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AMERICAL NEWSLETTER

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

APRIL - MAY - JUNE 2003

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

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

By John McCrae

IN FLANDERS FIELDS WHERE POPPIES GROW
BENEATH THE CROSSES, ROW ON ROW
THAT MARK OUR PLACE; AND IN THE SKY
THE LARKS, STILL BRAVELY SINGING, FLY
SCARCE HEARD AMID THE GUNS BELOW

WE ARE THE DEAD. SHORT DAYS AGO
WE LIVED, FELT DAWN, SAW SUNSET GLOW,
LOVED AND WERE LOVED, AND NOW WE LIE
IN FLANDERS FIELD

TAKE UP OUR QUARREL WITH THE FOE:
TO YOU FROM FAILING HANDS WE THROW
THE TORCH; BE YOURS TO HOLD IT HIGH.
IF YE BREAK FAITH WITH US WHO DIE
WE SHALL NOT SLEEP, THOUGH POPPIES GROW
IN FLANDERS FIELD.

MEMORIAL DAY – MAY 2003

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Oakley, IL 62552
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[REDACTED]

Chapter Commander
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[REDACTED]

Chapter Commander
Central Midwest Region
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[REDACTED]
Centralia, MO 65240
[REDACTED]

TAPS TAPS TAPS

182 INFANTRY E CO.
Lawrence Baltimore
FL 33462
December 26, 2002

221 FIELD ARTILLERY SER
James L. Campbell
Woodleaf, NC
July 2, 2002

101 MED REG A CO.
Generino Errichiello
Hanover, MA
September 15, 2001

132 INFANTRY
Heather Healy
Enfield, CT
November 28, 2002

164 INFANTRY
Arthur S. Kountz
Pahrump, NV
March 1, 2003

182 INFANTRY G CO.
Franklin T. Marion
Romance, WV
March 30, 2003

182 INFANTRY D CO.
Ralph W. Persinger
New Port Richey, FL
April 6, 2003

182 INFANTRY E CO.
James Simpson
Suprise, AZ
June 6, 2002

23 SIT BN HQ CO.
Chadwick G. Wendt
Marina, CA
Date Unknown

132 INFANTRY I CO.
Stanley Boeskool
Zeeland, MI
April 2003

493 QUARTERMASTER
Lawrence E. Donovan
Milton, MA
January 10, 2003

11 LIB E/4/3 INFANTRY
William K. Ferguson
Hueytown, AL
January 30, 2003

132 INFANTRY HQ CO.
Frank E. Heller
Vancouver, WA
Date Unknown

57 ENGINEERS
Henry E. Lague
Acushnet, MA
December 10, 2002

182 INFANTRY MED DET
Edward M.D. Moses
Peterborough, NH
December 16, 2002

247 FIELD ARTILLERY
Melvin K. Sandy
Stephens City, VA
February 1, 2003

26 SIGNAL CO.
Jacob Talenco
Hammond, IN
April 14, 2003

182 INFANTRY A CO.
Charles L. West
Haverhill, MA
October 10, 2002

REINSTATED MEMBERS

Capt. Rudy R. Alaniz (Re
198 LIB A/D/1/46 Inf
Walla Walla, WA
#Self

Mr. Terry L. Baggs
11 LIB D/3/1 Inf
Lima, OH
#PNC Gary L. Noller

Mr. Walter F. Cullen
3 Infantry 4/3 Inf
Ipswich, MA
#R. Castronova

Mr. Albert H. Holcomb
56 Arty Btry C
Fernley, NV
#Memb. Com.

Mr. William F. Smith
588 Maint
Heavener, OK
#Don Ballou

Mr. William D. Staebell
11 LIB E/4/3 Inf
Bloomington, MN
#R. Castronova

Mr. Leroy Tecube
11 LIB B/4/3 Inf
Dulce, NM
R. Thornton

Ms. Linda J. Wilson
American Red Cross
Hudson, MA

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. Carl F. Ahland
198 LIB H/17 Cav
Monroe City, MO
#PNC Gary L. Noller

Mr. Daniel F. Behrens
Associate
What Cheer, IA
#Lindley E. Hoopes

Mr. John H. Burton
196 LIB D/2/1 Inf
Rockhill, SC
#John C. Strickland

Mr. David Gaither
198 LIB 1/52 Inf
Linton, IN
#PNC Gary L. Noller

Mr. Millard (Harvey P. H
Americal Hq & Band
Gaston, SC
#Pnc Gary L. Noller

Mr. William R. Knight
198 LIB A/1/46 Inf
Bloomington, IN
#Bill Schneider

Mr. Richard W. LeBar
11 LIB HHC/D/1/21 Inf
Dansville, NY
#Don Ballou

Mr. Elias M. Sandoval Jr
198 LIB 5/46 Inf
Angleton, TX
#Self

Mr. Oliver W. Starr
1 Cav A/1/1 Cav
Carrabelle, FL
#Self

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196 LIB 23 MP 2 Plt
Crum, WV
#David W. Taylor

Mr. Russell R. Anderson
523 Sig Bn C Co.
Oneida, TN
#Bill Boyatt

Col. Donald M. Buchwald
196 LIB 2/1 Inf
Hot Springs Village AK
#Bill Schneider

Mr. Louis Dunlap
11 LIB A/4/3 Inf
Ada, OK
#Bill Allen

Mr. James Gibler
20 TAGG atch 198 LIB PA
Lubbock, TX
#Bill Schneider

Mr. Dan Holly
55 Arty G Btry
Ft. Wayne, IN
#Don Ballou

Mr. Mike Koop
198 LIB B/1/6 Inf
Holland, MI
#Vance Van Wieren

Mr. Jesse J. Lewis
11 LIB Hq/1/20 Inf
Fort Smith, AR
#PNC Gary L. Noller

Mr. Paul R. Smith
198 LIB E/1/6 Inf
Monticello, AR
#PNC Gary L. Noller

Mr. Dale W. Szarka
11 LIB 4/3 Recon
Solon, OH
#Self

#Sponsor

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Mr. Lawrence P. Christie
1 Cav 1 Sq B Troop
Moreno Valley, CA
#Gary L. Noller

Mr. Aurelio S. Menchaca
11 LIB C/1/20 Inf
Bakersfield, CA
#Jim Buckle

Mr. Roy N. Pierce
1 Cav 1/1
Hornbeck, TN
#Castronova & Babler

Mr. Don S. Squire
132 Infantry 3/Hq/I
Hurricane, UT
#Self

Mr. Ronald R. Janus
11 LIB D/4/21 Inf
South Plainfield, NJ
#Robert Thorton

Mr. Charles K. Northrup
182 Infantry M Co.
Bakirk, NY
#PNC Gary L. Noller

Mr. Jerry B. Schuster
51 Infantry Co A
Altus, OK
#Bill Maddox

HAVE YOU CALLED THAT BUDDY YET?
TOMORROW MAY BE TOO LATE

SICK CALL

PNC Bernard Carroll
Brockton Veterans Hospital
Brockton, MA 02301

John DePew
Reading, PA 19606

John served with F Troop, 17th Cav in Vietnam

Robert C. Muehrcke
Watertown WI 53098

HOW ABOUT A CARD GUYS?

REUNION - REUNION - REUNION - REUNION
Yankee Division Veterans Association

The 26th (Yankee) Infantry Division Veterans Association is having its 84th Annual Convention/Reunion at the Best Western Motel, Newport, RI, on June 8-9-10, 2003. Anyone that served in any unit of the 26th (Yankee) Infantry Division at any time, their families and friends, are welcome to attend. For further info contact:

Chairman Robert R. Raney
Peabody, MA 01960-4138
Tel: [REDACTED]

RAINBOW DIVISION VETERANS

The National Association of Rainbow Division Veterans (42nd Infantry Division), WWI & WWII wishes to contact veterans of wartime service in the Division to encourage their membership in the veterans association founded in 1919 by G/A Douglas MacArthur. For more info contact:

Walter L. Peirce
Waltham, MA 02452

Walter Pierce is vice President of the Eastern Region, Rainbow Division Veterans Association.

ATTENTION - ATTENTION - ATTENTION

NORTHWEST CHAPTER
AK WA OR ID MT WY

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

The Northwest Chapter will hold a "get acquainted" informal meeting in Beaverton, Oregon on September 13, 2003. Please contact Dave Hammond to RSVP and for more details at the above address.

ARE YOUR DUES PAID?

SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

I wish to thank all members that contibuted to our Scholarship Fund this year. Following is a list of names of members who have contributed in memory of a friend or a loved one.

The winning name will be drawn at the National Reunion and will be announced in the next Newsletter. If you have not returned your tickets --there is still time!!

Scholarship Chairman
Robert G. Short

Ethel Thornton
in memory of
PNC Robert Thornton

Janette Hills
in memory of
Jack Hills

Celia Fonseca Rohststein
in memory of
David Fonseca

Norma Moriarty
in memory of
James Moriarty

J. Paul Grice Jr.
in memory of
Fallen Brothers A/1/20 Infantry

Carlo & Margaret Pola
in memory of
Lorraine Murnaghan

Regina Persinger
in memory of
Ralph Persinger

E Company and Medical Detachment
in memory of
Lawrence J. Baltimore
Edward Moses M.D.

The following is a list of members tha contributed more than ten dollars to the Scholarship Fund:

Timothy Coffey
Bill Mahoney
Kenneth Churchill
Ltc. David Mower
John Anderson
Tom Vescio
Mike Kosteczko
James Gibler
Roger Gilmore
Steve Maluk
Daniel Young
Albert Simms
Dan Smith
John McKnown
Gene Wilson
Lee Kaywork
Logan Martin
W.K. Maddox
David Eckberg
Chris Bollis
Frederick Siems
Gene McGrory
Marko Milobar
John Silva
Dennis Bourcier
Mike Feltes
William Lynch
George Jones
Tom McAndrews
David Cote

Peter Chelemedos
Ltc. Patrick Dionne (Ret)
Claude Morris
Chuck Lanham
James Lewellen
Ben Tanish
Carl Hewitt
Joan Vardone
John Kilroy
Daniel Young
David Smith
Edgar Mccombe
David Eichhorn
William Connolly
1SG James Johnson (Ret)
Tom Garvey
Frederick Kolbrener
J. R. Flowers
Dutch DeGroot
Steve Kasach
Col. John Gasper (Ret)
Bruce Buehrig
Ann McGee
Jim Stein
Bill Marshall
John Copponi
Ltc. Michael Ross (Ret)
PNC Roland Castronova
Marion Doyle
PNC Bernard Carroll

FAR WEST CHAPTER
AZ,CA,CO,HA,NV,NM,UT

COMMANDER
Richard Merlin
Riverside, CA 92505

SEC/TREAS
Gene McGrath
Pahrump, NV 89048

Vice Commander - Kirk McFadden
Sergeant-at-Arms - John Bowley
Chaplain - Paris Tognoli

REUNION - REUNION - REUNION

The Far West Chapter will hold this years Reunion in Laughlin, Nevada starting Sunday September 28th and ending Tuesday September 30th. The Reunion will be held at he Flamingo Hotel. Room rates are only \$22.00 per night.

A bus trip is planned for Monday. This will include lunch and a tour of an old gold miners town, Oatman, Arizona. Tuesday night we will have a dinner dance. A Hospitality Room will be open the entire three days.

For room reservations call [REDACTED] and ask for the Americal Division Veterans Association. The group code is SLAME03. Cut off date for rooms is September 13, 2003.

Reservation forms for all events will be available at the end of April 2003. Any questions contact Rich Merlin: [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

2004 NATIONAL REUNION

The Far West Chapter will be hosting the National Reunion scheduled for June 2004, in Reno, Nevada. our Chapter Commander, Rich Merlin, is chairing this event. Obviously he is going to need a lot of help. Whether you are a Far West Chapter member or not, if you are interested and able to work on the committee, please contact Rich at:

Rich Merlin
Riverside, CA 92516

TAPS

It is with regret and sadness that we note the passing of Arthur Kountz who passed away on March 1, 2003. Arthur served with the 164th Infantry.

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 welcomes all Americal Veterans to join us for the 4th of July Celebration in Waterford, WI. The parade starts at 11:00 A.M. Meet at the Bunker, 29224 Evergreen, Waterford, WI, at 10:00 A.M. for transportation to the parade start. Commander and ex-DI John Mathews and 1/1 Cav President Terry Babler will call cadence calls in the parade. Celebration afterwards at the Bunker.

The Bunker is owned by three Vietnam Veterans. It is a Bar and has all sorts of memorabilia inside

from the Vietnam War. They have a Huey and a tank on display outside also. The grounds consist of Guard towers, fake VC soldiers in the woods etc. There will be huge tents and a lot of activities for veterans and their families which includes a breakfast served military style.

Waterford is near Milwaukee and nestled in the country near the Fox River. The Raymond Inn and Suites are \$69.00 a night. for more info call Mike Iverson, 1/20 Inf Americal, at [REDACTED].

Another event coming up will be the 21st Annual Vietnam Veterans Reunion in Kokomo, IN on September 18-20, 2003. About 30,000 veterans attend this function every year. The Americal will be setting up a tent and we will have hospitality areas in the camping area. Last year 125 Americal vets signed in.

The Winterfest 2004 R&R All Veterans Reunion and Festival will be January 15-18, 2004. More info: E-mail: [REDACTED] or call Terry Babler at [REDACTED].

We are looking at doing another Veterans Oceanside party in Cocoa Beach in Florida next year.

REMINDER TO MEMBERS: Dues are \$5.00 a year. Check the mailing label on the Great Lakes Newsletter for the date your dues expire. Renew your dues by sending a check to: terry Babler, W5889 Durst Road, New Glarus, WI 53574.

EASTERN REGIONAL CHAPTER
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Fleming, OH 45729
Tel: [REDACTED]

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

SECRETARY
Joe Tunis
Lake Ariel, PA 18436

TREASURER
Mark Deam
Sidney, OH 45365

Leo Orfe - Sergeant-At-Arms
Everitt Williams - Chaplain
Visit our web site at:

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

On February 13, 2003, Bob Cudworth, 2002 Reunion Coordinator presented a \$300.00 check to Paul Hart, President of the Lackawanna and Wyoming Valley Railway Historical Society.

The money will be used for the restoration of the Boston & Maine 3713 locomotive at the Steamtown National Historic Site.

Bob also presented a \$250.00 check to Margaret Reese, Business Manager of the Anthracite Heritage Museum Associates. Donations are used for the acquisition and/or preservation of museum artifacts and exhibits.

The Americal Division Veterans Association/Eastern Regional Chapter will be recognized as the benefactor at both museums.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

October 7-10, 2003
Rehoboth Beach, Delaware

That is the date and place for the coming Reunion of the Eastern Regional Chapter.

WORLD WAR II SERVICE RECORD OF FRED G. DAVIS
COMPANY G - 182ND INFANTRY

I was born in Nashville, Tennessee on 15 June 1924. I was the eldest of three sons born to John Gilbert and Azleene Alley Davis.

I was drafted into World War II service, being called up for a physical examination in January 1943, at the age of 18 1/2 years. I completed the necessary courses required for high school graduation in January 1943, but my high school graduation and awarding of my diploma were in June 1943. Thus I missed my graduation ceremonies from East Nashville Senior High School and my diploma was mailed to my parents home.

I was sent to Camp Forrest, Tennessee for my January 1943 physical examination, sworn in and returned home for about one week before reporting to Ft. Oglethorpe, Georgia for processing. In about three weeks I was shipped from Ft. Oglethorpe to Camp Shelby, Mississippi for sixteen weeks of basic training.

After completing basic training I volunteered for parachute troops and was shipped to Fort Benning, Georgia. Part way through training I injured my right foot and did not complete the training.

I was assigned to the Cadre in the 1st Parachute Training Regiment. I established a supply processing center and was promoted to Staff Sergeant. During this assignment I was given a commendation for organizing this procedure.

This assignment was drawing to a close and I was advised by Personnel that I was qualified to apply for Officer Candidate School or Air Cadet Training. I applied for Air Cadet Training, passed the qualifying examination and was transferred to the Air Corp in Miami Beach, Florida. Shortly after my arrival, orders came from the Army Ground Forces Headquarters there would be no transfers from Army Ground Forces to the Air Corp. I was affected by this order and returned to Fort Benning for reassignment. Shortly thereafter I was shipped to Fort Ord, California for overseas duty. This was the latter part of 1944.

Fort Ord, California is located in the San Francisco Bay area. I boarded the troop ship, "General A. E. Anderson", a general class troop ship which carried approximately 5,000 troops, plus the ship's crew. I was aboard that ship for thirty-one days, with orders to report to Company G, 2nd Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment, AMERICAL DIVISION at Hollandia, New Guinea. I was the only person among my group going to the Pacific Theatre of War who was ordered to report to G/2/182 Infantry AMERICAL DIVISION. Upon arrival in New Guinea, I was shipped to the Island of Leyte, Philippines, where I participated in the mop-up work of the Battle of Leyte, which lasted about three weeks to a month to secure the island. I did not make the beachhead at Leyte.

After participating in the battle to secure Leyte, we were given about three days rest, re-equipped, and then made the beachhead on Cebu Island, in the Philippines, in March of 1945. Company G was the first assault company to hit the beach and push forward to take the Japanese air strip. Shortly after we took the Capitol building that was close by. At this time the beachhead on Cebu was declared secure.

Company G had 150 men when we began the assault and suffered about one hundred dead and wounded. Some men being wounded twice. This represented a

70% casualty rate over a period of ninety-three days. I was wounded on the fifth day--March 29, 1945. A Jap bullet entered one side of my lower back, missing all vital organs, and exited the other side. After being wounded I was evacuated to a Catholic Mission building that had been converted into a hospital. Here my wound was cleaned, dressed, and I was given penicillin shots. During the night the Japs attempted to blow up the building. I was then evacuated to the beach area, along with other wounded, and placed on a LST that had been converted into a hospital ship, and taken back to Leyte. After twenty-seven days I reported back to my Company that was then located in the mountains of Cebu.

At the end of ninety-three days of fighting, we were brought back to a rest area to be re-equipped and prepare for the invasion Japan proper. During this time of rest and preparation for the invasion news reached us, via radio, of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, and Nagasaki on August 8, 1945.

We had prepared to make a beachhead invasion of Japan and boarded ships headed for Japan. Enroute we were given orders that we would make a dock landing at Yokohama, Japan. This we did and then proceeded to the town of Fuchinobe, where a Japanese training facility was located. Company G occupied an area of approximately 300 square miles and was ordered to secure the area by having all weapons turned in to the U. S. Army. The AMERICAL DIVISION was the first infantry unit to land in Japan proper. We first entered Japan in September of 1945 after the unconditional surrender of Japan on 2 September 1945.

There is no question in my mind that the atomic bombs dropped on Japan saved my life and that of thousands of my fellow American servicemen. Had it been necessary to invade by establishing beachheads, there would have been a heavy loss of American servicemen and equipment.

At the close of World War II the Americal Division was disbanded and the soldiers with the longest overseas service were sent home. I was transferred to the 1st Cavalry Division for a short period of time and then transferred to 8th Army Headquarters, located in Yokohama, awaiting shipment to the United States. During this period of about two months, I was assigned to a Special Service Company as the First Sergeant, awaiting shipment to the States.

I was shipped from Yokohama the latter part of January 1946 aboard the small ship "City of New York", a victory ship, and I landed at the Port of Seattle, Washington, was placed in charge of one half a troop train and routed to Camp Chaffee, Arkansas for discharge. I was honorably discharged from World War II service on 14 February 1946. Thus, I served in the U.S. Army for a total of three years and one month. This was a large block of my young manhood.

Comments by Betty D. Davis, widow of Fred G. Davis: Fred had never seen or read any history of the Americal Division. Thus, the above record of his personal World War II service was done from his personal experiences and memory. His remembrances may, or may not, completely match up with a written history of the Division, or with remembrances of other Division members.

I am pleased to share his personal account with the Americal Newsletter, as well as the Americal Museum in Worcester, Massachusetts. I trust it will be meaningful and helpful to others who

served and to their descendants across America.

Sincerely,
Betty D. Davis

Further data on Fred G. Davis:

In June 1996 the State of Tennessee, under the Department of State, Tennessee State Library and Archives, did an "Archival Project in celebration of Tennessee's Bicentennial to Honor Veterans of World War II". This project was done to "recognize the efforts of World War II veterans by collecting information about those veterans". A book was published on the veterans. This was a voluntary participation by the veterans. I did archival and genealogical research work, so I encouraged my husband, Fred G. Davis, to allow me to help him complete one of the veteran survey forms. We did this and this gives additional data on his total World War II service as follows:

Awards/Medals: Combat Infantry Badge, WWII Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal, American Theater, Asiatic Pacific Medal/with Bronze Star and Bronze Arrowhead, Philippine Liberation Medal with Bronze Star, and a Purple Heart. (On 17 July 1997 Fred was awarded the beautiful Bronze Star Medal for "meritorious achievement in ground combat against an armed enemy during World War II in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater of Operations" certificate. He was extremely proud of this certificate.)

Question: "Did you enlist or were you drafted? How did you feel about entering the service?"
Answer: "I volunteered for early draft. I was anxious and ready to serve."

Question: "What role were you trained for in the service and where?"
Answer: "Infantry Basic Training, Combat Engineer as a Reconnaissance Scout, Radio Operator."

Question: What preparations were made for combat?"
Answer: I had standard Army Infantry training and was issued standard equipment."

Question: "If you experienced combat engagements, what were your thoughts during?"
Answer: "I always felt confident that we would win each engagement, and prayed our casualties would be light."

Question: "If you were stationed overseas, where? What do you recall about those countries? Were the people friendly to the Americans?"
Answer: "Philippine Islands and Japan. The Philippine Islands of Leyte and Cebu, where I served were rather primitive. We were mostly in the jungles. Cebu city was a pretty city. Japan was a progressive country. I was in and around Tokyo and Yokohama. Train transportation was excellent. People were clean, friendly and cooperative."

Question: "What event or experience remains most vivid about your wartime service?"
Answer: "The beachhead at Cebu, where ships rendezvoused to proceed, the bombardment of the Island as we waited to go ashore, then going ashore and receiving fire after advancing a few yards, then being wounded by rifle fire four days later, being evacuated to Leyte."

Question: "What were your living conditions?"
Answer: "Conditions in the States were from fair to good. Conditions in combat consisted of a poncho and a shovel to dig a fox hole. My 2-3 months stay in Japan was excellent as I was assigned to a heated building in downtown Yokohama."

Question: "Did you receive good, adequate or inadequate medical attention?"

Answer: I received good medical attention in the field from the Company aid man to the evacuation hospital ship and to the field hospital."

Question: "How was morale?"

Answer: Very high!!"

Question: "How many people in your unit were from your hometown, county or state?"

Answer: "In my company there were none from my hometown or county. There were two people in my Company from the State of Tennessee."

Question: "What was the average age of members of your unit?"

Answer: "Probably mid-20's."

Question: "When you returned home from the service, who met you where?"

Answer: The victory ship I returned home on came into the Port of Seattle, Washington where we were met and greeted by the American Red Cross. The trip home was very rough aboard the victory ship. The greetings in Seattle were very gracious. Refreshments were served at the dock."

Question: Did you use the G.I. Bill?"

Answer: Yes. I did not receive a degree. I had one year of college."

"On 19 March 1954 I married Betty Sue Davis in Nashville, Tennessee. We had two sons. Fred Keith Davis, born 13 July 1957. Phillip Russell Davis, born 02 September 1960. For 44 years we lived in Madison, Tennessee. In August 2002 we moved to Hendersonville, Tennessee."

"On March 19, 1953 I was appointed to the Nashville Fire Department served for 34 1/2 years in various ranks, with 7 1/2 years service as Director-Chief of the Metropolitan Nashville - Davidson County Fire Department, Retiring on 16 July 1987".

Retired Chief Fred G. Davis died suddenly at home of Sudden Cardiac Death on Saturday 13 July 2002.

CORRECTION - CORRECTION - CORRECTION

On Page 11 of the Jan-Feb-Mar 2003 issue of the Americal Newsletter, is an error reflected under my name. It sounds as if I was on Guadalcanal and was one of the lucky 2% who did not come down with malaria. I was not on Guadalcanal. However I did get malaria--six attacks to be correct.

Jack Warkow
221 Field Artillery
B Battery

DO YOU KNOW THIS MAN?

John Souza was inducted into the Army on 4/14/41 and was stationed at Camp Edwards in the Yankee Division, possibly in the 182nd Infantry for he was shipped overseas and became a member of the Americal. If you knew him please contact:

John J. Souza
Cambridge, MA 02141

ARE YOUR DUES PAID?

221 FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

Pictured below are some of the backbone of the 221 Field Artillery Battalion, as we prepared to leave New Caledonia enroute to Guadalcanal.



STANDING: Left to Right: S/Sgt. Bob (Iron Mike) McGann, later M/Sgt. Battalion Motor Pool, S/Sgt. Lloyd Morrell, later 1/Sgt. Hq & Hq Battery, WO Jim (Pancho) Rouse. KNEELING: S/Sgt. Buster Kelly, later M/Sgt. Bn. Sgt. Major. All were Massachusetts National Guardsmen and stayed with the Battalion from Camp Edwards through Bougainville. Prior to embarking for the Philippines. McGann and Rouse were rotated back to the States. Kelly and Morrell remained with the Battalion until the war ended.

Lloyd Morrell
221. F.A. Bn.

132 INFANTRY Do You Know This Man?

Walter E. Stanik was KIA at the Jaba River battle.

In this action where Walter E. Stanik was fatally wounded there never was a body count of enemy casualties. There was a significant number of Japs killed as a result of a well planned entrapment of enemy forces.

Mr. Delimba is trying to establish a date of this action and develop a scenario of what took place. If you have any info please contact:

Mr. Frank J. Delimba
[REDACTED]
Ironwood, MI 49938

GREETINGS FROM NEW CALEDONIA

Yes, New Caledonians still have an affection for the Americans. On the first anniversary of the 11 September, a ceremony was held in which the Fire Department, the Police Department, the Boy Scouts of Noumea, and the Mayors of the major towns turned out to put a wreath at the foot of the monument of the Americans.

Even the Commander of a visiting U.S. warship remarked of the hospitality received.

Ed Note: The above is a paragraph of a letter written to me by Emery LaVallee'.

Yes, Emery, we the veterans that returned to New Caledonia on the fiftieth anniversary of our first visit there, will never forget the hospitality that we were shown.

BATTERY D - 746TH AAA GUN BATTALION

Enjoyed the article, in the Oct-Nov-Dec 2002 issue of the Americal Newsletter, on the "Jungle Hammock".

We were issued jungle hammocks before we boarded a ship that was part of a convoy bound for Bougainville. We arrived there on December 4, 1943, with mostly Marines and Engineers, that were scheduled to build the Bomber strip.

There was heavy jungle on both sides of the road. We were told that this would be our Battery position as soon as we could clear the jungle to set up our 90mm AA guns and radar equipment.

After parking our equipment on the side of the road, we started putting up our jungle hammocks for the night. We were interrupted by a Japanese air raid. Of course it started to rain and we felt fortunate that we would not be sleeping on the ground.

After setting up our guard watch on the road we thought we could settle in for a few hours sleep.

Shortly, we were rudely awakened by a Marine patrol moving down the road. The sergeant in charge was really upset! He hollered, "Are you guys nuts? Don't even think about sleeping in those HANGING COFFINS"!!

He then went on to explain that when they had tried to use them that several Japs sneaked into their bivouac area, circled their arms around guys sleeping in the hammocks, and stabbed them to death. He said it was just like being in a cocoon with no way to escape. They found several Marines dead in the morning.

I saved mine, and when we landed on Leyte, I used it until we were able to set up tents.

Leonard Owczarzak
B/746 AAA Gun Bn.

Ed Note: Sack added that the 746 AAA is holding a Reunion in September in Cincinnati. If you are interested call him at [REDACTED]

K COMPANY - 182ND INFANTRY

I'm writing to the Americal Newsletter in honor of my Dad, Arthur G. Streck, a WW II vet who spent time on Guadalcanal, South Pacific. Dad looked forward to the Newsletter and when he could no longer see I would read it to him.

My daughter recorded his stories and I thank God for sending him home to us, for I had a wonderful Dad, Friend and Hero. Dad passed away on May 15, 2002. He was in K Company, 182nd Infantry.

I just want to say, Thank You, to all who served and sacrificed so much during and after the war.

Sincerely yours,
Marlene Palmer
Daughter

ARE YOUR DUES PAID?
CHECK THAT ADDRESS LABEL NOW!!

JAPS SURRENDER ON CEBU

Illihan, Northern Cebu-August 28, 1945:

A special honor guard was picked to attend the formal surrender of the Japanese forces left on Cebu.

We were awakened at 3:45 A.M., loaded on trucks at 4:15 A.M. and approached the appointed place of surrender at about 8:30 A.M.

There, on a ridge, were the surrendering Nips. They were lined up in an orderly fashion, squatting on the ground. Our troops dismounted and marched to a position about 50 yards from the Japs, facing them.

After much preliminary dickering and arranging, on both sides, eight ranking Jap officers took their places in front of the troops. They were followed by four more of higher rank and finally by four more. Then, at last, the Big Shot appeared. All seventeen officers had a large Samuri sword attached to their belts.

At 10:00 A.M. our officers appeared. Through an interpreter the final details were arranged. The Jap officers saluted our officers and our officers returned the salute. Then, one by one, the Japanese officers saluted and turned over their swords saluted and bowed. Our officers then left.

Two Japanese officers were returned their swords. These officers were to go back to the hills and retrieve more prisoners.

The 2600 prisoners were divided into four groups. Army Line Troops, Services, Naval Forces, Civilians and Koreans. Among the latter were four women.

The prisoners' arms, binoculars, bayonets, swords, were neatly stacked in large piles to the right of the formation.

Each prisoner was fully clothed, had a canteen, mess gear, and pack. all had hats and shoes. All looked in good physical shape and in good spirits considering the circumstances.

Several young boys were with the Army group. Navy men appeared in better shape and more intelligent than the rest. All were very eager to do the right thing and no trouble took place.

At the conclusion of the ceremonies the troops were marched to vehicles and searched before boarding. Several vehicles, filled with Americans, proceeded the convoy of some hundred or more trucks needed to carry the prisoners.

The Japs were very obsequious, both to their superiors and to the Americans. I saw one Jap ask another for a light for his cigarette, he bowed, saluted, lit his cigarette, bowed and saluted, while backing away! While talking to officers.... continuous bowing and saluting was seen. Commands were quickly obeyed. Men appeared to be well trained and looked very soldierly.

Cleanliness appeared to be their biggest problem. There was evidence of old equipment, poor shoes. Uniforms were old and dirty. Their rank was pinned over their right breast pocket.

Several injured and a one-armed man were among the captives. A few had beards. Army had wrap around leggings...some had puttees. Army had khaki and

leggings...some had puttees. Army had khaki and brown colored uniforms. Navy had grayish blue, some with white hats, some with blue anchors on their hats. Army had a small gold star on a brown hat.

Our troops wore combat boots, khakis, steel helmets, web equipment and carried small arms.

Admiral Ha Rada was the senior Jap Naval officer captured. General Manjome was the senior Jap Army officer captured.

Some of the Japs were carrying small boxes wrapped in a white cloth. I understand they contained the ashes of fallen comrades.

Joseph F. McDonough
246 F. A. Hdq Btry
182 Inf Laison

NATIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS CENTER

The purpose of this letter is to inform you about an improved method of requesting documents from the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). As you know, the NPRC provides copies of documents from military personnel records to authorized requesters. Our new web-based application will provide for better service on these requests by eliminating our mailroom processing time. Also, since the requester will be prompted to supply all information essential for us to process the request, delays that occur when we must go back for more information will be minimized. You may access this application at:

<http://vetrecs.archives.gov>

Please note that there is no requirement to type 'www' in front of this web address. This improved on-line request process should be used INSTEAD OF Standard Form 180 for requests from the veteran or the veteran's next of kin.

R.L. Hindman
Director

1ST BATTALION - 132ND INFANTRY

Looking for anyone who may have known Pvt. Paul Jay Killeen, please contact Paula Killeen Jonker.

robjonker@attbi.com

COMPANY B - 182ND REGIMENT

Looking for anyone from this Company that knew my grandfather S/Sgt. Tillman Diamond of Milton, WV.

CONTACT

David Harshbarger
[REDACTED]
Milton, WV 25541

Tel [REDACTED]

HAVE YOU JOINED A CHAPTER YET?

M COMPANY - 182ND INFANTRY

Have you ever thought of how you got paid in the 182nd Infantry Regiment, Americal Division, during World War II? Well for some on Cebu in June 1945, here is how it got started.

I had been working for over a year as an electric welder, putting in nine hour days, six days a week helping to build 'Liberty' ships at a Jacksonville, Florida shipyard. On my eighteenth birthday in September 1944, I registered for the draft and three weeks later the journey began.

I was welcomed into the Army at Fort McPherson, Georgia and then on to Camp Blanding in Florida for basic training. After basic I was processed to Fort Ord in California and then I found myself on a Liberty ship headed for New Guinea and from there to the 4th Replacement Depot in Talcoban, Leyte, Philippine Islands.

Two years to the day, from the time I took the typing test in high school, I was given a typing test at the 4th Replacement Depot. I typed seventy words per minute, five more than I needed to pass a high school typing test and I hadn't seen a typewriter since graduation!

After a few more days I was shipped to the Cebu City area on Cebu. All of the replacements were kept in an isolated staging area. One of the instructions given to the replacements was, "Do not pick up or handle unexploded ordnance". We had one soldier killed and one wounded for not following instructions. From here we were assigned to units.

I was assigned to Company M, 182nd Infantry as I had had heavy weapons training in basic--81mm Mortars and 30 cal. water cooled machine guns, in addition to rifle squad training. Two days later we embarked on amphibious training. Apparently this was in preparation for the invasion of Japan.

When we returned from this training I was summoned to the Company orderly tent and asked where I had been. I replied that I had been assigned to the third platoon and sent on a training mission. They informed me that I was supposed to report to Regimental Headquarters and I was to report there immediately--I was not supposed to have been on that training mission.

Apparently Regimental Headquarters had been set up with one man from each unit with some kind of skill or experience as well as rank. My rank did not come until two months later when I was promoted to corporal and designated as company clerk for I Company.

My duties at Regimental consisted of typing pay rolls. This included Companies M, L, G, 2nd Bn. Hdq, and 3rd Bn. Hdq., as best as I can remember. This took over two weeks to complete, working seven days a week. The pay rolls were alphabetical by rank. Line companies consisted of around 220 E.M. not counting personal in hospitals, etc.

For each person it included last name, first name, middle initial, service number, date of rank, date shipped overseas, if promoted to include special order number and date, or VOCO, or VOG (vocal order commanding officer/general and date. Also allotment for family, soldiers bank deposits and partial payment for Combat Infantryman's Badge. Each month all of these were repeated and updated.

Each hospitalized persons required one to one and a half to over two pages to record remarks that

had to include all the hospital's as well as the finance office, finance officer and both sets of numbers and dates of amounts (\$5 or \$10) and dates units while there, or if transferred again. I often wondered if some soldiers ever got accurately paid by discharge date.

After pay rolls were completed and forwarded we spent time working on form 20's, 201 files, fighting to keep monkeys out of the office tents and occasional guard duty.

Unit mess hall and supply personnel looked out for us at Headquarters so to be sure their records were properly cared for.

Regimental Headquarters had consisted of 20 of 30 personnel. I remember Anti-tank Company said they had never had a casualty. The Medical Co. personnel had some medical alcohol of about 180 proof. This was cut to about 90 proof with grapefruit juice borrowed from the mess hall. This was June, July and August--then came the A-Bomb.

While preparing to ship to Japan all tents and equipment was packed. Bulldozers buried QM goods and food. Hot, left over beer, possibly from the Officer's Club, was passed out. This was the first I had seen as an eighteen year old on Cebu. After three days of waiting we loaded on ships.

On about September 8th we arrived in Yokohama and then were shipped to Fuchinobe on the island of Honshu. While here we continued to function as we did on Cebu. We were quartered in Japanese Army barracks built to their sleeping style, lights, and sanitation.

In November of 1945 demobilization started. High point men were transferred into the Regiment and low point men had to be transferred out. Orders came from above as to who to ship where. I was assigned to Headquarters IX Corps in the Inspectors General Office at Saparro and then later in Sendia.

To accomplish this mission typists typed 24 hours daily for 8 to 10 days. We only slept four or five hours per day. The mimeograph machines-hand cranked-never stopped. Everyone took turns at the mimeograph machines and collating orders. Six copies each for each name. These stencils/orders assigned personnel to the camp/fort closest to their home address.

We had a Sgt. Salletta (?) from Modesto, CA who had "connections" and secured air transportation, in lieu of boat transportation, for himself and Corp. Roy Cannon. This was in early November 1945. This didn't work out to well for on the way to the air base the Jeep was in an accident. Ten months after I returned home I received a post card from Roy Cannon. He was still in the hospital at Fort Lewis, Washington with a broken leg--and still in the Army.

Al Salletta died of heart problems in 1975 in Modesto, California.

The Americal Division was de-activated at Fort Lewis, WA when it arrived by boat in November of 1945. The troops were put on troop trains and headed for home. They were given \$.06 per mile and any money they had on deposit in the Soldiers Bank. If they had not received any type leave "officially" their service was extended to the equivalent of 30 days per year and called "terminal leave".

When I arrived on Cebu in June of 1945 I had been

A TRIBUTE TO A REAL PATRIOT

We are thinking of William S. Vinci, commonly called, 'Bill', who passed away at the young age of 94.

Bill was the Supply Sergeant of our Company F, 182nd Infantry, YD Division at Camp Edwards in 1941 and continued in this capacity when overseas while serving our country in the Americal Division.

He efficiently organized our supply records and knew our shortages and wasted no time in contacting various sources for delivery of same. During the cold winter of '41' at Camp Edwards, he pestered the tailors to spend extra time adjusting clothes and overcoats so items would fit properly on each individual.

Captain Archie McFadden, our second Father and a wonderful leader, often congratulated S/Sgt. Vinci for the appearance of our Company. Captain McFadden demanded that the men would look like the real soldiers that we were.

Before leaving for New York and for our embarkment to the South Pacific, first stop Australia, Bill was out after midnight, exchanging large overshoes for smaller ones, with other other Company Supply Sergeants, and succeeding on his mission.

In the various campaigns that he participated in, Guadalcanal and Bougainville, he assisted our Artificer in the acquisition and delivery of ammunition of all types used in an infantry Company, and supervised the delivery wherever our fighting small units were.

Bill was endeared to all members of Company F because he cared and positively produced when required.



Bill Vinci, Fourth from right--Holding Americal Newsletter, with his buddies of F Company during the Reunion of 2002.

If you are looking for a real Soldier, comforting individual, with act and deeds for the welfare of his buddies of Company F, 182 Infantry, He was it!

Realistically, he will be MISSED! May the good Lord be very kind to this wonderful Guy,

From his buddies of Company F, 182nd Infantry.

Submitted by,
Ltc. Sal Vinciullo (Ret)

overseas one month. Al Salletta had been overseas 42 months, Roy Cannon 38 months, Luther Heller 33 months and they were still 'over there' in November 1945.

We were fortunate--God bless America and all the World War II veterans.

Joseph Webb
[REDACTED]
Florence, SC 29501-5524

P.S If anyone has info on Roy Cannon--California about 1978, Luther Heller--Council Bluffs IA about 1978, Richard Schnider--Lansdown, Pennsylvania about 1976 or Richard Smedley--Pennsylvania about 1976, please write to me.

200th FIELD ARTILLERY - 247th FIELD ARTILLERY

Looking for anyone that knew my Dad, Elliott Lee Hedrick. He served with the 200th F.A. Bn and later in the 247th F.A. Bn. Battery C.

He served with that unit as a radio operator on Guadalcanal until he was sent home six months later with malaria.

I do have some pictures my father took while in the Pacific and Guadalcanal.

God Bless and keep the brave men of the 247th!

Contact:

Stan Hedrick
[REDACTED]
Peculiar, MO 64978
Tel: [REDACTED]
email: [REDACTED]

NATIONAL ORDER OF BATTLEFIELD COMMISSIONS

We are trying to locate all men, WWII, Korea, and Vietnam, who on the field of battle against an armed enemy received a commission from enlisted or Warrant status to commission status. It may be you or someone you know. Contact:

J.C. Angier III
[REDACTED]
Saint Augustine, FL 32080-9451

Ed Note: Mr. Angier is the National Adjutant.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press.
It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, who has given us freedom to demonstrate.

It is the soldier, not the lawyer, who has given us the right to a fair trial.

It is the soldier, not the religious leader, who has given us freedom of religion.

And, it is the soldier - who salutes the flag, who serves the flag, whose coffin is draped by the flag, - who allows the protester to burn the flag.
(Sent in by Robert E. McPheson)

WELL DECORATED 164TH VETERAN
By Joe Zentis - Sharon Herald

"I would say a hero is one that just does his job when he's ordered to do it, that's all, and doesn't crawl down into a hole and disappears", said Don Eichelberger of Sharpsville, who served with the Americal Division in the Pacific during World War II.

Taken literally, this definition could apply to a teen-ager in a fast food restaurant who sullenly works just enough not to get fired. The Job Eichelberger was talking about was facing an enemy who is out to kill you and your comrades. And for someone like him, it always applies to the guy next to him, never to himself.

Apparently the people next to him felt the same way, so Eichelberger ended up with two of only 199 Bronze Star Medals awarded to members of his outfit, the 164th Infantry Regiment during 600 plus days of combat on Pacific Islands.

The first resulted from action on the island of Bougainville in the Solomon Islands. Like action on many other islands, the major battle their happened not when the Marines first landed, but afterwards.

"The Marines had built a perimeter, but the Japanese were on the other end of the island," Eichelberger said. "They carried artillery up to the top of the hills and really bombarded the Americans, the Japanese came on with attack after attack, then they went back into the bush."

Eichelberger was part of a twelve-man reconnaissance squad responsible for going out in search of enemy units. They had no advance intelligence about where they could be found. "We just had to go out and find them, that's all," he said. "They're out there somewhere. It's just a matter of where." When they located enemy soldiers, they would radio back to the base for infantry support.

During November, 1944, his patrol discovered an enemy encampment. "We called in an infantry outfit, and we got them early in the morning, before they even got a shot off," Eichelberger said. Twenty-three of the enemy--the entire unit were killed without a single American casualty, and a lot of weapons, supplies, equipment, and ammunition were captured.

The Bronze Star was awarded to everyone who participated in the raid. According to the citation, "The courage and jungle craft displayed by all members of the patrol is especially meritorious. The careful preparation, skillful execution, and deadly accuracy of fire constitute a masterpiece of jungle fighting."

After Bougainville, Eichelberger's unit participated in actions on the Philippine islands of Negros. Eichelberger was corporal by that time.

"We were waiting around there three days on a red alert and nothing happened, so I went fishing," Eichelberger said, "Well, I looked over and there's a guy waving at me. I get over to the beach and he said we're moving out. They were all loaded up in trucks and taking off. So I gathered up my equipment real fast and we got on the landing craft bound for Dumaguete, on Negros." The lieutenant says to all the guys, "I want you to listen to this, Eichelberger, you're a private." Okay, well, I probably deserved it. Then when we weren't far from the beachhead, he says, "Eichelberger, you're a sergeant."

Eichelberger wasn't sure whether or not the lieutenant was serious about the demotion. When he looked at his service records after the war, he saw the he had indeed been officially demoted and promoted on the same day.

Eichelberger's second Bronze Star resulted from action on Negros. His Recon squad went out

on patrols through torturous jungles, for a long as twenty days at a time.

"At first we'd take a dog with us," he said, "but we found out that from experience we knew as much as the dog did. One of the signals was, as long as you hear any jungle sounds, the birds and what have you, there's nobody around. But when it is quiet, ... Or if you walk down a trail and you run into cobwebs, there's nobody around there. If you see where trees had been cut, you can tell how recently they were cut by how much they've grown. They grow back from the inside out."

With feet continually wet from slogging through the jungle, Eichelberger had to be hospitalized for treatment of ulcers on his ankles. He also contracted malaria.

After the island was considered clear of enemy soldiers, Eichelberger's unit started amphibious training for what would have been the most devastating and terrifying beach assault ever: the invasion of Japan.

"We were one of the units that were going to be in the first wave on Japan," he said. "We didn't know what they had waiting for us. Their planes were all converted over to suicide planes to take out the troop ships, even down to landing craft."

Of course, the war ended without an invasion after the United States dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Eichelberger disagrees with those who said the bombs shouldn't have been dropped. "We would probably have lost a million guys there," he said. Eichelberger spent three months in the occupation of Japan, then he returned home. "My welcoming was walking into the house and being embraced by my parents. I didn't have any bells ringing or parades and what have you."



Don Eichelberger showing his many medals

What he did have were some tokens of what heroes sometimes get: not only Bronze Stars, but also a Good Conduct Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Military Merit Medal, Armed Forces Achievement Medal, Philippine Liberation Medal, from the Philippine government, Presidential Unit Citation (Navy), Armed Forces Reserve Medal, and the Asiatic Pacific Medal with three campaign stars.

So was Don Eichelberger a hero? If you ask him, he'll tell you no. Then re-read his own definition of a hero, and make up your mind.

(Don Eichelberger was in the I&R platoon of the 164th Infantry and he resides in Sharpsville, PA.)

Ed. Note: I have a veterans plate on my car and in the past several months, on three different occasions, people have come up to me and said, Thank You!

Has this happened to you?

"My Life Overseas" ...The Diary of My Father (PFC Bill Henningsen, Company G, 182nd Regiment, The Battle of Bougainville, 1944) Steven Henningsen

This is the WWII diary of our Dad, Bill J. Henningsen, PFC, Company "G", 182nd Regiment, Americal Division, and XIV Corps. He was born January 23, 1925 in Fremont, Nebraska. He died March 27, 1977 in Apple Valley, California. His "My Life Overseas" diary has been archived by myself, his oldest of four sons. His other sons are Brad, Todd and Jeff. He was married to our Mom, formerly Anna Lee Long of Blair, Nebraska for thirty-one years.

Editors Note from David W. Taylor:

Steven Henningsen submitted this transcription of his Dads diary to me as Contributing Editor and World War II Historian. In addition to the diary itself, Steve has done considerable work, providing historical background, campaign maps, battle photos and weapons, both US and Japanese. Some of this additional research is included in the following pages. I have edited out some nondescript entries out of necessity for space limitations. The ADVA is very grateful for Steven Henningsen's work, presented below:

My Life Overseas

Undated: we got on the boat in Frisco on the 27th of Oct. 1943 but didn't sail till next day. Met a few boys on the ship I trained with. I sure hated to see that beautiful Golden Gate Bridge go out of sight. The crew had target practice - purty good shots. I met six boys from Omaha; they were sailors, nice guys. One of them had been on the Enterprise and had been in thirteen major battles. Met a sailor from Salt Lake, I hope to see him again. I also met a corporal I took my training under. We passed some islands. I think they were the Christmas Islands. Hot as hell on the ship. Submarine scares.

Nov 15th 1943: finally spotted an island. It's New Caledonia. It looks like a good place. Stayed on the ship all night.

Nov 16th 1943: We got off the ship early this morning and got on trucks. They took us eighteen miles on the other side of town or the island ... and talk about dirty, wow! Arrived at the 6th replacement camp. We lived in tents, five men in a tent. They had a big PX. You could buy almost anything, even fountain cokes, of course they aren't ice cold but they serve the purpose. This camp also has a purty good swimming hole with two diving boards. Big deal, huh.

We made that ride on the other side of the island to be shipped out. By the way, the people or natives are Javanese, Chinese, Tokenese, Cannibals and the French. The island belongs to the French; they hire these



PFC Bill J. Henningsen

other people to work for them for about five bucks a week.

We boarded the Dutch ship, Nordam. It looks pretty good. We arrived in the Fiji on Nov. 28; it's a lot better than New Caledonia, not near as good as the USA. It's not as hilly as mountains as Cal (Caledonia). I went to my company, the 30th. I sleep in the same tent as my platoon sergeant. He's a swell guy. This outfit used to be a National Guard (unit). They've been over here two years Jan 23. They went through Guadalcanal Campaign, tough outfit. It's known as the Americal Division. Our regiment is the oldest in the Army. I've been made first scout, looks like I'm going to have a short, rough life and I have a feeling it's going to be short. We've had a rough life in those hills in Fiji. What hikes! We're moving off this island in a few weeks but we don't know where.

Nov 19th 1943: We moved about three miles from Suva. It's the largest city in the Fiji and not bad for a place like this island. Some of the boys went to Suva tonight and came back drunk as heck. One of them had about a case of gin and a sailor cap on. They gave me a few drinks.

Nov 20th 1943: I had about eight dishes of ice cream in the town today. I haven't received any mail from home or from Connie. One of the boys came back from town drunk and with a sailor uniform on. Now I've seen everything. He also had a case of gin.

Dec 21st 1943: I heard we were pulling out tomorrow but we still don't know where to.

Went to Suva again with James Edgar. We call him "Sgt. York". He's really a swell guy. I run around with him almost all the time or Steve Frazer. Steve is about 6 ft. and weighs about 210 lbs. He's really built good.

Dec 22nd 1943: We're leaving today. The name of the boat is President Hayes. Really nice tug. It has seven zeros to its credit. They have a nice PX. We think we're going to Bougainville, hope not! Spent Christmas Day on the boat. Had a nice meal. Passed the New Hebrides. Pulled in the Canal. Had a damn submarine scare. We stayed overnight here from Dec 26th to the 27th. We know we're going to Bougainville now. Passed the Russell Islands, several islands there. Arrived in Bougainville on Dec 28th. We were expecting trouble but we didn't. Had about twenty planes for protection. Not many planes up here. The volcano looks mighty beautiful from here but they say it's almost ready to reup but I hope not until we get off. We unloaded the boat. I guess we're going to bivwac up road.

December 29, 1943: We had an air raid last night. Several Jap planes were over. I guess the AA got one. I also slept in the water and the mosquitos are thick here. We cleaned up the area today we might be here for awhile. Nothing happened so will close till tomorrow.

Dec 30, 1943: We had another air raid last night and I also slept in the water again last night. This sure is a muddy place. We cleaned up the area again today. Two of us built a bridge today. I called it Blair Bridge.

Dec 31st, 1943: Another air raid last night and I also slept in water again. I'm used to it by now and the Marines say the Jap Kites (Japanese carrier based bomber, allied code named "Kate") come over every night. We had off today.

Jan 1st, 1944: I started the New Year with K.P. and almost got in a fight with a guy. I forgot to say I had a comfortable night in the water again and we had another air raid. I guess we're going to the front lines tomorrow.

Jan 2nd, 1944: Another air raid and I slept in the water last night. We marched about nine miles today up toward the lines and bivwaced. This jungle is thicker than hell and really muddy.

Jan 3, 1944: We came up to the lines yesterday. It's not bad up here. We're on a high hill, its called "Hellsapoppin Hill". The Marines had a hard time getting it. We have a river in front of our lines; it's called the Eagle. Went on the first patrol. The jungle is really thick. We didn't hit any nips but there are plenty out there. PS. Another air raid.

Note: Hellsapoppin Hill was also known as Hill 260 or South Knob. It was a piece of strategically located high ground near the Torokina River that dad refers to as the "Eagle". The Torokina River empties into the Augusta bay on the southwest coast of Bougainville.

Jan 4th 1944: Just laid around today. Air raid tonight.

Jan 5th, 1944: Volunteered for patrol but didn't hit anything. This job as first scout is nerve racking. Air raid again.

Jan 6th 1944: Got a lot of letters today. I've still been sleeping in the water but we fixed our hole so I don't think it will leak.

Jan 7th 1944: It didn't leak but we had another raid. Big item ... I made Pfc. today. It hasn't come through for sure but I'm getting Pfc. pay.

Jan 8th 1944: Nothing happened except another air raid last night.

Jan 9th 1944: Artillery was practicing this afternoon. A shell fell short and almost got a Cpl. And myself. Surprise! No air raid last night.

Jan 10th 1944: Air raid last night. I guess we're moving off lines tomorrow. Went on patrol today, just missed the nips.

Jan 11th 1944: No air raid last night. We have a nice clean area but it's going to take a lot of work to clean it up. And we're starting this afternoon.

Jan 12th 1944: Edgar and I slipped off and went down to the CBs (Seabees). He says there's a guy from Omaha down here and sure enough, his name is Oliver Damon. He used to go to school at Benson. We ate dinner with them. I guess they're coming up tomorrow. Air raid.

Jan 13th 1944: We've been on a work detail today. The CBs had a heck of a time finding us. Air raid.

Jan 14th 1944: We had another raid. We went on patrol today, hit them but didn't kill any, couldn't see them. There (they're) good fighters but can't shoot so good.

Jan 15th 1944: CBs came up today but we have to go on the outpost for two days. It's in front of the lines on Hill 260. Had another air raid last (night).

Note: The Japanese counterattack called for two simultaneous preliminary attacks followed three days later by a major thrust. The attacks along a horseshoe perimeter would be aimed at the middle (Hill 700) and at both points where the horseshoe's legs began to curve (low-lying creeks in the west and Hill 260 on the East Side). Hill 260 was a geographically isolated outpost, garrisoned with eighty men and located 800 yards beyond the American defensive perimeter.

Jan 16th 1944: Edgar and I went on a two-man patrol. I'm glad we didn't hit anything. Had another air raid last night. I thought he was going to strafe us but he didn't.



The **Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR)** (note the diary entry for January 19th) was a popular weapon in WWII because it was very reliable and offered excellent rapid fire and penetrating power. The BAR's drawbacks were its lack of a quick-change barrel (to reduce the chance of overheating) and its weight (BAR, with tripod and a loaded bandoleer, weighed about 40 pounds).

Jan 17 1944: we came off the hill this afternoon. We didn't have an air raid last night.

Jan 18 1944: We get to lay around today but I guess we have a long patrol tomorrow. The Lt. (Lieutenant) is planning it and also told what's up. I guess a squad ran into a reinforced Jap battalion and we're going out to see if their moving in and see if we can find some wounded. I hope lady luck is with me. We also had an air raid, about twelve nips came over (and) threw everything but the kitchen zinc (sink) at us.

Jan 19 1944: We started on patrol about five this morning and didn't get in til about five this morning (evening?). We ran right into the nips front lines. We were lost but we surprised them. They didn't (know) we were there. One came walking right at me and then another joined them. They didn't see us. Finally, they got about fifteen feet from me. The one spotted me and hit the deck. The other one didn't have a chance to. I shot one, the BAR man put nine slugs into him. Lt. Shot once and the sergeant shot him with the shotgun and knocked his head clear off. The other one started to crawl away (and) like a damn fool, I stood up and run about ten steps and shot him twice in the head and killed him. Then I stood there firing at more across the creek. I hit five more and I think I killed three of them. I turned and the squad had run off and left me so I took off and caught them about a mile away. I almost run all the way. The first one I got was about 6 Ft. 4 in. He was really a big bruiser. The rest were all six ft. or more. The BAR man got credit for one, Bells got credit for one. I killing four and wounding two. Not bad but I hope we never see anymore.

Jan 20 1944: The Lt. Col. Talked to my squad and really thought we had done a swell job until the BAR man spoke up accidentally and said they had run off and left me. Boy, he really ate the Lt.'s ear and said the only thing that was good about the patrol was us killing the Japs and me standing and fighting. We were the first squad to draw blood in our company ("G") and the first one in the

regiment (182nd) to kill that many without getting one wounded. We had another air raid last night.

Jan 21 1944: Had all today off so went down to see the CBs, Edgar and I. Air raid last night.

Jan 22nd 1944: Steve and I went down to see the CBs again. Air raid last night.

Jan 23rd 1944: Hell, today is my birthday and I had to go on a patrol. We hit them but no one got hurt. I came close to getting it. Air raid.

Jan 24th 1944: I wonder how much longer my luck will hold out. I guess I'm getting a commendation for the patrol on Jan 19th.

Jan 25th 1944: I guess the whole company is going to be sent on a patrol tomorrow. Air raid.

Jan 26th 1944: Well, old lady luck finally ran out. I got (it) today just above the kneecap. Steve (Frazer) was about ten feet from me, it lit almost on top of him. It blew both his legs off. And Duffy, his second scout was killed. The kid behind him got his eye put out. What a horrible sight! My God! Steve didn't live long and it killed poor Duffy outright. I was very lucky it just missed the bone or rather scraped it. Six wounded two killed by the shell and five wounded from the .25 calibers and one killed. Two sergeants carried me out or I would have never made it. My Lt. was shell-shocked very bad.

Jan 27th 1944: I guess my fighting days are over. The doc said it got the leg muscles and nerves but I won't be crippled.

Jan 30th 1944: we have a hell of a time during an air raid 'cause the hospital is close to the airport and they try (to take) it out so we have some close ones. They were six over last night.

Jan 31st 1944: He took the bandage off today and did it hurt! Wow! The ward boy is swell. He's short. His name is Solly. Air raid last (night).

Note: As January gave way to February, patrols from all three of the Americal's infantry regiments probed ever deeper into enemy held territory outside the perimeter, aggressively engaging large and small

groups of enemy in firefights. Reconnaissance units, similar to dad's, ranged to the east of the Torokina River, scouting enemy positions, gathering vitally needed bits of information concerning strength and disposition. On January 29th plans were made for an all-out attack eastward across the Torokina's mouth.

Feb 1st 1944: Air raid last night. The Capt. (Captain) and two Lt. And the company clerk came down to pay me and brought me a pie.

Feb 2nd 1944: Air raid last night. One of them was close but it was a dud.

Feb 3rd-7th 1944: Air raids each night, from one to twelve Jap planes.

Feb 10th 1944: Grafted skin today. Met a swell guy. He works in the O.R. He's tech 3rd.

Feb 15th 1944: No more air raids.

Mar 1st 1944: The boys captured a Jap. He said they were going to attack soon.

Mar 2nd 1944: The boys spotted some Jap artillery.

Mar 3rd 1944: The Japs are moving toward the lines.

Mar 4th 1944: Nothing happened today.

Mar 5th 1944: Nothing happened today.

Mar 6th 1944: Still nothing happened but our artillery is throwing a lot of lead.

Mar 7th 1944: The Japs are moving in. We expect trouble soon.

Note: This begins the big battle of Bougainville. It was an attempt by the Japanese 17th Area Army, to drive the Americans from their beachhead at Empress Augusta bay. The Sixth Division was, by all odds, the finest fighting unit encountered by the 3rd and Americal Divisions. Here the strength of the enemy was hurled against the American front. The Japanese massed about 20,000 troops along a seven-mile long perimeter, manned by both the 27th and the Americal Divisions. Never before had more frightful or bloody fighting taken place in the Pacific. Time after time, for more than a month the Japanese smashed themselves against the front, ultimately losing more than 10,000 killed and countless wounded. They ran up against two veteran American divisions (the 3rd and the Americal) that proved as aggressive and powerful in defense as they had in the New Georgia offensive campaign. The Americans were beginning to feel the weight of more and better equipment by now. They had more air support, more and better tank support, more artillery and, above all, men that had learned the business of jungle fighting. They had refined the policy of letting machines fight for them to the maximum. American artillery fired more than 450,000 rounds of artillery on Bougainville. In the end, the Japanese suffered a kill ratio of 33 to every one American soldier lost.



Americal Machine Gun Position on Bougainville

Mar 8 1944: They attacked this morning at 6:15. My company had suffered a lot but I don't know how much, my platoon and weapons were on Hill 260. That's where they hit.

Note: In the early morning of March 8th, the enemy began shelling the Americal defensive perimeter with artillery fire. The heaviest fighting centered around the small observation outpost on Hill 260. After a heavy siege, the small American force was unable to stand fast and a grim battle was underway to regain the high ground.

Mar 9th 1944: Wounded are coming in fast. We lost a lot of men.

Mar 10th 1944: I finally got out of the hospital. I'm going back up.

Note: The intensity of the fighting was shown on March 10, when Company F beat off the advancing enemy in a close-in-bayonet attack. After about two hours of hand-to-hand combat, the enemy withdrew and Company F's perimeter was still intact. While the fury of the battle for Hill 260 continued in the jungle, the enemy artillery continued to pound at targets within the main division perimeter. Wave upon wave of Japanese soldiers advanced only to be driven back. The intense fighting lasted for several days.

Mar 11th 1944: I was amo (ammo carrier?) but I'm on (Hill) 260 today.

Mar 12th 1944: We lost the hill (260) Friday but we have it back now but not all of it. We've suffered a lot. I got two more nips. One guy is doing good.

Mar 13 1944: My sergeant made it down yesterday. He's been trapped up on (Hill) 260 for three days.

Note: During the night of march 9-10 small numbers of enemy infiltrated between Hill 260 and the main line, while a larger force massed nearby. Shortly after 0600 a Japanese battalion stormed South Knob (Hill 260) capturing most positions and driving all but six of the garrison to North Knob. Those six, mortar and artillery observers, fortified themselves within two pillboxes and battled so fiercely that they held their position. Sergeant James Edgar, mentioned above in Dad's notes, appears to be one of those six men.

Mar 14 1944: They made me go back to the hospital this afternoon but I got the pleasure of getting another nip. Edgar was killed today. He got it in the head (by a) sniper. First Steve and then him (James Edgar).

Note: Repeated American attacks over these four days could not retake Hill 260 (South Knob). Preceded by lavish artillery fire and using flame-throwers, each attempt achieved some measure of success (one attack liberated the besieged artillery observers) but casualties from concealed Japanese machine guns, supply shortages and the lack of additional troops all prevented the troops from consolidating a strong position. One company in the 182nd (Dad's regiment) was reduced from 150 to 25 men in a single day. After another attempt failed on March 14th, the Americans changed tactics. Casualties already

numbered 98 killed, 24 missing and 581 wounded. Patrols had not detected any other Japanese troops in the area and those on South Knob were too few to attack elsewhere, so recapturing Hill 260 did not merit additional casualties. For the next several days, therefore, raids and artillery fire – including 10,000 rounds of 105mm howitzer fire – harassed the hill. The Japanese survivors left behind 560 dead and retreated into the jungle.

Note: A quote from Wm. Manchester's book, *Goodbye Darkness*, "Soldiers coming off the line had a different look; dull, sightless eyes showing the strain, misery, shock, sleeplessness and, in veteran fighters, the supreme indifference of young men who have lost their youth and will never recover it and more."

Mar 15 1944: They put me in the 21st Evacuation (Hospital).

Mar 16th 1944: They got eight Japs that got through the lines.

Mar 17th 1944: The Fijians got another Jap last night. Right near the ward I'm in. We had the air raid for (a) long time. He dropped his eggs near the lines. The nips are still attacking a little. When I was there on (Hill) 260, they were attacking us so fast they were sling arm, not all of them, just some of them. They're still shelling us and I really mean they're throwing it. The doc said he was going to evacuate me tomorrow.

Note: hill 260 was recaptured on March 28th after a long period of bitter fighting. All three regiments participated in the battle. Intense shelling and close in fighting left the hill almost barren, with the few remaining trees bullet-ridden and charred.

Mar 20th 1944: I came out by plane. It was (a) rough ride. We stopped in Munda. What a swell place and nice airstrip. I'm now in Guadalcanal at the 9th Station Hospital.

Mar 30th 1944: The doc said I'll never see combat again. And then he asked me what I wanted to do, so I said drive. He says OK. The ward boy on nights sure is swell. He sure likes Betty's looks.

Mar 31st 1944: the ward boy, his name is Blodgeot, brought me four bottles of beer tonight. It's the first I've had for an awful long time.

Apr 1st 1944: Don bought me one more bottle of beer tonight. He's a swell guy.

Apr 2nd 1944: I went over to the barracks with Don and Moody tonight and had four more bottles of beer. They want me to try to get in their outfit.

Apr 3rd 1944: They sent me to another outfit, rather hospital and I don't like it here and told the Captain I wanted out. He said after I rest a little. That's all I've been doing.

Apr 4th 1944: He gave me some stuff to take so that means I'll be here quite a while. They get beer here so it won't be so bad.

Apr 5th 1944: I went up to the 9th Hospital to see Don B. today. I had dinner there. I had

Standard Weapons used by Americal Division soldiers in the Pacific Theatre



The M-1 Garand was the standard weapon of the US infantry soldier in World War II, including the Americal in the Pacific. It was semi-automatic, fed by a clip that held eight caliber .30 cartridges. It was gas operated, self-loading, and a shoulder weapon. The Gun weighed 8.94 pounds, was 43 inches long, with the barrel itself being 22.30 inches. The Garand had a muzzle velocity of 2,760 feet per second and a maximum range of 5,500 yards. A bayonet could be attached to the M-1, giving it a reach of about 5 feet.



The M-1 Carbine was a .30 caliber semi-automatic shoulder weapon, gas operated with an effective range up to 200 yards. The length was 36 inches, barrel 18 inches, and weight 5 pounds including magazine and sling.

a heck of a time getting back. I went about seven miles out of my way.

Apr 6th 1944: I finally got a few letters today. I got a ration of beer, six bottles and five bottles of Cleo Cola.

Apr 7th -24th 1944: (Diary entries tell of recuperation on Guadalcanal and going to various shows (USO) and movies; occasional K.P. Duty. PFC Henningsen finally received mail on April 12th when he "hit the jackpot" with 10 letters from home. Among the shows he saw – both new and old- while in recuperation were, "Edge of Darkness", "Phantom of the Opera", and "Dr. Barry Was A Lady").

Apr 25th 1944: Got a ration of beer, nine bottles. Finally got two letters today.

Apr 26th 1944: Had an operation today. Removed a siss (cyst). It kind of hurts now. Went to show, had six shorts. The show was "Crime Doctor." Not bad but old.

Apr 27th 1944: We had ice cream last night and chicken for dinner. We've had fresh eggs twice. I saw two white women; one a nurse and the other one from the Red Cross.

Apr 28th 1944: An orchestra played (probably a USO tour) here this afternoon. Pretty good too. Went to show again.

Apr 29th 1944: Went to show again. Another flag waving picture.

Apr 30th 1944: Went to show. It rained. Had a operation.

May 1st 1944: went to show. It rained again.

Note: reconnaissance patrols continued their intensive scouring of the jungles around the Torokina River. By May, control was extended as far inland as Mount Bagana, the islands active volcano. A strong outpost line of resistance was formed in the hills near Mount Bagana.

May 2nd 1944: had another operation.

Hell, I feel like a piece (unfinished sentence).

May 3rd 1944: Got a beer ration. I got eight bottles and four Pepsi Colas. It rained again.

May 10th 1944: Went to show.

May 11th 1944: Left hospital and went to casual camp.

July 20th 1944: Going to Bougainville again. Boarded ship.

July 23rd 1944: Got here and what a hell of a trip. In a new outfit. It's an AAA (Anti-Aircraft Artillery). Have good chow here. This island has sure changed. The boat was the Anntalal (USS Anne Arundel?).

Oct 11th 1944: we flew down from Bougainville to the New Guinea. We left at 11:15 and arrived at 2:30.

Diary ends with Oct 11th Entry

Editors Note: Grateful appreciation is acknowledged to Steven Henningsen for his extraordinary effort at transcribing his fathers World War II diary. The ADVA thanks him for this personal look at his Dad's experience with the Americal Division.

Americal veterans still serving in the U. S. Army

Dear editor,

I was reading the recent edition of my *Americal Newsletter* and noted an article that mentioned the dwindling number of Americal vets still on active duty. I am still active. I served in the 523d Signal Battalion at LZ Hawk Hill and then Chu Lai from July 1970 to August 1971.

According to the Army I am now the senior serving 23d Infantry Division (Americal) vet on active duty. Another piece of history until I retire on 1 Sep 2003.

Peter M. Cuvillo
LTG USA; US Army CIO/G6

[LTG Cuvillo assumed the position of the Department of the Army's Chief Information Officer/G6 on August 1, 2000. His previous assignment was the Commanding General, U.S. Army Signal Center and Chief of Signal from May 1998 through July 2000. He resides in the Washington, DC area. -Editor]

Dear editor,

Father (Chaplain) James Sheil was with the 11th Brigade in 1970. He is still on active duty at Ft. Lewis, WA and is scheduled for retirement in 2004. He is one of the Chaplains I interviewed for my article on chaplains.

Dave Taylor
Contributing Editor

Dear editor,

We have another active officer in the 63d Regional Support Command. He is MG Robert Ostberg, Commanding General.

Chaplain Gerry Fox
63d Regional Support Command

[The 63d RSC provides combat ready units and soldiers from California, Arizona, and Nevada. MG Ostberg became the CG of the 63rd RSC on October 21, 2001. He served as a Platoon Leader in Vietnam with the 196th LIB and the 198th LIB. The 63d RSC is based in Los Alamitos, CA. -Editor]

Dear editor,

I retired from the USAR in January 1997 after have been activated for Operation Desert Storm. I am on a list for possible mobilization from the retired reserve. I do not know if that will happen, but I am ready.

Additionally, I am now serving as the Director of Logistics for the California State Military Reserve, a federally authorized augmentation and back fill for the California National Guard. I am subject to

activation by the Governor for Homeland Security and State Disaster service.

E. Robert Clifton; LTC, TC, USAR(Ret)
Antelope, CA

[Clifton served with the Americal Division Band and played at the division deactivation in November 1971. He then went to the 196th LIB Band until March 1972. -Editor]

Dear readers,

Colonel David Gillingham is serving as Commander of the U.S. Army Aeromedical Center and Lyster Army Hospital at Ft. Rucker, AL. In 1971-72 he served as an enlisted man with the 4/3rd Inf. and the Medical Company, Support Battalion (Provisional), 196th Light Infantry Brigade.

Gillingham was DIVARTY Surgeon, 101st Airborne Division, in Saudi Arabia and Iraq during Operation Desert Shield/Operation Desert Storm. His awards include the Combat Medic Badge. -Editor

Americal vet named to head Illinois Dept. of Veterans Affairs

Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich announced on March 5, 2003 Vietnam veteran Roy L. Dolgos as his choice as director of the state's Department on Veterans' Affairs. Dolgos, 58, will lead an agency that coordinates with the federal government to provide benefits, education and nursing care to Illinois veterans and their families.

"Mr. Dolgos knows first-hand what our veterans gave up to serve their country. His background as a soldier and his professional experience as a manager put him in a unique position to address the needs and concerns of Illinois' veterans," said the Governor, who served on the U.S. House Armed Services Committee while in Congress.

Dolgos served in the U.S. Army as a military policeman from 1966 to 1968. He earned a Bronze Star for his outstanding service under hostile conditions in Vietnam. He is involved with numerous veterans' groups, including the 196th Light Infantry Brigade Association; the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 242; the 9th Infantry Division Association and the Chicago Commission on Human Relations' Advisory Council on Veterans' Affairs.

In 1972, Dolgos earned his bachelor's degree in business administration from Central Connecticut State University. Dolgos, Chicago, is currently a manager for the Inter Parking Corporation, overseeing facility finances and operations. Previously, he served as general manager, secretary and treasurer for Arrow Illinois Company.

(News release courtesy of Brian Mulcrone)

Reservist readies for Little Rock reunion re-up

PNC John (Dutch) DeGroot has scheduled his USAF Reserve re-enlistment ceremony to take place during the ADVA reunion in Little Rock, AR. DeGroot served with the 23rd M.P. Co., 198th LIB in Vietnam and currently resides in Mt. Prospect, IL.

DeGroot served two years in the active Army before joining the Army Reserve. In 1990 he crossed over from the Army Reserve to the United States Airforce Reserve. He is assigned to the 440th Communications Flight, 440th Airlift Wing, at General Mitchell ARS, Milwaukee, WI.

His current post is the NCOIC of the Visual Information Section. He describes his duties as being "responsible for photography, video, and any graphic needs the wing or numbered AF needs to include bomb damage assessment." DeGroot is up for promotion to the rank of Master Sergeant (E-7). His re-enlistment will be for six years and take him to the age of 59.

Ensign Bryan Gelnett, USN, will give the re-enlistment oath. Bryan is the son of Janice and Larry Gelnett. Larry passed away in 2001 after a courageous battle with cancer. DeGroot and Larry Gelnett were close friends. "I feel almost a part of the wonderful Gelnett family," says DeGroot, "they are one and all a fantastic clan."

DeGroot continues, "Bryan was kind enough to let me stand in for his late father for the incredible honor of pinning his boards on at his graduation from the USNA. I also rendered him his first salute. That was one of the most memorable times in my life, one that I will always treasure."

Ensign Gelnett graduated from the US Naval Academy on May 24, 2002. He majored in Mathematics and selected Submarine Warfare as his service assignment. He is assigned to the Naval Nuclear Power Training Command in Charleston, SC. He plans to qualify as an Engineering Officer on a Naval Nuclear Power Plant and report to his submarine in March 2004.

Gelnett says, "I was honored last May to have Dutch DeGroot at Annapolis for my graduation and to render the first salute. But I am even more honored to be asked to swear him in one last time. Dutch are a great person and a great friend to my family. It really is humbling to be a part of this, and I am also excited to meet many of the veterans."

DeGroot summarizes his plans by saying, "I have the paperwork coming, the oath is on it. We just will need an American flag and be in uniform. All is good to go...as long as I am not called up."



Chu Lai, Vietnam
Tra Bong, 1968, 1:50,000 scale
USGS Stock # L701467394
Locations all years added by Al Simms
(Radar Mech of 1/14th Arty Radar Section - 1968)
Additions/Corrections to asimmsjr@aol.com
Color Version at members.aol.com/asimmsjr/

MAP READING 101 - READ RIGHT, UP
1. Each grid square on this map is 1000 x 1000 meters.
2. Any coord marks the lower left corner of a square.
* 2x2 (xx xx) coords indicate a 1000 x 1000 meter square
* 3x3 (xxx xxx)=100m x 100m; 4x4 (xxxx xxxx)=10m x 10m
* 5x5 (xxxxx xxxxx)=1m x 1m
* Add 02 and 17 (02xxxx 17xxxx) for world coords (GPS)

To determine coordinates:
1. Find the 2 digit number for the vertical grid line.
2. Find the 2 digit number for the horizontal grid line.
3. Divide that square into 10 parts Horizontal and Vertical.
4. Add the H distance as another digit to the V line number.
5. Add the V distance as another digit to the H line number.
6. You now have a 3x3 (xxx xxx) that is the lower left corner of a 100x100 meter square with your object in it.

Sample Coords - Main Gate 1968 (Indian-Thai Datum)
5210 0439 - 10 meter accuracy - best on this map
521 043 - 100 meter accuracy - normal for this map
0252102 1704390 - World - GPS (use indian-thai datum)
This is an ongoing work in progress. Please Email additions or corrections to [redacted] (Grid coords please for your unit or place)

The Quiet Hero: Platoon Sergeant Finnis D. McCleery

Medal of Honor recipient Finnis D. McCleery was a quiet person who shunned all publicity for his bravery in Vietnam. Let us remember him on July 11, 2003 ... the first anniversary of his death.

David W. Taylor

A Life of Service

Finnis D. McCleery was born in Stephenville, Texas on Christmas day, 1927 and died 75 years later in San Angelo, 155 miles away. His life between those years reflected an unassuming devotion to his country and family, marked by his Irish wit and a deep humility about what life represented to him and those he knew.

At the age of 19, in 1946, McCleery joined the fledgling Army Air Corps and served in the post-war occupation of Germany until 1948. He re-enlisted during the Korean Conflict from 1950 to 1953, although he was not sent to the Korean Theatre. Not satisfied with civilian life, he re-enlisted once again in 1958 and served continuously until his retirement in 1973.

A Man's Destiny: Vietnam

McCleery's Army career took him to Vietnam where he was eventually assigned as Platoon Sergeant, 1st platoon, in Company A, 1st/6th Infantry Battalion, 198th Light Infantry Brigade. In short order upon arriving in Vietnam, the 1st/6th became heavily engaged in the search for NVA main force units in its assigned areas of operation.

SFC McCleery led by example, earning the Silver Star on February 8, 1968 when, during the battle of Lo Giang he killed six Viet Cong who charged his position. When his platoon leader assumed command of Company A, McCleery took charge of 1st platoon, which covered the withdrawal of the company while under heavy fire. The company had suffered 19 dead and over 35 wounded. When it came time for the 1st platoon to withdraw, McCleery grabbed an M-60 machinegun to provide covering fire. Seeing wounded in the open, he ran under intense enemy fire to assist in their recovery.

On April 25th he earned the Bronze Star for valor, and a Purple Heart, during operations in the Que Son valley. In the late afternoon company A came under small arms fire. Shortly after the enemy fire began, a booby-trapped mortar round was detonated, severely wounding several men in the 1st platoon, including Platoon Sergeant McCleery. Ignoring his wounds, he exposed himself several times to reach the wounded and provided covering fire, while the wounded were attended to. He was wounded shortly after for his second Purple Heart on May 5th.

Nui Hoac Ridge

On April 22, 1968 Companies A, B and C of the 1st/6th had moved to Area of Operation "Manassas" as part of the Americal's "Wheeler/Wallowa" operation. The battalions

Tactical Operations Center (TOC) was set up on LZ Center. On May 14, the battalions Alpha and Delta Companies along with its recon platoon and companies Alpha and Bravo of the 1st/20th battalion (under operational control of the 1st/6th), were given the mission of attacking an NVA force that was well entrenched on the Nui Hoac ridge, near Hill 352, directly south of LZ Center and 17 miles west of Tam Ky. The day was sunny and exceptionally hot.

The positions on and around Hill 352 had been deemed "impregnable". A company-sized force of NVA regulars was positioned in bunkers over six-feet deep with reinforced covers and excellent fields of fire on any attacking force. The sloping ridges around Hill 352 had few normal terrain features and little foliage to provide cover due to previous air strikes.

The combined forces from the 1st/6th and 1st/20th battalions began their attack by sweeping southward up the ridge. Their positions from left to right (east to west) were A/1-6, D/1-6, A/1-20 and B/1-20. At 1455 hrs Alpha/1-6 on the eastern flank of the assault, received heavy machine-gun fire to their left and M-79 and small arms fire directly from their front up the ridge. By 1500 hrs both Alpha and Delta 1st/6th were receiving automatic weapons fire from the top of the ridge. In 15 minutes each company counted four men wounded. At 1524 hrs Alpha received RPG rounds from their right front up on the ridge. They engaged the enemy position with light anti-tank weapons (LAWs). Only a few minutes later Delta received RPG fire from an NVA position 200 meters to their front. By this time Alpha had captured a 60mm mortar that had fired on them from their left flank. By 1527 hrs the first dust-off had been completed for the seriously wounded of Alpha and Delta and by 1539 hrs another dust-off was accomplished for more wounded.

All along the ridge the enemy fire intensified. Alpha and Bravo companies of the 1st/20th on the west flank of the assault force were also receiving heavy fire that had killed one and wounded twelve. Back on the east flank, McCleery's Alpha Company received recoilless rocket and RPG fire but gunships silenced the NVA position. At 1607 hrs Alpha of the 1st/20th, back on the western flank, received 50-cal. machinegun fire and called for artillery and air strikes.

Above and Beyond

By 1610 hrs McCleery's Alpha Company had begun their assault on the hill itself. The first platoon, led by SFC McCleery, was in

the lead. He was serving at the time as both the platoon sergeant and platoon leader. As they approached the first rim, where the terrain broke over to the flatter top of the ridge, his platoon came under heavy fire and was forced to take cover. The NVA was bombarding them with mortars, rockets, machine-guns and automatic weapons fire. Realizing the gravity of the situation, with the momentum slowed and fearing his men would take heavy casualties if they paused, McCleery rose from his sheltered position to begin a one-man assault on the bunker line.

SFC Finnis D. McCleery at the age of 41, charged across 60 meters of open ground to the key enemy bunker. As he closed to 30 meters he began firing furiously from the hip. As he charged, grenades exploded close by and bullets were impacting all around him. He continued to the bunker and destroyed it with grenades. During this final push an exploding RPG round wounded him but, as one witness noted, "this failed to slow him down". After destroying the NVA bunker, McCleery climbed on top of it and, in full view of the enemy shouted to his men, "come on boys" and motioned for them to follow him in the assault.

McCleery then continued the attack, flanking the bunkers that were on the right side of the NVA bunker complex along the ridge. Approaching his second target, he was again painfully wounded by shrapnel but he silenced the position from which two NVA soldiers had been firing rockets and hurling grenades. Still disregarding his multiple wounds, he ran 50 meters to a third bunker and killed its defenders with a burst of fire. He repeatedly exposed himself to intense fire as he moved from bunker to bunker. According to one of his men, "he moved through the area even though as he was under fire from several directions but did not slow down". He then advanced to a fourth emplacement, destroying a NVA machine-gun crew just as his platoon began to penetrate the enemy perimeter. SFC Finnis McCleery had killed eleven NVA soldiers in the four bunkers.

Sergeant Alan Allen, a 1st platoon squad leader, had moved forward just in time to witness McCleery's stand on top of the first NVA bunker. Allen penetrated the bunker perimeter behind McCleery and, while McCleery wheeled to the right, Allen began an attack on the left side of the NVA bunker complex. Allen knocked out bunkers with his shotgun and hand grenades. As one NVA soldier attempted to fire an RPG rocket, Sgt. Allen pushed the launcher back into the

bunker with his foot and then fired his shotgun at point blank range into the enemy position. He earned his second Purple Heart from fragments of several grenades that exploded a few feet away.

After the battle the 198th Brigade Commander recognized that SFC McCleery's "... actions turned what could have been a disastrous defeat for his unit into a complete rout of the enemy." President Nixon presented SFC McCleery the Medal of Honor on March 2, 1971, with his full family in attendance. His oldest son Jack, who was serving in the Air Force in Viet Nam, was flown back for the ceremony.



SFC Finnis D. McCleery
(U.S. Army Photo)

The Quiet Warrior

Sgt. Alan Allen remembers McCleery as a warrior cut from a different cloth. "I always thought 'Sgt. Mac' cared deeply for his men, as much for their lives as his own; but I used to call him 'Friar Tuck' because he was short and rotund. He had a little hair around the side of his head and nothing on the top". He recalls, "Platoon Sergeant McCleery had that Irish look ...rosy cheeks, wire rim glasses and a mischievous twinkle in his eye". Allen also remembers him as a man of competence: "He was easy-going but when he told you to do something, you did it. You knew that he knew what he was talking about --- he always made sense. Because he was so much older he was sort of a father figure, and to me almost a grandfather figure".

SFC McCleery was awarded the Medal of Honor while stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia in 1971. His son Jack recalls, "Dad was very agitated. The folks at Ft. Benning made him sit and sit while they took pictures of him with his medal" (the picture which

appears in this article). "He didn't like it one bit. He just wanted to be left alone".

Although he was a quiet man, those who knew him, his family, sensed the weight of his combat experience he carried with him. His son Roger reflects, "he rarely talked about Nam but we knew it was always within him. When I was 4 or 5 I remember him coming home in his uniform and laying on the couch for a nap. Mom told my brother Curt and I to wake him for supper. We shook him to wake up and all of a sudden we were flying 12-15 feet into the kitchen. It was an automatic response on his part. He didn't know he had done it. As soon as he realized what he had done he was on his feet checking that we were OK. From that point on, we just called him to wake him up. But he was a kind man. His way to discipline us was to quietly talk to us for a half an hour. We got so that we would rather get spanked and be done with it than be lectured. But it was his way."

His daughter Dee remembered those early years growing up: "My Dad couldn't stand for us kids to fight, as kids normally did with sibling rivalry. He would always say, 'there's too much fighting in the world'. Mom was the disciplinarian; she had to be, with him gone so much. But all he had to do is say something, and you listened".

After his retirement in 1973 Finnis McCleery moved back to his beloved Texas and opened a refrigeration/air conditioning repair shop, content to be a quiet family man. He was cordial and tried to fulfill whatever local requests he could when asked for appearances, but avoided going far from home. This included the traditional Medal of Honor Balls at the Presidential Inaugurations in Washington D.C. His children remember their father's consistent response to requests for appearances: "I don't feel like I'm owed anything. I was just doing my job".

McCleery retired from his repair business in the early 90's due to his advancing age and declining health as a result of his injuries in Vietnam, which dogged him even while he was still on active duty. Shortly after retirement he suffered a heart attack which required by-pass surgery. In 1998 his wife of 45 years, Lena, passed away.

Lisa Moore, the McCleery's 2nd oldest of seven children reflects on the incongruity of her dad's fame, and the man she knew: "My dad was a very humble man who was embarrassed by all the attention he received. He felt he did not deserve the Medal of Honor, that he should not have been singled out for his actions when there were so many other men who fought day after day, and whose actions were heroic. He always said that he was 'just doing his job'.

"I have always considered him to be the most unlikely hero. He morally opposed taking human life, but knew that his country required him to do so. Dad was a jolly man,

short (5'5"), round and bald. He had a joke and a smile for everyone, always remembered to ask about your family. He always remembered birthdays and anniversaries, and made up errands for his grandchildren to do so that he could give them money.

"Dad wrote love letters to my mom when they were apart, and always gave beautiful cards to her for Valentines Day, her birthday and their anniversary. He followed politics and current events and liked to hear other people's opinions. He had a great sense of humor (once he painted the doorframe, going into the kitchen pink as a joke. My mom made him repaint it before he went to bed that night). Another time, he came home and told my mom he had bought her a car. She went outside and found an old Chevy with no motor in the back yard"

His son Curt, remembers, "Dad was always kind and thoughtful about other people. He didn't think about himself much ... he always put himself last".

McCleery's son Jack recalls his Dad had trouble sleeping in his last few years. "Sometimes it took a few beers for him to open up, but he would share with me the fact he had trouble sleeping and remembering the faces of the enemy he took on in close combat. He would share with me; 'I can still see their eyes'. It bothered him at the loss of life which took place but I tried to assure him God would understand". Finnis D. McCleery died July 11, 2002.

Let We Forget

July 11, 2003 will bring the usual summer heat and bright sun to the Texas town of San Angelo. It will be much like that day on Nui Hoac Ridge. It will be one week after the July 4th weekend, and its citizens will be busy working and living their lives, few of them thinking about a hero buried in Belvedere Cemetery off Arden Road. But on this day this hero's family will remember the father and grandfather they lost one year ago, his grave appropriately facing the flagpole, and his wife, their devoted mother and grandmother lying in rest with him.

And although they won't be physically present on this day, thousands of Americal Army Division veterans will also remember this man, a fellow soldier, a leader, a brother in arms, a soldier who gave of himself. And they will salute him ... the quiet hero with an Irish grin and a mischievous twinkle in his eye.

Appreciation is given for the interviews with the McCleery family, Alan Allen and Wayne Johnston, who is webmaster of the web site for the 1st/6th Battalion and from which much of the description of the battle was obtained. Readers can learn more by accessing:

<http://hometown.aol.com/old16inf>

Canadian Vietnam Veterans Memorial

The eighth annual memorial ceremony at the Canadian Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The North Wall) will take place on July 5, 2003. The memorial is located in Assumption Park in Windsor, Ontario, just across the water from Detroit, MI.

The North Wall honors the memory of the more than 100 Canadians that lost their lives in the Vietnam War. It is estimated that 40,000 Canadians joined the U.S. military to fight in Vietnam.

This year the name of Ralph William Bigelow will be added to the memorial. WO1 Bigelow, a helicopter pilot with the 198th LIB, was killed on May 22, 1970.

The memorial ceremony will take place at noon on July 5, 2003. Several Americal Division veterans are expected to attend the memorial service. Members of Bigelow's family will also attend.

2004 Reno reunion

Dear editor,

The ADVA 2004 reunion will take place from Thursday, June 24, through Sunday, June 27, 2004. The reunion will be held in the Reno-Tahoe area in Nevada.

Operation LZ RENO will be headquartered at John Ascuaga's Nugget Resort Hotel Casino (www.janugget.com). Room rates will be \$85.00 per night. Reservations can be made starting July 1, 2003, by calling 1-800-648-1177 and identifying yourselves as being with the Americal Division Veterans Association.

The Nugget is located on Interstate 80 just 10 minutes from the Reno-Tahoe International Airport. The Nugget offers free shuttle service to and from the hotel every 30 minutes. Information on Airline discounts will be released later.

Friday night the Americal goes to the Rodeo. It will be a night to remember as hundreds of Americal vets, family, and friends watch a live rodeo. The rodeo is billed as the richest and wildest in the West. We are working on having one of our own vets sing the National Anthem.

Saturday night features a full blown award winning buffet dinner, maybe the best that you have ever had. Also included is a live band, dancing, and entertainment. This will be a night of relaxation and enjoyment.

We are working on bus trips to Virginia City, Lake Tahoe and a special trip for the ladies on Saturday. We will have guest speakers and other programs. We are trying to bring in Adrian Cronauer ("Good Morning Vietnam"), and a program called "Sniper Talk" ("The Long-shot Warriors").

"Hospitality Road" is a legend in the making. Besides the normal hospitality

room hosted by "Operation LZ Reno", several larger units have been invited to join us and will be operating their own rooms. All of these rooms will be in the same area right next to each other. This will make it very easy to mingle and have some good natured fun. Vendor tables will be located right outside the hospitality rooms.

There is much more to come as we have only begun our plans. Mark your calendars as this will be one of the best reunions ever. The Reno-Tahoe area is a great vacation designation for the whole family.

On To Reno

Rich Merlin; 23rd MP Co.
2004 Reunion Chairman

Supporting soldiers

Dear editor,

As you know I have been working on sending sundry items to the 10th Mountain Division and will continue to do so. The Michigan state VFW office is sending phone cards and other items overseas. Why can't the ADVA regions each adopt a unit (Infantry, Artillery, Engineers, etc.)? They can send books, phone cards, playing cards, etc. to a deployed unit.

If and when this is done they should send a press release to the local papers in each region. This will inform people that there is an ADVA and we are doing good things. We may find a few members that way also.

There are plenty of units to go around. I chose the 10th Mountain Division because our webmaster Tony Greene served with the 10th. After researching the unit a bit I discovered the 11th LIB is now 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain. The 11th LIB is my alma mater. It was a coincidence but cool none the less. Contact me at [redacted]

Bill Allen; Jr. Vice Commander
Great Lakes Region ADVA

P.S. The 4/31st Infantry is now in 10th Mountain Division and heading to Iraq.

Where We Were

Dear editor,

I have great news. The Military Book Club has just picked up an initial order of 1,500 copies of my book Where We Were In Vietnam. They will be featuring it in the upcoming Memorial Day advertising brochure. Their brochures are very large, full color, high quality publications that are mailed world wide. Where We Were In Vietnam will be featured front and center on the cover. I am told that the advertisement will fill most of the front page.

Mike Kelley; 101st Airborne Div.

How to get unit rosters

A great resource to help find the names of those you served with is your unit rosters. Although you may not always be successful it is at least worth a try. You might want to just request a couple of months rather than an entire year. Alternately, you may want to request a couple of different time frames to see what is available.

If you need rosters for a VA claim then you should state such as it may result in better service. Be sure to include your complete unit designation: company, battalion, regiment/brigade, division, and the specific dates requested.

Send your request to:
National Personnel Records Center
Military Personnel Records
[redacted]

St. Louis, MO 63132

Be sure to include your return address and your service number.

John Anderson; F Troop, 8th Cavalry
Paso Robles, CA

Vietnam history

Les Hines, ADVA Vietnam Historian, reports that he now has a complete set of 1/52nd Infantry Daily Staff Journals for the Vietnam era. These records were obtained by veterans of the 1/52nd Inf. and forwarded to Les for transcription and preservation. The journals cover the period from Oct. 26, 1967 to Oct. 30, 1971

Appreciation is given to Barry Luther, William Cox, Buddy Sadler, Tom Twork, Conrad Geibel, and Dan Young for providing many records. Jimmie and Teresa Simmons and John Boyer helped transcribe the printed records to electronic media.

Daily Staff Journals were usually kept in the battalion Tactical Operations Center (TOC) and recorded the combat activity of the unit. They are sometimes referred to as S2/S3 journals or Duty Officer's Log.

Hines has also acquired the last known missing issue of Americal Magazine. Judge Joe Walker, former editor of the magazine, provided a mint condition April 1970 issue. Walker was assigned to the Americal Division Information Office in 1969-1970. Hines said the magazine "is an exciting contribution for the history collection." Walker also included a copy of "Uptight" magazine that honored the Americal Division. The issues are being sent to Dutch DeGroot for a reproduction project.

These items are just a few of the Americal Division records transcribed to compact disc by Les Hines. You can obtain a CD by sending \$15 made payable to the ADVA to Hines. Please indicate the word processor software that you use and your unit and times of service. Hines' address is in the Americal Newsletter directory.

Dear editor,

I was on LZ Thunder after arriving in-country in March 1968. I'm trying to find anyone who was on Thunder with the 4.2 mortar platoon. I was one of two company drivers. Sometime in late May I was hurt while driving a Jeep taking another GI to LZ Bronco. I am not sure what happened but when I woke up it was dark. A recon team found me and called a Dust Off. When I got to the hospital the next day I tried to find out what had happen to the other GI but no one would tell me anything.

William Waymire;
[redacted]

Dear editor,

I am trying to get information on a soldier who was killed on Dec. 29, 1969 at Phu Long. His name is Michael Dinda and he was with Co. C or D, 5/46th Inf.

Michael and I were next door neighbors as kids. His mother has shown me his medals. I would like to know about the action in the area when he was killed.

Dan Rich; [redacted]

Dear editor,

I found your website and read it with a great interest. I'm 34 years old and a SFC in the French Army. One of my favourite hobbies is to study the Indochina and Vietnam wars. I've been five times to the former Indochina with my rucksack and visited the former battlefields. I even visited near the Chinese border in the former French commandos AOR.

I also collect uniforms, papers, gear, and insignias of this period. As a soldier myself I never forget that behind a jacket was a soldier and I always want to know more about the former owner. I found a jungle jacket and OD shirt of a member of the 198th LIB. He is Major Wagner, Infantry, awarded of the CIB and basic parachutist course. He did a previous tour with the MACV. Both uniforms have the MACV patch sewn on the right shoulder.

I would like to know if you have in your files a trace of him. Was he with one of the infantry battalions or at the brigade HQ?

SFC ValeryTarrus;
[redacted]

Dear editor,

I am looking for anyone who served with Garland Dave Benoit from Lake Arthur, Louisiana. He served in U.S. Army from November 1969 until his death on March 18, 1970, in Quang Ngai. He was assigned to Co. D, 3/1st Inf., 11th LIB as an infantryman.

Pat Jochum; patnal10@bellsouth.net

Dear editor,

I am a former platoon leader of 3rd platoon, Co. C, 1/20th Inf., from January 1968 through February 1968. I would like to know of any after action reports or copies of orders pertaining to the minefield incident of 25 Feb 68. I was wounded at that time.

I am also looking for anything pertaining to reports for 23 Feb 68 and 24 Feb 68. I am hoping to reconstruct records pertaining to lost award recommendations. My address is [redacted], Marshfield, WI 54449 Phone me at [redacted].

Paul F Blemings; Co. C, 1/20th Inf.

Dear editor,

I am searching for anyone that served in the Americal Division, C-3-1, 11th LIB from January 15, 1969 to May 12, 1969. My e-mail address is [redacted].

I can also be reached by telephone at [redacted] (daytime) or [redacted] (evening). My address is [redacted], Bakersfield, California, 93307.

Aurelio S. Menchaca

Dear editor,

I was with Co. A, 1/46th Inf. from October to December 1967. After this time I transferred to Co. D, 1/46th Inf. I was a pointman, tunnel rat, Squad Leader, and Platoon Sergeant. I received a Bronze Star for Valor and the Purple Heart for action on October 1, 1968.

I would like to find the following members of 1/46th Infantry. They were in a squad that signed their names on a South Vietnamese flag: Kenny Collins, John Bowles, Sergio Castillo, Miguel Castillo, Simon Hernandez, Luis Muniz, Pedro Barrera, Carlos Diaz, Daniel Valadez, Francisco Bisbal, and Israel Robledo. I have already contacted Loren (Tex) Boldin.

After serving in Vietnam I entered the U.S Army reserve and retired as a Major in 1994. Contact me at [redacted], Walla Walla, WA 99362

Rodolfo R. (Rudy) Alaniz; 1/46th Inf.

More Vietnam locators

Looking For: Anyone from A Co., 5/46th Inf., 198th LIB from Nov. 1968 to Nov. 1969. Some of the names I remember are:

Tim OBrien, Fred Shorty Eason, Lt. Dan Martin, Toby Tyler, Bob Smith, Bill Crawford, Joe Palmeiro, Alvin Chip Merricks, Sgt. Moon, Fred Ladue, Reno Simonec, A.J. Fontenau, Tom McMillen, Eric LeBlanc, Sgt. Moreland, Jerry Stull, Lonnie Bishop, Garth Scott, Jim Barkus, Red Nunnaly, Dick Lannon, Capt. Anderson, Buddy Rick Massey, Buddy

Jim Barker, Tom Markunis, Dave Fallon, Capt. Longrear, Lt. Mark White, Carl Foley, Jack Haas, Chuck Barbo, George Draper, Al Schleicher, Ed Higgins, John Wright, Lannie Polston, Wayne Streif. I already found Willie Lavender and Dave Kueitnen. Contact: Bob Buddy Wolf, [redacted]

[redacted], York, PA 17404

Looking For: Anyone, B/3/21, 196th LIB 66-67. Contact: Dennis Eads [redacted]

P.O. Box 886, Hillsboro, OH 45133

Looking For: 2nd Lt. Randolph Jarmon, Troop Platoon Leader, Nov. 1970, Alpha Troop, 1/1 Cavalry. Contact: Gary G. Quaney Sr. [redacted]

Looking For: Anyone who knew Tom Behrens, my brother. He was in 11LIB, 4/3rd Inf., D Co. He was KIA Oct. 31 68. I have found several guys that knew him. Contact: Dan Behrens, [redacted]

[redacted] What Cheer, Ia 50268

Looking For: Anyone, B Co, 2/1st Inf., 196th LIB, Jan 69 - Jan 70. I was with Doc Jarman, Yank Bob Hoorman, and Tom Runcorn. Contact: Gene Hart, [redacted]

Looking For: Anyone knowing Steven Lynn Green, B Co., 4/3rd Inf., 11th LIB. Died Jan 2, 1970 in Quang Ngai on Hill 285. I am looking for pictures or someone that knew him. He was my uncle. Contact: Jacob Davis, [redacted] Des Moines, IA 50312 [redacted]

Looking For: Btry A, 1/14 Arty, October 1966 to October 1968. Looking for photos. I can send a CD of photos to A Battery members. Contact: Dave Porter [redacted]

[redacted], Boise, ID 83716

Looking For: David W. Wagner, commanded Recon 2-1st Inf., 1969. Contact: Tom Bedient, [redacted], Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027 [redacted]

Looking For: Hahn, Carter, Martin, Seagraves, Williams, and Aldridge, H Troop, 17th Cav., 198th LIB, Aug. 14, 1970 - Aug 9, 1971. Contact: Nieves Medina Jr. #223867 Muskegon Correctional Facility, [redacted], Muskegon, MI 49442

Looking For: Anyone that remembers James Pitts, 1/52nd Inf., D Co., 68-69. I served with 123rd Avn/Aeroscouts/Warlords 69 Contact: Jack Scott, [redacted]

506 Green Oaks Rd., Havana, FL 32333

www.americal.org/locator/

Dear editor,
I am sending you a series of e-mails between 1LT Jeremiah Fritz and me. Fritz's messages show the strong ties between father and son, a respect that never dies.

Terry Wyrick; Co. C, 1/52nd Inf.

Dear Mr. Wyrick

I found your Co. C, 1/52nd Inf. website a few months ago and I want to share some information and ask some questions. My father, Roger Fritz, was a Lieutenant in Co. C during 1970-71.

I am happy to see that so many of you who served our country in Vietnam are still reaching out to each other. Although my father passed away since his return from the war, I am still very interested in learning about his past and the people he served with. Specifically, I am curious about the Charlie Scarf - what it is, what are its origins, who wore it and when, etc. Please know that I appreciate your service to our country and I admire what you do now for our veterans.

Jeremiah Fritz

Dear Jeremiah,

It is good to hear from you and to welcome you to Charlie Co. Our website www.angelfire.com/mo2/CharlieCoScarf/ is made for and by the grunts of Charlie Co. There is a long story about the Charlie Scarf and its origin. It has made wartime history unlike any other.

The following account is from the S2/S3 Daily Staff Journal records of July 12, 1969. Charlie Co. sent the following to TOC DO (Tactical Operations Command Duty Officer): At grid 531845, detonated one pressure type 105mm round mine buried in ground at 19:15 hrs resulting in two US KIA and 28 WIA. Dustoff requested 19:20 hrs. Dustoff on station at 19:30 hrs. First dustoff complete 19:35 hrs, seven WIA sent to 312th Evac., three Dead On Arrival. Dustoff 58 reported taking two or three rounds sniper fire from grid 532838 with no hits. Second dustoff complete 20:00 hrs with 12 WIA to 27th Surg. Third dustoff complete 20:30 hrs with one KIA to 312th and ten WIA to 27th. Also had three NPFF WIA and one Kit Carson Scout WIA.

The names of the KIAs were CPT Bray, Cramer, Bickle, and Cisneros. About 30 Charlie Co. grunts were all that were not evacuated. Charlie Co. was ordered combat ineffective. CPT Terry Gordon was soon assigned to C Co. as Commanding Officer. His job was to rebuild the company.

Later, while on a patrol in the Vinh Loc 2 area off LZ Stinson, C Co. took a bolt of black silk cloth from a VC (Viet Cong) tax collector. Someone suggested sending the material to the rear to make memorial tribute scarves to the fallen men of C Co.



CPT Gordon sent the material to the rear where 24"x24" squares were cut and decorated with a 3" red "C". These scarves were issued to the grunts in the company. CPT Gordon asked LTC Arthur Brown, C O, 1/52nd Infantry, to authorize the Charlie Scarf as part of our uniform. The scarf was to be worn as a memorial tribute to the grunts killed and wounded by the booby trap. LTC Brown approved the scarf.

Charlie Co. and the Charlie Scarf made history in the *Life* magazine (October 24, 1969) issue. The story incorrectly stated that Charlie Co. wore the Charlie Scarf as a black armband to support the antiwar movement and the thousands who marched.

Thanks for your interest and support of the veterans who served in Vietnam. Maybe someday soon you'll be able to make a Charlie Co. reunion. After all these years, it's a very moving time in one's life. Keep in contact and hope to hear from you soon.

Terry Wyrick

Mr. Wyrick,

Thank you for your response. I have a significant request for you and the members of C 1/52 IN. I am now a 2LT like my father. Currently I am an Abrams Tank Platoon Leader in the 4th Infantry Div. at Ft. Hood. My unit is C Co., 1/67 Armor.

Because of my position I have the honor of naming my tank with any word or phrase that starts with the letter "C". I would be honored if you would allow me to name my tank "Charlie Scarf". I can't think of a better way to honor and remember my father and all the soldiers of C 1/52 IN. I've attached a picture of me on my first Tank Table VIII run. You can see where the name would read on the gun tube. Thank you for your dedication to our country.

Jeremiah Fritz

Dear Jeremiah,

Your request is granted for Charlie Scarf to be put on your tank tube.

I feel it would be a great tribute and honor to your father, a veteran of Co. C, 1/52nd Inf., to have the name "CHARLIE SCARF" on your tank's gun tube.

Terry Wyrick

Dear Mr. Wyrick

Thank you for granting me this favor. My tank will be a constant reminder of my father and of the responsibilities I have as a platoon leader. Thank you again for your support.

Jeremiah Fritz

30 March 03

Mr. Wyrick

Here is a quick update on where I am. As you may know from the news the 4th ID received deployment orders in January and we quickly loaded our equipment on ships bound for Turkey. Attached is a picture of my tank, "Charlie Scarf," waiting to be loaded at the port in Beaumont, TX. As you may know, Turkey did not allow us to use their land and the Pentagon finally made the decision to send us to Kuwait. I will leave in roughly a week. Here is my deployment address: 1LT Fritz, Jeremiah; I-67 AR, C Company; 92607; APO AE 09323-2607.

I want you and everyone who served in 1/52 INF to know that I am honored to have the opportunity to pay tribute to my father and the men of Charlie Company. "Charlie Scarf" is a constant inspiration to me. Thanks so much for your support and best wishes to all the men and their families.

Jeremiah Fritz

Bird of Paradise

January 17 is a day that will live in infamy. On this day in 1969, Co. C, 3/21st Inf., 196th LIB, was attacked by VC/NVA units in what is now known as the "Bird of Paradise" battle.

Charlie Co. was on a Search and Destroy patrol in a flat rice paddy region. It actually felt good to be out of the thick jungle and rugged mountains. We approached Hill 63 with my platoon on point for the company. We had our first real indication that the enemy was in the area by discovering a neck high tripwire. Our pointman was alert and wise and we disarmed a hidden grenade. We proceeded to establish a night laager site and dig in.

The men of Co. C were in excellent morale as we prepared meals and defensive positions. It was almost dark when a trip flare went off in our platoon sector. We instantly reacted by jumping in foxholes and shouldering our weapons. Suddenly an incredibly large white bird lifted up from the ground where the trip flare had gone off. Almost simultaneously, AK-47s and RPGs exploded from several concealed and camouflaged locations that surrounded us.

We repelled the attack and we were not overrun. We did lose some fine young men killed and wounded. I can attest to and have the greatest admiration for the performance of our American soldiers who fought that night. We call it the Bird of Paradise battle.

Randall J. Hain; Co. C, 3/21st Inf.
Walden, CO

Battling buffalo

I served my tour in Vietnam with Co. D, 4/31st Inf., 196th LIB. I arrived on May 30, 1968 two days before my 21st birthday. I processed through the 90th Replacement Bn. in Long Binh and then got orders for the Americal Division. After a ride to Chu Lai on a C-130 I spent about ten days in the Americal Combat Center. It was nice to sleep in tents on the beach but it was still far from being on a tropical vacation.

I finally got out to my company in the field about the third week in June. They were humping in the Que Son Valley. We spent about a week building bunkers on a temporary firebase. Then it was back out to the boonies again.

We awoke about dawn one morning and shortly after retrieving our night ambush we moved out. My platoon was on point but since I was a FNG I wasn't up front. We headed down a trail on the valley floor that took us in a northerly direction. In less than an hour we had moved several clicks. The straps on my rucksack were already cutting into my shoulders. I had to concentrate on keeping my spacing behind the trooper in front of me. Up ahead I could see that we were coming to a ville in a wooded area.

There were paddies to the left of the trail and an open field overgrown with weeds on the right. The early morning sun, still low in the sky, cut through the misty air. As we approached the ville the growth on the right grew thicker and the trail fell into shadows.

Looking to my right I noticed a low mud wall about knee height. It ran next to the trail. A small bamboo roof overgrown with trees and vines was framed on top of the wall. A few more steps down the trail I saw a two foot wide opening in the wall.

I peered into the dark recess of the opening. As I did saw a movement. In the next instant a blur coalesced into a shape. It was one I could not mistake. I was staring into a pen that housed the village water buffalo. He was definitely at home.

Ten or twelve members of my platoon passed the opening before me. The sight of those strangers moving by must have been more than the beast could stand. He was mad as hell and he wasn't going to take it anymore. I happened to be the closest available target.

He let out a snort and headed straight at me. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I froze in my tracks. The animal was no more than ten feet from me when he lunged in my direction. He took two big buffalo strides. Time seemed to stand still as I tried to react. The only thing I could think of was that I would have to shoot him.

My rifle was pointed down and to the left. With my heavy gear on, there was no way I could turn quickly enough. In the next fraction of a second I realized that it wouldn't matter anyway. At the speed he was moving ten M-16s would not stop him. But there was nothing that was going to keep me from being hooked on a buffalo horn and tossed into the rice paddy.

The angry animal reached the opening of the pen and was closing fast. Suddenly something happened that I did not at first understand. He seemed to stop dead in his tracks. At the same time I heard a loud "thwack". We were now only a foot or so apart. He was staring at me with the vilest eye that I had ever seen.

We stood like that for what seemed like an eternity although I am sure it was a brief few seconds. Then he let out another snort, turned his head, and started to move back into the pen. As he did I was finally able to see what occurred. I could barely make out a thick rope around his neck. The rope ran back to a heavy post in the rear of the pen.

The rope was just long enough for the buffalo to reach the opening where I stood. When the buffalo lunged the rope yanked tight and made the loud crack that I heard. There was really no way that he could get to me as long as the rope held.

I stood there with my heart racing. The guy following me caught up to where I was. I said, "Damn, did you see that?" As soon

as I did I knew I should have kept my mouth shut. There was no way he could have seen into the pen without being right next to me. He gave me a funny look and said, "See what?" All I could do was mumble, "Ah, never mind."

I never mentioned this incident to anyone else as long as I was in Vietnam. In fact, I have only told the story a couple of times since and I am not sure that anyone has believed it. Like most vets will tell you, "If you weren't there, you'll never understand."

I do know I aged a couple of years in those few seconds. You could not pay me enough to own a water buffalo.

David Hathaway; Co. D, 4/31st Inf.
Mendota Heights, MN



FREEDOM IS NOT FREE

I watched the flag pass by one day,
It fluttered in the breeze,
A young soldier saluted it, and then
He stood at ease.

I looked at him in uniform
So young, so tall, so proud,
With hair cut square and eyes alert
He'd stand out in any crowd.
I thought how many men like him,
Had fallen through the years,
How many died on foreign soil?
How many mothers' tears?

How many pilot's planes shot down?
How many foxholes were soldiers' graves?
No, Freedom is not free.

I heard the sound of taps one night,
When everything was still,
I listened to the bugler play
And felt a sudden chill.

I wondered just how many times
That taps had meant "Amen",
When a flag had draped a coffin
Of a brother, father or friend.
I thought of all the children
Of the mothers and the wives,
Of fathers, sons and husbands
With interrupted lives.

I thought about a graveyard at the
bottom of the sea,
Of unmarked graves in Arlington.
No, Freedom is not free!

-Cadet Major Kelly Strong

Serving God In All Places: The Americal Chaplain – Vietnam

Three Chaplains share their personal reflections on serving soldiers during “a season of war”

David W. Taylor

Book of Ecclesiastes 3: 1-11

“For all things there is a season,
And for every affair under
heaven its time.
A time to be born and a time to die;
A time to plant and a time to
uproot the plant.
A time to kill and a time to heal;
A time to tear down and a time to
build.
A time to weep and a time to laugh;
A time to mourn and a time to dance.
A time to scatter stones, and a time to
gather them;
A time to embrace and a time to be
far from embraces.
A time to seek, and a time to lose;
A time to keep, and a time to cast
away.
A time to rend, and a time to sew;
A time to be silent and a time to
speak.
A time to love, and a time to hate;
A time of war, and a time of peace.

What advantage has the worker from his
toil? I have considered the task, which God
has appointed for men to be busied about. He
has made everything appropriate to its time,
and has put the timeless into their hearts,
without men ever discovering, from
beginning to end, the work, which God has
done.”

A Season of War

War draws individuals from many walks
of life into a life experience few are prepared
for. The challenges come in many forms.
And even “men of God”, prepared as they are
for ministering to others in the realities of
life’s many journey’s, find war a challenge
unlike any other.

Here are the thoughts and reflections of
several Americal chaplains who served in
Vietnam. This dialogue is not an attempt to
summarize the thoughts of the many
chaplains who served the division in that war,
but will allow their fellow soldiers to gain an
appreciation of the struggles they faced
working side-by-side with the soldiers they
served and loved.

Two chaplains, Fathers James Sheil and
Richard Shannon, were ordained as Catholic
Priests and Reverend James Cosner was
ordained as a United Methodist Minister.
They have graciously agreed to share their
thoughts with their fellow vets about the
reflections they have, looking back on their
“season of war” ... a season all soldiers lived.



(Chaplain Richard Shannon celebrates Mass with A Co., 1/52nd Battalion, 198th LIB, south of Chu Lai. Source: U.S. Army Photo – courtesy of Father Richard Shannon)

**All of us come together from varied
backgrounds to serve in war. That is no
different with “men of the cloth”. What
was the path that led you to the Army and
to Vietnam?**

Cosner: “I am a Wyoming native. Prior to
Vietnam (1954-1955) I served as an enlisted
soldier in the Army. After being discharged I
turned my back on the military and took on
the challenge of college and seminary
training to become a United Methodist
Minister. In the 1960’s I was skeptical and
critical about the U.S. involvement in Asian’s
political struggles. But because of my prior
military service, I was persuaded from within
my church denomination to volunteer to
become a military chaplain.

Shannon: I was born in Chicago in 1934
and ordained as a Priest in 1959. I was
stationed at two parishes before I entered the
Army. I was asked to join the reserves in
1963 and joined in May of that year. I was
allowed to go on active duty in July 1967 and
was stationed at Fort Hood, Texas. After four
months I was assigned to the 198th Light
Infantry Brigade which was forming to go to
Vietnam. We left in October of that year and

during the several weeks it took to go over I
had services each day for the men and I was
able to talk with them about many things.

Sheil: I was ordained as a Priest in 1966
for the Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio. After
ordination I was involved at several area high
schools and instrumental in several boys
being given the opportunity to serve in the
military rather than go to “jail”. At a
memorial service for several young men who
were killed in action in Vietnam, I was giving
a kind of “duty-honor-country” talk and
suddenly realized I did not know what I was
talking about. I immediately asked the bishop
for permission to join the Army. I entered the
Army at Fort Polk in May 1969. The
character and quality of the people I was
assigned with wholly impressed me. On the
other hand, the schooling in the Chaplain
Basic Course at Ft. Hamilton (Brooklyn)
New York did not impress me. The course
began with, “You might think you’re
ministers and priests, we are going to make
you officers”. Most of us priests just finished
with basic trainees for the previous 6 months
and loved it. We knew we didn’t go along
with the officer stuff. The best part was being
with other chaplains. The rest could have
been done in a few weeks rather than months.

**What was your initial impression on
arriving in Vietnam and your unit
assignment?**

Cosner: Like everyone else I was scared.
I arrived in October 1968 and I wanted to
serve in a line unit but was offered a rear area
support battalion near Saigon. I opted for a
slot in the Americal Division and before long
found myself at LZ Gator with the 5/46th
battalion, 198th LIB. The unit had not had an
assigned chaplain since arriving in Vietnam
in March 1968 and they had not been notified
that I was coming, so they had no place or
space for me. That was discouraging. On the
other hand this was a unit that was taking
casualties almost on a daily basis. I judged
that my services were needed. Here life hung
in a different balance than I had ever
experienced before. Life was day to day and
there was no future until one had survived his
365 days of hell. People spoke of God and
faith with an intensity and urgency that I
hadn’t experienced before and wasn’t really
prepared to respond to.

Shannon: I remember the heat. I was
celebrating Mass on top of a hilltop and the
sandbags began to smoke all by themselves.
Instant combustion! We were all pretty busy
arriving in Vietnam.

Sheil: I don’t recall having too many
profound thoughts upon arriving in Vietnam
in March 1970, other than to come home
alive and reasonably unhurt. My first
assignment was with Division Artillery
(DIVARTY) and I spent a lot of time with
DIVARTY Air. As times got rough I was
readily accepted. After a few months I was
assigned to Headquarters, 11th LIB at Duc
Pho and provided “Catholic coverage” to the
battalions, the Air Force, Dust-Off, MP’s,
LRRP’s, Special Forces in the area and
anywhere else I was needed to pick up the
slack. I think most of the units I came in
contact with thought I was “their” chaplain.

**How do you remember the process of
finding some kind of acceptance by the
men in a war time climate?**

Cosner: Every military chaplain carries
the baggage of being an officer, “religious”
and providing an ancillary service.
Commanders, staff officers and NCO’s
sometime see the chaplain as an added
burden, failing to appreciate the assets that
the chaplain brings. Gaining the support of
commanders and staff is imperative for the
chaplain to get around and do his work.

That having been said, I perceived that my
biggest challenge was making myself
available to as many soldiers as possible.
Being present was magnetic. Soldiers were
curious, and sometimes confrontational. They
wanted to know who I was, what I
represented, and they wanted to know

answers to questions. It was rare, during a
break or lull that I didn’t have someone
talking with me. I spent as much time in the
field as time would allow. I conducted
worship services and memorial services in
the field, on remote firebases, and at the
chapel.

I went through the command to have a
chapel built. This building provided a place
and space for much counseling, group
conversations and worship services. It was an
important place for men rotating in and out of
that firebase.

Finally, I was fortunate to have seasoned
soldiers, who were known and trusted, to
serve as my chaplain assistants. Once they
got to see me as a person they could trust,
then they enhanced the relationship between
myself, and the soldiers in the field.

Shannon: I believe that because I had the
same uniform as they did and that I was in
Vietnam with them there was a great deal of
acceptance. When I got to a unit in the field
many times I would spend the whole day
with them because the choppers would not
always return quickly. Usually I would get a
ride on the chopper that brought them their
evening meal. My ministry in the field was
limited by dependence on chopper rides.
Because of this I as a Catholic Chaplain did
not see some units on a regular schedule.

Sheil: In war there was less fluff and more
substance; also we were much closer to our
people. There was no putting the chaplain on
a “pedestal”. We wore the same uniform,
shared the same comforts or lack thereof. As
a priest/chaplain, I lived with my people.
They did not have to call me for an
appointment to see me. I did what they did,
and ministry happened this way in the
ordinary things of everyday life. Often we
were all afraid together.

**War places chaplains on the horns of a
dilemma: the values of the sacredness of
life versus the drive for self-preservation.
How did you reconcile that with the
soldiers you ministered to?**

Cosner: Life in general places religious
people on the horns of a dilemma - sacred
versus secular. Godly values as opposed to
worldly values. War creates an extension, and
an exaggeration of that human dilemma.
Every Christian and Jew is taught “Thou
shalt not kill”. The government orders them
into a killed or be killed environment. The
chaplain is faced with some kind of palatable
blending of those opposed values. Soldiers
unable to reconcile this conflict dealt with
enormous amounts of guilt, confusion,
cynicism and anger. The chaplain attempted
to assist the soldier in that struggle –
sometimes successfully, sometimes not.

Shannon: For most of my tour I was the
only Catholic Chaplain assigned to the

198th Brigade and I had to cover all the
battalion and support units. This was the most
difficult thing to do because the men were in
small units and could only be reached by
helicopter. On Sunday I would have Mass for
our headquarters and all other units I could
reach by jeep. I would have about seven
Masses each Sunday. I believed that I was a
source of hope and strength for our soldiers
as they faced possible death each day. I knew
Catholic men would appreciate the
opportunity to attend Mass and receive the
other sacraments as often as possible.

Sheil: I didn’t look at it in terms of those
thoughts back in those days. I just wanted to
take care of my friends, the soldiers I
ministered to, as best as I could. Sometimes I
was not sure of what they were asking of me.
I learned to watch others’ back and to be
aware of people watching mine. I also
learned to take care of my people as others
were taking care of me. There is no doubt
they enjoyed having me around and looked
forward to my coming. I think I offered them
some kind of hope and vision that there was
more beyond all the stuff we were dealing
with.

**Any reflections on your chaplain’s
assistants?**

Cosner: Chaplain assistants were one of
my most important assets. Our battalion had a
policy of giving short-timers a rear-area job
whenever that was possible. I was fortunate
to have some fine men serve as my assistants.
They were invaluable because they helped
me understand what life was like as a grunt
and they added credibility to my ministry.
They provided a “connection” to the soldiers,
by knowing when someone was in trouble
and needed the assistance that the chaplain
could provide, or needed someone to talk to.
And each of them became my friends and
part of my support system – they also knew
what I was going through. They were special
people for me.

Shannon: As we formed the 198th
Brigade at Fort Hood, each chaplain had the
opportunity to choose the assistant that he
wanted from all the assistants at Ft. Hood. I
chose my assistant because of his good
qualities: He had sound judgement, was
intelligent, was of good character and could
work independent of me. He was good with
people and we got along fine. I didn’t know if
he would ever forgive me for taking him to
Nam. He did, and after a few years I married
him in Mt. Vernon, Illinois.

Sheil: Keep in mind I was at the brigade
headquarters level, covering a lot of ground
for the battalions, support units and even
other units not part of the Americal. And I
arrived at the 11th Brigade after it had formed
in Duc Pho. Overall I did not find my

assistants to be of much help. There was one standout exception: an 11-B Sergeant who was assigned to me after his third Purple Heart. He was terrific. He knew his way around the field, was definitely interested in the soldiers more than anything else, opened doors for me that otherwise probably I would not have known about. He was one of the best soldiers I have ever known.

We must always try to find God in all things. How did you try to help soldiers find God in the chaos of war?

Cosner: I had to first rediscover God in the horrors of war myself. Part of my adjustment was trying to find anything Godly in that war. One long day the unit I was with moved several clicks in some severe heat. In the morning a mine was detonated, taking some casualties. In the afternoon we were pinned down by sniper fire – no casualties. When we bivouacked that evening, tired and harassed, it was in the presence of a spectacular sunset followed by a sky filled with bright serene stars. I had such a peaceful feeling. I saw goodness in the soldiers passing out some C-rations to villagers; many kind and caring gestures among the soldiers. I tried to share some of my realizations and experiences. It was so important for me to go where those soldiers had to go – for me to get into the field, and share in their experiences. My being in the field with them gave us a common experience – then I could interpret that common experience in the language of faith.

Shannon: I had the most contact with troops at the brigade headquarters and the support units for the battalions. Finding God in war is a very difficult thing to do because war is a terrible evil. However, God can bring forth good from evil. I believe the men who served in Vietnam and returned home have a better appreciation of the life God gave them. So many of them became people of peace. It was in Nam that they began to see how precious life is and how quickly it can be taken from us. Did they find God in war or did God find them?

Sheil: Finding God was not a rational process, more an experiential one. Most of the time I think God touched me through the soldiers. They really cared about each other and, when I was with them, they cared about me – unobtrusively and in a rough sort of way. They also took time to tell me when I was all wet. For example, while on a hill waiting for the bird to take us on a combat assault, a soldier asked me to hear his confession. He mentioned he was “out of the church”. I told him I could not help him. He fell on the ground and washed my boots with his tears; it was as if Jesus was there asking who I thought I was to decide whom he would forgive. I knew then the love of the

guys and the love of the Lord, and I am not sure there is much difference. I think in our own way we were living what Christ taught.



(Chaplain James Cosner – circa 1968. Photo courtesy of Pastor Cosner)

There is an old saying, “There are no atheists in foxholes”. Did your experience confirm, refute or redefine that observation?

Cosner: We all believe in something. Most have some definition of a deity that they believe in. When we look death in the face, the faith that we hold becomes something really important to hang on to. I affirm – there are no atheists in foxholes.

Shannon: I’m sure they may have been some atheists in Vietnam. Did they stay atheists all through their tour? I don’t know. Most likely there were some who made promises to a higher power that if they made it home they would fulfill that promise.

Sheil: We were all so scared that we would look – and did look – for help anywhere.

How did you manage the dichotomy of the “separate worlds” of the soldier and the chaplain?

Cosner: There is a separation between clergy and laity in all aspects of life. I have had to deal with that reality for over forty years. Vietnam was only one year when that separation was exaggerated by the intensity of men’s search for a deeper faith. I was saddened when that gap was so huge that nothing we could do or say would bridge it. I celebrated when that gap became an arena for dialogue and a stronger faith and some learning came out of all that conversation. I’ve found that dichotomy to be a challenge – but for that one year it was a special

challenge and I grew from that. I believe, hope and pray that others grew also. I have a profound respect and admiration for the men I met and worked with in Vietnam.

Shannon: I never had a problem remembering that I was a priest first and a Captain in the U.S. Army second. It was an honor to serve my country and that country was the men who served. Sometimes they would see the “bars” and thought of me as an officer. I think most of the soldiers accepted me because I wore the same uniform and was stationed in the same place they were. They knew I was there because I wanted to be with them.

Sheil: I don’t think there was such a dichotomy of separation, nor is there one today.

What topics ... what kinds of help did soldiers most often seek from you? What were your responses?

Cosner: Most often it was some variation of what clergy refer to as “God questions”. If God is love, why is there war? – that question can take a hundred forms, but it always comes back to reconciling “my perception of God” and the unthinkable horror that people visit upon each other. Another question: “How can you represent God and wear a ‘killing uniform?’ That was asked over and over. “Why are you here, chaplain?” was another common question. Men needed to bring together the sacredness of God and the ugliness of a war that their country sent them to participate in.

Shannon: This business of killing. I believe most soldiers did not want to take innocent lives. They were in so many fire fights where they could not see whom they were shooting. When they would find children or innocent people dead, this bothered them and they talked with me about that. My response was always that they did not want to kill these people directly and therefore they were not guilty of killing innocent people.

Sheil: The big question I recall was, “Is there really a God?” I’m not sure how I answered these questions, or even if I did answer them. I was sure of God myself, and what I saw forced me to expand my thoughts. I think my beliefs influenced how I lived, and maybe they caught on from that. The guys I have met over the years seem to remember things that way. I think what we saw done to others, and not always by the “enemy”, reinforced our desire to take care of each other.

What are your reflections when visiting the wounded in hospitals?

Cosner: I had difficulty with the sense of celebration that wounded soldiers often experienced in the hospital. I understood the sense of relief that they had survived being in the field and they were on their way out of country without being in a body bag. But I looked at the months, years, or a lifetime that they would suffer and struggle from these wounds. I celebrated their relief at being on their way home alive, but often at such a great price. They were overjoyed at being alive, but I was already anticipating the long lone struggles ahead for them. I just could never enjoy the ecstatic moment of happiness that they were sometimes experiencing.

Shannon: Men in the hospitals always looked forward to seeing a chaplain from their unit. Those who were injured seriously were always concerned about their buddies and how they were. I always make it a point not to forget the veterans who were wounded in that war. I pray for them each day and for many other veterans for whom the war is not over.

Sheil: The experience of visiting the wounded in hospitals was overpowering. The first question asked of me was almost always: “How is my buddy?” Most of my “hospital” experience was either at the Brigade Medical Unit at Duc Pho or the hospitals at Chu Lai. Seeing all those mangled soldiers left me with tears more often than not. The guys themselves, in the midst of their pain, were wonderful – usually wanted to know what was going on with their buddies, even though they knew they were probably going back to the “world”. And the nurses – words fail; they were wonderful. In the Brigade Medical Emergency Room, the concern of the guys for their buddies was so common; we didn’t always notice it – unless a rare someone didn’t ask those questions.

Thank you for contributing to this article. In closing, briefly describe your life journey after leaving Vietnam, up to the present time.

Cosner: After Vietnam I continued life in an almost total denial of that year. I forgot the names of people, dates and places. I went on as though Vietnam had never happened. I could talk about it, but I avoided the emotion and pain. I remained on active duty for six years, then resigned my active commission. Four years later I went through a painful divorce. When I remarried it was as though the healing began. I began to tell my wife of events in Vietnam; I cried and relived the pain of those experiences. In 1988, acting upon advice I had been given, I wrote the flashbacks I had been having for 20 years. Over the following ten years I told people of my experiences, and then in 1998 I fleshed out the experiences into a manuscript. That

process brought about the healing I continue to experience.

Shannon: After Vietnam I was stationed at Ft. Carson in Colorado Springs. After 18 months I was sent to Korea for 13 months. I returned home and became a parish priest again. I was asked to join the Reserves again and I did. I served with various units in the Chicago area. I was in the process of being called up for Desert Storm when it came to a fast ending. I retired about nine years ago with the rank of full Colonel. During my Chicago parish years I spent seven years in the inner city. I then became pastor of another city parish in 1983 and remained there for 12 years. I took six months off for a sabbatical and was made pastor of St. Patrick Church in Lemont, IL. I hope to retire in January of 2004 when I will be 70. I will not be pastor of any parish but I will be free to help out with Masses at various parishes in the diocese.

Sheil: After Vietnam I was sent to Fort Benning, Georgia. That assignment, while difficult, helped me put my Vietnam experience into perspective. I then went to Germany for two assignments until I resigned in 1977. I was angry in general. I learned later that a lot of my anger had to do with Vietnam – things that, for whatever reason I had not dealt with. I saw too much of what I can only call incompetence at the leadership level. To be fair, I also saw many more leaders who went well beyond competent into heroic. I remember with a great deal of respect most of the leaders I knew. I also did not like the way the Army was going in those days. There was a deterioration of authority and rising racial tensions. In retrospect I think my decision to leave was the right thing at the right time for the wrong reason. I had a lot of growing up to do. I returned to Cleveland and parish work. I also had to deal with several Vietnam issues, which began to surface at the time. I developed a back problem which required surgery, and in an effort to deal with all these issues, I sensed in myself a deep-seated anger. Eventually with the help of friends and a powerful healing ministry that seemed to come out of the blue, I began to deal with these things. I had my first heart attack in 1987 – a big one – and a second in 1989. I resigned my position as a parish pastor and returned to being an associate pastor. I was recalled to active duty in 1991, and in 1994 attended the Chaplain Career Course. I was with some fine people but not overly impressed with the course. The Army and the Chaplaincy had changed significantly. I was sent to Germany in December 1994 (medevac to Walter Reed Hospital for a bypass in July 1997). Retired in May, 2002 and recalled to Active Duty the same month. While in Cleveland during my brief retirement I had a stroke. Life is good.



(Chaplain James Sheil in the field, late 1970. Photo courtesy of Chaplain Sheil)

Serving God in All Places:

Reverend James Cosner is retired in Akron, Colorado. He is an ADVA member and attends functions when he can. He has finished his book draft, “Faith Under Fire: Memoirs of a Sky Pilot in Vietnam”. He is currently looking for a publisher.

Father Richard Shannon continues his ministry at St. Patrick Church in Lemont, Illinois. When he retires he hopes to spend more time with veterans groups and attend some of the Americal reunions.

Father James Sheil continues serving on active duty in the Army at Fort Lewis, Washington. Thanks to Colonel John Insani he is a member of the ADVA. Despite serious health problems in the past, he continues to minister to soldiers and their families and ... as he says, “life is good”.

The Lord is my shepherd;

I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside the still waters;
He restoreth my soul;
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
For thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

To replace tears with smiles, Americal vet helps the poor of Vietnam



Left photo: Ken Herrmann at Hiep Duc resettlement village, 1969. Right photo: Herrmann visiting needy child and family in Danang, 2001. Photos courtesy of Ken Herrmann

Kenneth J. Herrmann was already 25 years old when he went to Vietnam for the first time. He was 55 years old when he and two other Vietnam veterans returned to visit the people and places they knew during the war. Herrmann's trip to Vietnam in 1998 had as much or more of an impact on his life as did the trip 30 years earlier.

Herrmann was born in an Irish neighborhood in Buffalo, NY in 1943 and received his primary education from the Sisters of Mercy. After grade school he spent six years preparing for the priesthood at a diocesan preparatory school in his hometown. He determined that the constraints of religious life were not for him so he left the seminary in 1963. He immediately found a job teaching seventh grade students at St. Monica's School.

Of his time at St. Monica's, Herrmann would say, "I loved that place, and the students loved me." But he did not enjoy the poverty wages he was receiving. In 1967 he left teaching to become a Foster Care Caseworker with the county social services department. In leaving teaching he also left his draft deferment. He was drafted into the U.S. Army in July 1967.

Herrmann received military training as a radio teletype (RTT) operator at Ft. Dix, NJ and Ft. Gordon, GA. He arrived in Vietnam in May 1968 and was assigned to 4/31st Inf., 196th LIB as a radiotelephone operator (RTO) at the battalion tactical operations center (TOC). It was here that a significant event occurred in his tour of duty and in his life.

MAJ James Stringham was the operations officer at the 4/31st Inf. TOC at LZ West. Late at night Herrmann and Stringham would spend many hours philosophizing and discussing the war. Stringham asked Herrmann what he would really like to do. Herrmann replied, "I'd like to do something to help the people."

Much to his surprise, Herrmann was assigned to Public Affairs. "The next thing I knew I was doing psyops, broadcasting in the

field, and performing other S-5 duties," he recalls. This eventually led to a post as the advisor and liaison for the 196th LIB in the resettlement village at Hiep Duc. Of this time, Herrmann says, "It seemed to define my experience in Vietnam. It certainly seemed to determine what I have become and what I do now."

Herrmann adapted well to his assignment of caring for the Vietnamese villagers. Maybe it was due to his age, or his education, or his previous social work. Or maybe it was just his fate. He describes his job, "My responsibilities were to coordinate security and to help resettle about 2,500 people who had fled fighting in this end of the valley that had been the scene of constant and bloody battle for years." He lived in the village and assisted in providing food, shelter, and health care for the refugees of the war. He grew closer and closer to those he protected. Vietnam was becoming a part of him.

After his tour of duty Herrmann returned to the United States and established a career and family. He received a BA degree from Canisius College and a Master of Social Work degree from SUNY Buffalo. In 1978 he accepted a position at SUNY-Brockport and has been a tenured Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work since 1985. He is considered an expert in his field and has authored numerous publications.

Upon returning from Vietnam in 1998 Herrmann was asked by the college president to consider starting a Vietnam program for SUNY-Brockport students. Herrmann made two trips to Vietnam in 1999 and then made his proposal for a study abroad program based in Danang. The program was approved and students were selected to begin a one-of-a-kind educational experience. The first students arrived in January 2001 and the program was underway. "Students take their classroom courses in the mornings, provide community services during the afternoons, and assist in teaching English several evenings each week," says Herrmann.

To augment the study program and to assist the many poor of Vietnam, Herrmann began a non-government organization (NGO) called the Danang/Quang Nam Fund. The fund provides direct aid to the poorest in Vietnam. The fund has helped care for residents of a leper colony, victims of Agent Orange diseases, homeless living in a garbage dump, and children in need of urgent medical care. Herrmann is Executive Director of the fund and resides in Vietnam a substantial amount of the time.

Herrmann admits to being torn between his family and ties in America and the every pressing need to live and care for the needy in Vietnam. He believes it is a responsibility of Americans to help undo the harm that the war caused. In particular, the Vietnamese have now been exposed to the hazards of dioxin in Agent Orange for two generations. Even though the war has been over for 30 years, people continue to suffer illnesses and deformities from this powerful chemical. Herrmann intends to do what he can to replace tears with smiles.

The Danang/Quang Nam Fund, Inc. gladly accepts donations to help continue its work. Herrmann states that it is important that Americans "become more aware of the progress being made by Vietnam" and he encourages Americans to "build bridges of friendship" with the Vietnamese.

Herrmann's just completed book Lepers and Lunacy: An American in Vietnam Today will be published in mid-2003. More information on the SUNY-Brockport study program is available on the internet at www.studyabroad.com/suny/brockport/vietnam.html. The NGO is described in detail at www.danangquangnamfund.org. Herrmann can be reached at by writing to The Danang/Quang Nam Fund, Inc., [redacted], East Pembroke, New York 14056, email to [redacted]

World War II

Looking For: Anyone who may have known Pvt. Paul Jay Killeen, 1st Bn, 132nd Inf.; Pvt. officers mess Camp Forrest, Tenn.; Hill 31, Fort Belvoir, Virg. 1944; Tech 4 Co B 7th Bat. 2571st SCU. Contact: Paula Killeen Jonker [redacted]

Looking For: K Co., Weapons Platoon, 132nd Inf. Regt., Contact: Jim Liedahl, [redacted] Moorhead, Mn 56560 [redacted]

Looking For: Anyone, WWII 132Inf, 1st Bn., HQ Co, Antitank. Contact: Charles Fiore [redacted]

Looking For: Anyone who knew my father, Elliott Lee Hedrick, with the 200th Field Artillery Battalion when they left Australia in 1942. They were moved to New Caledonia and on August 15, 1942, that unit was redesignated the 247th Field Artillery Battalion- Battery C. On January 1st, 1943, the 247th FAB departed from New Caledonia and landed on Guadalcanal on January 4th, 1943. He served as a radio operator for that unit on Guadalcanal for the next six months until he was sent back to a hospital in the states with acute Malaria. Looking for anyone who served with him or anyone of his buddies' descendants. I do have some pictures my father took while he was in the Solomon Islands during the Pacific campaign and some from Guadalcanal. God Bless and keep the brave men of the 247th! Contact: Stan Hedrick [redacted]

[redacted] Peculiar, Mo 64078 [redacted]

Looking For: Anyone in 164th Inf. Regt, 41-43, that knew my father, Henry Michael Schlereth, nickname Ham. He started with the Kansas guards in the 35th Division. Mobilized and went to New Caladonia, transferred to the Americal Division, 1st Marine reinforced that went to Guadalcanal. I do know that he received a Presidential Unit Citation for outstanding gallantry, 2/4/43. I believe he was under command of Major General Vandegrift. He spoke of a friend, Frances Black that was killed near him and a man named Titus that he became friends with and was later killed in a non combat accident. Dad received an honorable discharge due to malaria and war related wounds, I believe that he was a #4 machine gunner and ammo carrier, serial number: 20725003. Even though he has passed away, I would like to be able to piece it all together. Contact: Gayle Hall [redacted]

[redacted], Dodge City, KS 67801
Looking For: Anyone with info Co. B, 182nd Inf. Regt, Cebu, Leyte, that knew my grandfather S/Sgt Tillman Diamond of

Milton, WV. He also went on to Japan with 738th engineers in charge of base depot. Contact: David Harshbarger [redacted]

[redacted] Milton, WV 2554 [redacted]
Looking For: Col. Charles A. Brown, Co. C, 182nd Inf., Bougainville, Leyte, Samar, Beri Island, Cebu Pl. Feb 1944 to Mar 1945. Contact: Don Taylor, [redacted]

[redacted], Temple City, CA 91780
Looking For: Any who may have known my dad, Avery M. Turner, served in Co. H, 164th Inf. Regt. Contact: Everett Turner [redacted]
[redacted], Columbus, OH 43215 [redacted]

Looking For: Anyone knowing or Ateo Frank Petrucci, my uncle and godfather, known to his buddies as Frank Chokie or Artichoke. I believe he was a sniper in Co. B or C, 182nd Inf., trained at Camp Roberts, CA. Contact: Mr. Dee Hester [redacted]
Scottsdale, AZ 85267-936

Vietnam War

Looking For: Anyone, 3rd platoon, A Co., 1/6th Inf., 198th LIB, Nov 1969 to late July 1970. I remember: Harry LLOYD, Norm Ochinerio, Don Bosacher, Vince Iafolla, Beatty, Stone, Dodd. Contact: Martin Marty Tomcek {Moose} [redacted]

Looking For: Anyone, A Co., 4/3rd, 11th LIB, Sept 68 to March 69, and anyone who remembers Pat DeMarco, KIA around Pinksville. Contact: John Dean [redacted]

[redacted], Lexington, NC 27299

Looking For: Bob (Robert?) Yost, Medic, 196th LIB, 4/31st Inf., August 69-70. Contact: Jimmy Dischert, [redacted]

[redacted], St. Louis, MO 63111
Looking For: Anyone, B Co., 1/52nd, 198th LIB, for my name roster of B Co. reunion information. Contact: Buddy R. Sadler [redacted]
[redacted], Terrell, TX 75160

Looking For: Carl W. McDaniels, 3rd Plt. Ldr., C Co., 1/52nd, nickname Mack, March 69 till WIA 6/21/69, or anyone that knows him. Contact: Gary Franklin, [redacted]

[redacted], Lubbock, TX 79424-2408
Looking For: Frank or James Laughton (Lofton), HHQ S4 Office, 1st/6th., 198th LIB. 68-69. Contact: Dave Lipman [redacted]
[redacted], Monterey, CA 93940 [redacted]

Looking For: William Forte, 175th Engr. Co., 66-67. Don Maxfield, 41 Planten Ave., Prospect Pk., NJ 07508

Looking For: Anyone, B Co., 3/1st Inf., Firebase 411, Sept 1970-Sept 1971.

Charles{Chuck} Walker [redacted]

[redacted], Beaumont, TX 77706 [redacted]
Looking For: Members of Co. C, 5/46th, 198th LIB, 1968-1969. Contact: Wm. Grady [redacted]
[redacted], Columbus, GA 31909

Looking For: CPT Wescott, with Americal sometime in early to mid-1969, possible with Polar Bears. Contact: Donald Quinn [redacted]
[redacted], Norfolk, VA 23503 [redacted]

Looking For: Anyone, C Co. or HHC, 5/46th, 198th LIB. 3/70-2/71. I can put you in touch with about 50 or so guys who were in the company. Contact: David R. Culver, [redacted]

[redacted] Sisters, OR 97759-0635

Looking For: Pat Larkin, 1/1st Cav., 70-71. Contact: Jessie H. Jackson, [redacted]

[redacted], Alamo, TN 38001-4216 [redacted]

Looking For: Anyone, HQ 3/4 Cav. Contact: Larry Grant, 229-861-2896 [redacted]

[redacted] Donalsonville, Ga 39845

Looking For: Terry Bird, Tim Morgan, Keith Hartwell, Sugar Bear, Lt. Kelly, Cpt. Mitch Kutla; A Co., 4/21st, 11th LIB, May 1970 to April 1971. Contact: Tim Gaffney [redacted]
[redacted], Medina, OH 44256 [redacted]

Looking For: Any info on Collins, Clyde Raymond, 69-70, LZ San Juan Hill. Hit in eye on 12/24/69. Contact: Ed Brock [redacted]
[redacted], Mount Vernon, KY 40456 [redacted]

Looking For: Family members of Cahoon, Gomez, Hopper, and Williams, KIA 10 Jun 69. Alpha Co, 1/20th, 11Bde. My husband was Cpt. David Walsh who also died that day. I'd like to communicate with any of you. Contact: Bonnie Walsh-Ward [redacted]
[redacted], Bellevue, WA 98005 [redacted]

Looking For: Anyone, Co. A, 6th Support Bn., 11th Inf. Brigade, Schofield Barracks HI. 1967 and Combat Center Americal Div., Dec., 1967, 1968 thru July 1969. Contact: Don Palmer [redacted]

[redacted], Glendale, AZ 85308

Looking For: Dennis Maddox, medic, A Co., 4/3rd 11th LIB, 69 - 70. Contact: Doc TC Wilson [redacted]

[redacted] Bokchito, OK 74726

See these and other requests at www.americal.org/locator

americal.org gets a graphical facelift

The ADVA website www.americal.org took on a new look on March 26, 2003. The updated color scheme and header design was installed by webmaster Kevin Sartorius. Kevin says, "I think that the other design looked very good in 1999, it's just not 1999 anymore!" The content of the site was not affected.

The new look is easier on the eyes and makes the site's pages appear crisp and fresh. An American flag to the sidebar display to present a patriotic effect. Sartorius resides in Tulsa, OK and is a principal in VSS Technology, LLC.

Co. D, 1/20th & Co. A, 1/46th sites now online

I am pleased to announce that after a lot of hard work we now have a Company D website. Our thanks go to Glenn Sippola and Wayne Rhine of Web2e! Wendell Strode knows Glenn and Wayne and they volunteered to design and set up our website. The new website can be found at www.deltacompany.org/.

Wayne set us up with pictures from all three reunions and information for the 2004 reunion at Pigeon Forge. Most importantly, we have included the listing of our never forgotten buddies whom we lost in 'Nam. Please review the list because we want to add names that we do not currently have.

Wendell and I are extremely pleased with the results of the website and offer a big word of thanks to Glenn and Wayne. I encourage you to please write them a short thank you for the great work they have done. You can access their website through their link at the bottom of our page.

Alan Conger; Co. D, 1/20th Inf.

Please take a look at own very own A Co., 1/46th website. Thanks to Dave and Suzanne Pope for all the work they put into this. See you all in Oklahoma City in September 2003. "God Bless the Infantry" www.geocities.com/m16infantry/index.html

Bill Schneider, Co. A, 1/46th Inf.

M.P.s change address

The 198th Military Police (23rd M.P. Co.) website has been enhanced and moved to a new web server. Make a note of the new URL or go to the old site and it will guide you. The new web address is at www.dutch23mp.bravepages.com/.

Dutch Degroot; 23rd MP Co.

Squashing spam

Webmaster Anthony (Tony) Greene recently made changes to americal.org that will obscure the e-mail addresses and contact information posted on the site. These changes will help limit the amount of spam that is received by those who list their contact information on various pages of the website.

Spam is unwanted and objectionable junk mail that is sent in mass quantities via the internet. Spammers harvest legitimate websites for e-mail address and then use or sell these addresses for advertising and other purposes. Some spam may be criminal in nature and designed to fleece money from unsuspecting people.

Greene says, "A recent report provides pretty good proof that spammers get most e-mail addresses by having their software download web pages and read the addresses that are posted on the page." Greene made changes to the website to obscure the e-mail address in a way that the spammer's software can't understand but still leave it available to web browsers.

Verio/NTT continues to host ADVA website free of charge

Word was recently received that NTT/Verio will continue to host americal.org at no charge to the ADVA. NTT/Verio is a global enterprise offering a vast array of communication and internet services. They can be found on the internet at www.nttverio.com.

The ADVA has enjoyed free hosting of americal.org since its inception in 1995. This is a service that would normally cost several hundred dollars annually. The ADVA is grateful for this support and urges its members to utilize the services of NTT/Verio whenever possible.

400,000 hits surpassed

The ADVA website americal.org recently surpassed the 400,000 hit mark. Each "hit" represents one visit to the website. The count began on January 1, 1996 and represents over 4,000 visits per month. The website was officially unveiled in November 1995.

Americal.org was one of the first Army division unit association websites on the internet. The most popular sections of the website are the locator and the history pages. The guestbook usually registers two or three new posts every day. The site also includes information about the ADVA, upcoming reunions, Army awards and decorations, and frequently asked questions. Visit the ADVA at www.americal.org.

Product sales catalog introduced on-line

Wayne Bryant, ADVA Product Sales Director, and PNC John (Dutch) DeGroot, Master of Graphics, recently collaborated to establish an on-line color catalogue of ADVA products. This new service can be reached from americal.org by clicking on the PX (Store) button on the left sidebar.

The opening page of the catalogue features a 1969 photo of the Americal PX in Chu Lai. Clicking on the photo will allow entrance into the catalogue. Items for sale are priced and shown in full color.

An order form is provided and can be printed for use. On-line ordering is not yet available. ADVA members have been asking for this feature and thanks to the work of Wayne and Dutch it is now a reality.

The oral history project needs you

Several Americal veterans have stepped forward to tell their personal stories for the ADVA Oral History Project section of americal.org. The intent of this project is to collect and preserve the stories of Americal veterans for the benefit of history.

The project can be accessed by clicking on Unit History on the home page, and the by clicking on ADVA Oral History Project. Each veteran's story will be featured on a separate page reached from a link on the index page.

The section also includes information on how to submit stories and a page that lists questions that can be answered as a written interview. The stories will be available to anyone who desires to learn more about the personal contributions of Americal veterans.

Submissions have been posted from the following:

World War II

Dunford, Rev. James; Division Chaplain; Henningsen, Bill; 182nd Inf. Regt.; Jacobs, Zane; 164th Inf. Regt.; Lombardo, Michele; 182nd Inf. Regt.; Morrell, Lloyd; 180th FA/221st FA;

Vietnam

Calhoun, Jerry; 23rd S & T Bn; Cao, Jose; 1/20th Inf., 11th LIB; Frysinger, Victor; 4/3rd Inf., 11th LIB; Gales, James; 2/1st Inf., 196th LIB; Griffin, Ron; 1/82nd Arty.; Winter, Donald; 1/20th Inf., 11th LIB;

Family members submitted the stories about Rev. James Dunford and Bill Henningsen. Contact Gary Noller if you would like further information on how to submit your story.

BOAT MISSION

By Tom Waterbury

Recon had been back on the hill (LZ Liz) only one day when LTC Fischer called for me to come to the TOC to tell me about a new mission. We were going to work with the Vietnamese Navy again. A month earlier we had tried a boat assault, but I think it failed because we landed before dark. This allowed the VC to see us coming and avoid contact. Fischer filled me in on the details and informed me that a reporter from the Stars and Stripes would be spending the week with me. The plan was to go north on Highway One by duce-and-a-half. We would be dropped off near Quang Ngai City, and from there we would walk the rest of the way to the ocean where we would meet with a Navy Ensign, the liaison officer with the so-called Vietnamese Navy. The Vietnamese would then transport us in junks on the South China Sea and drop us off in an uncharted area of the Gaza Strip to the south. From there we would execute a search and destroy mission.

After the men were in the trucks, Fischer brought the reporter, Dennis Thornton, down to our area. I asked him if he had been in the field before, and he said, "Sure, plenty of times." I told him, "Good, I won't have to babysit you. Just stay out of our way and don't get yourself killed."

The trucks started up and we headed north. After about an hour, I had the trucks let us off. We walked east toward the ocean. On the way we passed through the deserted village of My Lai, the village that had been totally wiped out by C Co. back in March 1968. LT Calley was convicted of murder in connection with the massacre at My Lai. From the evidence we could see in the village, it was definitely a VC village. There were spider holes all around.

Calley claimed he had been ordered to shoot everything that moved. I have no doubt that this was true because once before I had been given the same order, but I didn't allow my men to do what Charlie Company had done. We didn't shoot unarmed villagers even though we knew they were VC. What Calley allowed to happen was wrong, but, having experienced some of the same things he and his men did, I can understand how it could have happened. Eighteen and nineteen-year-old soldiers in a lawless environment with a weak commander could easily get out of control and do things that they would be ashamed of later. I think that could be one reason so many Vietnam vets have had mental problems related to serving in 'Nam.

After checking out My Lai, we moved on to the Vietnamese Navy Base, a couple of hooches with a boat dock and two Vietnamese junks. It was early afternoon so the men took a break while SSG Cruz Vasquez and I met with the USN Ensign to

work out the details. We were going to be transported in the junks about ten miles south to an area heavily populated with VC. We wanted to hit the beach after dark so we planned to leave around 1900 hours.

The men took the opportunity to rest and write letters. My forward observer found out that a Coast Guard ship with 5-inch guns was operating in the vicinity, so he got their radio frequency and call sign.

At about 1800 hours we loaded the boats, 30 foot long converted fishing boats. We were ready but waited till 1900 hours before departing. It took two hours for the junks to chug along slowly eating the ten miles to our destination. The sea was gentle and rolling, unlike the first time when the huge waves had pounded the junks for the entire trip. It was hard finding landmarks by which to fix our location but I succeeded in doing so. The motors were cut and the junks drifted toward shore. When we got close to the beach, we lowered ourselves off the bow of the boats into the water. For some of us the water was only ankle deep, but for others it was chest deep. It just depended on the waves and the timing.

The first boatload of men ashore immediately set up a perimeter on the endless sand while the second boatload scrambled to shore. The Will Scarlet squad headed west to set up an ambush. Bong spotted some lights in the distance to the northwest, so I grabbed the platoon sergeant, SSG Vasquez, and the medic, Sp4 Hershell Jones (with his M-79 grenade launcher), to go with Bong and me to check them out. We could see the outline of hooches as we peered over the top of a sand dune. We heard voices, to which Bong said, "VC." When I asked how he knew they were VC, he said, "I speak same-same them. They VC."

We tried to get closer but an illumination round burst in the sky a few miles inland. Evidently the VC guard had spotted us and alerted the others because one man ran out of a hooch only ten feet away and fired a couple of rounds over our heads with an SKS or maybe a carbine, judging from the sound. We missed him but nailed the two VC behind him. We rushed into the village capturing one male and one female VC.

After returning to the platoon, we packed up and moved up the beach before setting up for the night. Bong then had a chance to interrogate the prisoners. "He said there beaucoup VC and beaucoup booby traps," Bong told me after talking with the captives. It was midnight by the time my men got any sleep. It was later than that for me.

My forward observer wanted the Coast Guard to fire some spotting rounds from their ship just in case we needed support later. I really thought he was just playing but it did sound like fun, so I told him to go ahead. Using the frequency and call sign we had obtained from the Ensign, we

contacted the ship. The radioman asked, "What are you guys, Gyrenes?"

"Negative," we answered. "We're just a bunch of ground pounders looking for support."

After some chitchat, he said, "I don't know who in the hell you are, but we'll fire for you."

We gave him the coordinates for an area about 500 meters to our northeast and requested the fire mission. The ship must have been pretty far out because we didn't even see the flash. However, we did hear the whistling sound that accompanies an artillery round flying overhead, and then we saw it hit right on target, first shot. We picked out a few more targets, had him fire and record these coordinates for reference points just in case we needed fire support later.

Early the next morning before dawn, SSG Vasquez observed movement on the horizon. Two of my men and I moved toward the group of people Vasquez had spotted. As we approached them, two ran off down the beach. We chased them, but they didn't stop until one of my men put a bullet through one of the VC's shoulders. I was amazed when the VC stopped and one said "I give up" in fluent English. After we captured them, Doc Jones patched up the wounded man before we secured them with the other prisoners.

At dawn we headed inland. Knowing that the area was heavily booby trapped, I ordered the prisoners to walk point. I knew that they knew how to get through the minefield and we followed their lead.

One squad searched a small hamlet while another headed out to set up an early morning ambush. The Will Scarlet squad spotted a VC wearing a blue uniform heading into a hamlet. When the VC saw my men, he ran but was halted by a 400-meter shot fired by Sp4 Mike Kilian. This VC was identified as a supply sergeant. Will Scarlet captured three more VC who were trying to escape the village. The next thing I heard was a loud explosion and I knew we had trouble. The Little Al squad had tripped a booby trap. Immediately I got on the radio, contacted the other squad, and found out the booby trap had killed one sniper who was working with us and wounded another along with Jack Rogers, one of the squad members. I called for a dustoff.

Jack would later describe the incident. "When I was hit, I was with both of our snipers who were with Little Al. It was getting hot and we were going to set up for awhile. Both of the snipers were from California, so we were going to talk about all the places we had in common and about the real world. Neither one of them had been in country that long and you know how it is if you can get some news from home."

"There was a hedge row and some trees off to the right of us. The squad spread out and we went to the hedgerow. I was going to set up in the sun. One of the guys said, 'Let's go under the trees and get out of the sun.' I was not thinking because I just came back from R&R and said, 'That sounds great.' Well, normally, I would not have gone under the trees because there were too many leaves and junk on the ground (good place for a booby trap). Well, we went under there where it was a little cooler. I was looking for a place to sit down and started to sit in a spot but something changed my mind (Guardian Angel). I moved about two or three steps away, and all of a sudden it sounded like a grenade had gone off next to me. I jumped into a hole at the same time and actually could not hear anything so I yelled out, 'Who's throwing grenades?' never thinking that we had hit a booby trap. As I got out of the hole I was in, I couldn't find anyone. Well, as it turned out, one of the snipers had sat down in the exact spot that I had just walked away from. I found him face down and was about to try to help him when Radke came running in under the trees. He helped me turn him over and we realized he was dead. I told Radke we needed to find the other guy. He had to be around there somewhere."

Well, as it turned out, he had been wounded in the jugular vein, grabbed his neck, and run out of there to the open area and collapsed. As Radke and I came out of the trees, Doc Janes was right helping the other sniper. I figured Doc had run a one-minute mile to get there. It wasn't until I sat down in the open area that someone came over, I can't remember who, and told me that I was wounded in the back shoulder from the flying metal. He tried to put one of those bandages on it, but it just wouldn't stay on."

"They put me on the chopper with the one dead sniper. I'm not sure how the other guy got in, he was probably on there too, but I figure I was in partial shock. Needless to say, I didn't go back out in the field because of the broken ear drum and nerve damage to my back, but they didn't send me home either. I ended up pulling permanent bunker guard duty the last three months."

After the dustoff chopper picked up the dead and wounded, we detonated other booby traps that had failed to go off. The pointman, Sp4 Truman Hall, had tossed his pack on one, while another one was found on the path that the stretcher bearers had used to get to the chopper.

A little later that day a helicopter came in to pick up the prisoners and the gear of the dead and wounded. Dennis Thornton from the Stars and Stripes decided he had had enough and caught a ride back to the safety of the rear. It was only the first day of a four-day mission.



Photos: Truman Hall ready to load up. Sgt. Clyde Shirron, Lt Tom Waterbury and Kit

Carson Scout Bong heading out to sea. One of the two boats we used. (Tom Waterbury)

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Eligibility for Membership

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

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

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

Dedication

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

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Editor-in-Chief
James C. Buckle

Harwich, MA 02645

April - May - June 2003

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