. At 3AM one of the tracker dogs, "Crash" started barking. By waking the LRRPs, Moncada recalls, "the dog saved our bacon." NVA sappers attacked the perimeter exactly where the LRRPs were staying. They attacked in two waves. Moncada remembers, "The first wave were sappers with satchel charges, but lightly armed. We were literally caught with our pants down but able to grab our weapons and an M-60 machine gun to defend our position. The second wave came through with automatic weapons. Everyone was wounded. Most of the dogs and their handlers were killed. I lost my best friend, SGT Arthur Scott who went through ranger school with me at Benning. By morning we found 30-40 NVA bodies in front of the

perimeter and about 20 NVA dead by our position".

Moncada recalls some of his most successful missions were Hunter-Killer teams. His team and team Oklahoma combined to form a ten-man team that "packed hard". They carried two M-60 machine guns and extra M-79 grenade launchers. Teams were assigned site reconnaissance with a specific target. "We called them slip & slide missions", he recalls. "We hustled in to the target area as quickly as possible, hitting the NVA hard, killing as many as possible. Then we pulled off and headed for a fake extraction assuming we weren't being pursued. Two slicks would come in, one behind the other. We would hide in the jungle; they would land and then take off again. We would move back to the NVA target and hit them again."

Moncada's luck ran out on a hunter-killer mission working off of LZ Siberia. "We were sent very close to the Laos border. I was told, 'be careful not to cross the border'. Hell, I thought, I won't cross it if I see signs! We were to hit an NVA supply depot on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. When we approached it we could even hear vehicles but we never saw them. We hit them hard and killed a lot of NVA and took documents from a guy who looked to be a mail courier. Then we ran like hell but this time they came after us." As the team reached the extraction site the NVA were close behind showering them with gunfire and grenades. One of them exploded behind Moncada's back. "The next thing I knew", he recalls, "I was awake on a helicopter laying in the fetal position. I had shrapnel all over me but fortunately I had been wearing the radio which probably saved me".



"Men with Painted Faces", An Americal LRRP (Photo Source: lrrpranger.org web site)

Special Missions For Special Men

LRRP Ranger Stephen "Tower" Johnson was a member of Team Georgia. He and his comrades looked forward to hunter-killer missions and recon insertions, outside of artillery support, deep into the enemy's back yard. Other missions like stay-behinds and radio relays on hilltops were not as exciting but necessary.

One day while enjoying themselves on the beaches of Chu Lai, a composite team of Georgia and Oklahoma was assigned to recover two pilots from a reconnaissance fighter F-4 Phantom that crashed on a mountain side. Johnson recalls, "We decided on an LZ about one klick away from the crash site with the crash site located between the insertion and the extraction site, about one-half kilometer further down from the crash. Rappelling was ruled out because of the possibility of getting fired on. We would start from high ground and move downhill to the site for our mission: recover bodies and blow up the tail section of the RF-4."

"There was about an hours worth of sunlight when we were inserted. After a brief time waiting at the LZ, listening for enemy movement, we detected none and started down the mountain. About 400 meters down we smelled the enemy. It was a base camp that was recently deserted, hidden under triple canopy forest with running water via bamboo chutes with spigots. Several hooches with other things might have been searched but our mission was to get the bodies of the pilots out before the enemy took them for psychological purposes."

"Off to the side, still moving downhill, we moved to our night position. We traded off security duties until daylight, always keeping one ear and eye open, wondering what happened to the guys who abandoned their base camp."

"At dawn we started towards the crash site with purpose and caution. Over one small ridge we barely spotted a wreckage of a helicopter that had been devoured by the jungle. Our team leader called in the tail number of this Marine or Navy transport and we moved another 200 meters where we saw the Phantom crash site. Fortunately, we didn't see any green flashes of AK's from the NVA!"

"We found the first pilot, put him in a body bag, but couldn't find the second. We called for a huey that lowered a cable down that took the body out. Then we got a call to secure the extraction site for a VIP Marine-Navy medical and aviation team. I stayed at the extraction LZ and other team members took these guys to the wreckage sites of the helicopter and RF-4, where they found the other pilot. I learned the helicopter had crashed several years prior to the Phantom crash with many on board. To this day 2,102 MIA's have not been accounted for, but we

accounted for several that day in the fall of 1969 in I Corps."

Above and Beyond

Americal LRRPs came from all walks of life and the reason for their assignments to the division LRRPs were as varied as the men themselves. Danny Jacks entered the Army on December 29, 1968 from Pine Bluff, Arkansas and took his Basic and AIT training at Fort Polk, Louisiana, then jump school at Ft. Benning. From there he volunteered for Vietnam, arriving in Chu Lai in April 1969. At Chu Lai he was asked "if anyone wants to join the Rangers?" and he volunteered, spending three weeks in Chu Lai then selected, with two others, for Recondo training at Nha Trang with the 5th Special Forces. When he returned to Chu Lai he and another soldier were assigned to a LRRP team with the 11th Brigade in Duc Pho which needed men.

Jacks recalls, "I had a stuttering problem and a southern drawl. I met my team leader; Bob Pruden and the whole team started harassing me led by Pruden. I had had enough so I kicked the table over and challenged those Yankees on the team to take me on. Pruden said, 'damn boy, you have have some juice in your blood' and from that point on we were the best of friends".

Staff Sergeant Robert Pruden's Team Oregon ranged far and wide on missions for the 11th brigade. Most missions were of a reconnaissance nature but as Jacks recalls, "we became famous for grabbing prisoners. It started as a lark with me, just to show them I could do anything a damn Yankee could do. We developed techniques for grabbing prisoners and we thrived on that, it gave us an adrenaline high." Jacks continues, "the longer we were there in the Brigade the more we were pushed for a body count, so we would set a an ambush on the last day of our patrol but if the situation allowed, we tried to grab a prisoner as well."

November 29, 1969 remains etched on Danny Jacks mind. "We had been in this particular area for a few days before and had seen a lot of activity. We were sent back to set up an ambush. It wasn't a good place for an ambush. There were some dried up rice paddies and a high-speed trail about 10 yards away. Pruden split the team about ten yards apart just off the trail. Whatever direction the NVA would come from, the second team they passed would blow the ambush. We had a new guy who was not with us long and he was taking too long to set up his claymores. He was still setting them up while we were getting hunkered down when twelve NVA came out of the jungle and caught him in the open. They opened up on him and pinned him down.

"We were all dumbfounded by what was taking place but Pruden reacted immediately.



SSG Robert Pruden's Team Oregon (Left to Right): Jim Gromacki, John Schultz, Robert Kalaway, Bob Pruden (MOH), Danny Jacks, Edward Beattie (Photo courtesy of the lrrpranger.org web site).

He leaped over the paddy berm to draw their attention, then he charged the NVA hollering and screaming. He was hit, went to his knees, then charged again and went down a second time. He looked at me and said, 'Jacks, I need you', we all came out of our trance and charged the NVA. Pruden got up and charged a third time until hit again. We killed seven of them and the rest faded into the jungle. The guy caught in the open had bullet holes all over his gear but was not hit.

"Pruden was in bad shape. He couldn't breathe. I tried to clear his throat and gave him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. The third time I did that he coughed, his eyes popped wide open and he asked, 'did they kill the new guy?' I told him, no, he's still alive. He asked me 'Jacks, how am I?' We were scheduled to go on R&R together and I told him, 'boy, in another thirty days we are going on an R&R and having some fun'. He looked at me and said, 'Jacks, you and I have walked too many trails together, don't lie to me'. I told him, 'Pruden, you're dying'. He asked for a cigarette, a Marlboro, even though he couldn't breathe ... that is what he smoked and we smoked one together. He told me to enjoy the R&R on him. Pruden never did panic; he remained calm throughout the whole ordeal. I was crying because I was loosing my best friend. The Medevac finally came in and, as we were lifting him up into the bird he said, 'tell my mother I love her', he rolled his eyes and died."

Danny Jacks became the team leader and extended his tour by six months to stay in the LRRPs. On August 16, 1970 he was badly wounded and sent home. Staff Sergeant Robert J. Pruden of St. Paul, Minnesota was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

The Men with Painted Faces

Danny Jacks was discharged from the Army in October 1970. After trying trapping and fishing and working on a railroad for three years, he settled on farming and raising chickens (40,000) in Rison, Arkansas with his wife of 33 years and two children.

Stephen Johnson left the Army in June 1970. He and his wife of 30 years, Pam, teach Special Education. He is the Editor/Publisher of the LRRP/Ranger Quarterly Newsletter and is very active in the LRRP/Ranger Association. Steve Johnson resides in Bemidji, Minnesota.

David Moncada left the active Army in 1971 but went into the Army Reserves in 1986, where he still serves as a First Sergeant. He is a Special Agent for the Defense Security Service in civilian life and lives in Carmichael, California.

Ralph Tildon, West Point Class of June 1968, remained on active duty until June 1978, when he entered the Army Reserve, retiring as a Colonel in 1998. It was Tildon who submitted the recommendation for SSG Pruden's Medal of Honor. He works for the Federal Government and lives in Herndon, Virginia.

Grateful appreciation is given to Tom Nash, Americal LRRP and President, the 196th LRRP -E/51st and Company G/75th Rangers Organization. His untiring assistance in providing contacts and photos made this article possible. The section "Special Missions For Special Men" was edited from a story authored by Stephen Johnson on the LRRP web site titled "No Longer MIA". Americal vets can learn more about their LRRPs on the web site: www.lrrpranger.org.



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