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★ VIETNAM



FOUNDED 1945

AMERICAL NEWSLETTER

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

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: JAMES C. BUCKLE

VIETNAM EDITOR: DAVID L. RECOB

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THE AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION - P.O. BOX 1381, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02104

HERO OF BOUGAINVILLE



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A by-law change, approved by a National Ballot, now makes Chapter Commanders members of the Executive Council.

AMERICAL NEWSLETTEREDITOR-IN-CHIEF

James C. Buckle
Wakefield, MA 01880

Telephone [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

VIETNAM EDITOR

David L. Recob
Topeka, KS 66611-2132

Telephone [REDACTED]

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

It has been a very busy couple of months for the volunteers who are helping to run the A.D.V.A.. Membership is working hard trying to get the word out, so that we can reach those potential members that have never heard of our Association. Remember to get us those copies of old orders that re in your closet.

We will be actively involved in two reunions to be held; one this September in Kokomo, IN, and the other the dedication of the Women's Vietnam Memorial that will take place in Washington, DC this coming Veteran's Day.

Our Museum Committee is still working on the delicate situation of finding a home for our museum. This will hopefully be resolved in the near future, and then we can grow even stronger.

Our Computer network is working well. There are quite a few association members now on line. I have joined the Americal Division Forum of the National Video Network, and it is great to communicate across the country with other members for the cost of a local phone call. Man thanks to the members who have developed this. If you have a computer and a modem, this is for you.

The National Reunion to be held in the Catskills, NY, June 9-12, 1994 should be well attended. This is a good opportunity to get that buddy to come or even invite your unit to have their reunion in conjunction with ours. It should make for a fantastic reunion if everyone attempted to get that one old buddy to come too.

John "Dutch" DeGroot
National Commander

REPORT OF MUSEUM COMMITTEE

When it was announced that Fort Devens was due to be closed it became imperative that the Americal Division Veterans Association consider the possibility that the Americal Museum would have to be relocated.

PNC Peter J. Messina, then National Commander, appointed a committee to investigate several locations that might seem to be a suitable home for the Museum.

The committee was composed of Chairman William J. McLaughlin, PNC Alfred R. Doig, PNC Kenneth R. Turner, PNC Bernard C. Chase and Colonel Pike.

It is the recommendation of the Committee that the Americal Museum be moved to the former National Guard Armory in Worcester, Massachusetts.

This Armory is the oldest National Guard Armory in the United States and is being restored with a Federal grant. Worcester is the second largest city in Massachusetts and is centrally located.

Our quarters will be one half of the second floor ---five spacious rooms---all contiguous for display, storage, or office space. Some display cabinets are available and also toilet facilities.

We are offered this area rent free with free moving and storage. The National Guard will also advertise the Americal Museum nationally.

MONTHLY A.D.V.A. MEETINGS

October 9, 1993
Americal Museum Fort Devens, MA
General Meeting 1:00 P.M.

November 13, 1993
Americal Museum Fort Devens, MA
General Meeting 1:00 P.M.
Americal Museum Fort Devens, MA

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER

TAPS TAPS TAPS

Michael J. Florio Sr.
182 Infantry
Northampton, MA
Date Unknown

Howard Bush
26 Signal Co.
San Marco, CA
June 30, 1992

Americo A. DeFeo
182 Infantry E Co.
Revere, MA
June 7, 1993

Donald M. Richards
221 Field Artillery
Concord, NH
July 1993

Rev. Neil Higbee
164 Infantry
Sedro Wooley, WA
August 28, 1993

Frank Quinn
132 Infantry F Co.
Salem, OH
April 11, 1993

Angelo M. Todisco
101 Medical Regiment
Winthrop, MA
July 24, 1993

William F. Kerivan
182 Infantry D Co.
Wellesley, MA
August 18, 1993

CONVALESCING

23 MILITARY POLICE

164 INFANTRY

David L. Recob
Topeka, KS 66611

Joe D. Feeler
Albuquerque, NM 87110

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Charles R. Anderson
196 LIB A/146 Inf
Montgomery, AL
Bill Maddox

Harvey G. Bell
196 LIB F/17 Cav
Hayward, CA
Maurice Henson

Joe E.M. Cuellar
164 Infantry 2/Hq
Corrales, NM
Joe Feeler

Bob Kapp
198 LIB C/5/46 Inf
Tampa, FL
#Ron Ward

Amy Lazar
Red Cross 312-91 Ho
Shawnee, KS
David Recob

Bernie G. Moyeda
198 LIB
San Bernardino, CA

Charles R. Anderson
196 LIB A/146 Inf
Montgomery, AL

Harvey G. Bell
196 LIB F/17 Cav
Hayward, CA

Joe E.M. Cuellar
164 Infantry 2/Hq
Corrales, NM

Bob Kapp
198 LIB C/5/46 Inf
Tampa, FL

Amy Lazar
Red Cross 312-91 Ho
Shawnee, KS

Bernie G. Moyeda
198 LIB
San Bernardino, CA

ARE YOUR DUES PAID?

NEW MEMBERS

Andrew Adams III
11 LIB
San Antonio, TX
#PNC R. Castronova

Robert Alexander Sr.
HHC Americal
New York, NY
#PNC R. Castronova

Robert G. Anderson
132 Infantry K Co.
Rockford, IL
#R. Castronova

Terry L. Baggs
11 LIB D/3/1 Inf
Lima, OH
#PNC R. Castronova

Byron Bennett
164 Infantry H Co
Bellevue, WA
#PNC R. Castronova

David J. Berkely
182 Infantry I Co
Newton, MA
#R. Castronova

Donald E. Biel
182 Infantry D Co
Saun Lake, AZ
#R. Castronova -

Ken Bosc
11 LIB A/4/21 Inf
Terre Haute, IN
#PNC R. Castronova

Loren Ted Bouldin
198 LIB D/1/46 Inf
Stratford, TX
#PNC R. Castronova

Ronald F. Brown
198 LIB D/1/52 Inf
Dumfries, VA
#PNC R. Castronova

Robert K. Brown Jr.
196 LIB A/4/31 Inf
Fuquay-Varina NC
#PNC R. Castronova

William J. Bruinsma
11 Infantry A/6
Alto, MI
#P. Santogeanis -

John C. Bullock
14 Cmt Avn 71 Avn C
Redondo Beach, CA
#PNC R. Castronova

Robert E. Butcher
182 Infantry H Co
Lakeland, FL
#John Groppi

Nicholas Capezza
11 LIB C/1/20 Inf
Babylon, NY
#PNC R. Castronova

Peter Chelemados
USAT John Erickson
Seattle, WA
#Jim buckle

Michael S. Chu
75 Rangers G Co
Honolulu, HI
#PNC Castronova

Harrol Collins
164 Infantry H Co
Madison, MN
#PNC R. Castronova

Bill Connolly
11 LIB A/4/3 Inf
Asheville, NC
#PNC R. Castronova

Milton Cusher
182 Infantry L Co
Canton, MA
#PNC R. Castronova

James R. Daly
182 Infantry
Long Beach, CA
#Castronova - Bill

George E. Davis
U.S. Navy
Laguna Beach, CA
#Joe Feeler

Joseph DeStasio
HHC Americal Div
Highland Mills, NY
#PNC R. Castronova

Steve J. Dempsey
132 ASH
Poland Spring, ME
#PNC R. Castronova

Leonard H. Drabus
164 Infantry F Co
Harvey, ND
#PNC R. Castronova

Ollie Droganes
182 Infantry Hq/1
Florence, KY
#PNC R. Castronova

Albert A. Duncan
132 Infantry A Co
Tallassee, AL
#Bernie Chase

Tom Ellis
196 LIB B/2/1Inf
Columbus, OH
#PNC R. Castronova

Wayne C. Erickson
82 Arty B/1/82
Wenatchee, WA
#Self

Eugene D. Finn
182 Infantry A Co
Boston, MA
#Self

HAVE YOU CALLED THAT BUDDY YET?

NEW MEMBERS

- William P. Finn
198 LIB HHC 87 Chem
Somerville, MA
#Kenneth Turner

Richard C.
523 Sig HHD
Oaks, PA
#PNC R. Castronova

James W. Gales
196 LIB B/2/1 Inf
Glendale, WI
#Bernie Chase

Louis Garza
11 LIB
San Antonio, TX
#PNC R. Castronova

George Graan
198 LIB HHC/1/6 Inf
Calumet City, IL
#Self

Wallace E. Herman
11 LIB C/1/20 Inf
Havana, ND
#Marlin Egeland

Melvin C. Ickert
Bill Maddox
Waco, TX
#William Maddox#

James Lowerly
196 LIB 1/46 Inf
Waupun, WI
#PNC R. Castronova

Walter J. Moeller
198 LIB A/1/52 Inf
Springfield, VA
#William Maddox

Santos M. Rivera
196 LIB
Brooklyn, NY
#Americal Museum

Ward Weaver
11 LIB
Taamal, CA
#PNC R. Castronova

Donald I. Wiess
11 LIB 6 SPT C-Med
Vancouver, WA
#PNC R. Castronova
- James Foley
3142 Ord 101 QM
Southbridge, MA
#Castronova - Lindon

Charles E. Gabbert
3142 Ord 101 QM
Morgantown, WV
#Castronova - Lindon

Francis P. Gallagher
HHC 23 S+T
Rochester, NY
#PNC R. Castronova

Alberto Gonzalez
198 LIB C/1/6 Inf
Woodside, NY
#PNC R. Castronova

Dan Heller
1 Infantry HHC1/46
Waupun, WI
#PNC R. Castronova

John L. Husky
11 LIB 6 SPT C-Med
Salem, NH
#PNC R. Castronova

David T. Jones
11 LIB B/1/20 B/4/24
Reynoldsburg, OH
#PNC R. Castronova

Carl Luebking
11 LIB B/4/3 Inf
Concord, OH
#PNC R. Castronova

Dean C. Nelson
14 CAB 178 ASHC 16
Mountiew, MN
#R. Castronova

Howard R. Thomas
Spec Troops Hq.
Bloomington, MN
#John Slaver

Howard A. Webb Sr.
221 FA B Btry
Apopka, FL
#E.R. Horton
- #SPONSORS

ATTENTION ATTENTION ATTENTION

If you are moving, or planning to move, please notify this Headquarters as soon as possible. Our cost for return postage has skyrocketed and your help in reducing this cost will be greatly appreciated. Send your change of address to:

- Adj. Bernard C. Chase
South Yarmouth, MA
02664

OR

James C. Buckle
Wakefield, MA
01880

IN MEMORIAM

REV. NEIL M. HIGBEE

It is great regret that we announce that on August 28, 1993 our National Protestant Chaplain, ADVA, died at Sedro Wooley, WA of complications associated with two succeeding strokes. Rev. Higbee was appointed National Chaplain in 1991 and quietly conducted his duties, including letters of condolence to families of departed comrades. Many members will remember his fine service at our National Reunion in 1987 in Reno, NV and his generous contribution of the collection for the impressive floral wreath to be placed at the Vietnam Memorial during the dedication.

Neil joined the North Dakota National Guard Co. K, 164th Infantry Regiment, in 1939 and was with them at Camp Clairborne and New Caledonia. He served with the 164th on Guadalcanal, as a member of the Band and as a stretcher bearer. He was reassigned to the 18th General Hospital and was transferred to the China-Burma-India Theater of operations in 1944. He was discharged at Ft. Lewis, WA in 1945 and married his wife Amy the same year.

After WW II he received his B.A. at Whitworth College, Spokane, WA, and his Th.B at Dubuque Theological Seminary, Iowa. He was very dedicated to his calling and generally served small churches, where he felt the need was the greatest. He had retired after 35 years of active church assignments in Illinois, South Dakota and Washington state. Even after retirement he was called upon frequently to conduct military funerals in his area.

He is survived by his wife Amy and children in the Sedro Wooley, WA area. Donations to the Americal Scholarship Fund, made in his memory, would be appreciated by his family.

Lloyd Morrell

Ed Note: Rev. Neil Higbee will certainly be missed by his many friends and all the people whose lives he has touched.

I for one remember the Memorial Service that Rev. Higbee arranged for the National Reunion in Reno. It was without a doubt one of the most impressive services that I have attended.

JOE D. FEELER

The officers of the A.D.V.A. wish to say a great big "THANK YOU" to Joe D. Feeler, the retiring Commander of the Far West Regional Chapter.

With a great deal of hard work, and surely some disappointments, he has built this Chapter into the second largest in our organization.

Physical problems are no stranger to Joe and this problem will not lick him. He will be in the background watching over 'his' Chapter.

Again, many thanks. Our thoughts and prayers will be with you.

CHAPTERS

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

Regional Commander
Thomas P. McQuade
Nalcrest, FL 33856-6345

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AR, LA, MS, OK, TX

Regional Commander
Ernest B. Carlson
Fredericksburg, TX 78624
Telephone

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

Regional Commander
Rush G. Propper
Swartz Creek, MI 48473

FAR WEST REGIONAL CHAPTER
AZ, CA, CO, HI, NV, UT, NM

Regional Commander
Lewis C. Turner
Oroville, CA 95966-5643
Telephone

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Plymouth & Wareham & South of the Canal

Cape Cod Chapter Commander
William J. McLaughlin
Marston Mills, MA 02648

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DC, DE, KY, NY, OH, PA, VA, WV, MD, NJ

Eastern Regional Commander
Stephen N. Dennison
Pittsburgh, PA 15227
Telephone

CENTRAL MID WEST CHAPTER
IA KS MO NE ND SD

David L. Recob
Topeka, KS 66611
Tel:

HAVE YOU JOINED A CHAPTER YET?
HAVE YOU PAID YOUR CHAPTER DUES?

NORTH WEST CHAPTER
ALASKA, WASHINGTON, OREGON, IDAHO,
MONTANA, WYOMING

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT
Lloyd J. Morrell
Redmond, OR 97756-9612

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT
ROLAND T. CASTRONOVA
PEABODY, MA 01960

CHAPTER NEWS

SOUTH MID WEST CHAPTER

Chapter Commander
Ernest B. Carlson
Fredericksburg, TX 78624
Tel-
Secretary/Treasurer
Malcolm P. East
Lumberton, TX 77656
Tel-

Sergeant-at-Arms Jesse J. Mendoza

As I write this letter, the old "Yankee Division" has become history. However, our great 182nd Infantry, in part, still carries on the tradition that began on 7 October 1636.

I regret to report, one more time, that our Chapter Members have sent me nothing to report in this Newsletter.

However, on August 27, 1993 the Americal was represented once again by this Chapter in the 105th consecutive Gillespie County Fair Parade, here in Fredericksburg, Texas.

The trailer and pick-up were decorated for the float by Jim Strackbein 3/3/16 Arty-Vietnam and he was assisted by Alfred 'Bruce' Mobley D/182 Infantry WWII and myself D/HQ Co/ Hq 182 Infantry.

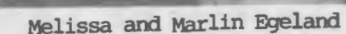
We were greatly honored by the presence on our float, of Julia Patch Diehl, daughter of our beloved Major General Alexander Patch---the first Commanding General of the Americal. Mrs. Diehl was joined by her husband Chandler. We greatly appreciated their being with us.

Everything went smoothly, except, when we passed the reviewing stand they announced the float as being the AMERICAN Division. We are trying very hard to keep this from happening, as it does time after time.

Nothing more in the news line except that it's NO NEWS that about 50 % of the South Mid-West Chapter members have not paid their 1993 DUES!

Ernest B. Carlson
Chapter Commander

ARE YOUR DUES PAID?



VIETNAM NEWS NETWORK

Mr. William Trubiano

Camarillo, CA. 93012-5419

Aug 2, 1993

Dear Dave:

Seabee Friendship Festival was held at Port Huemene, CA on June 5-6, 1993. At the Vietnam Vets booth, they were barbecuing polish sausages. I was in Co B, 57th Engineers, Americal Division in WW2, and I met Michael French from the 23rd Inf Div [Americal].

French is trying to locate Steven "Slim" Colpepper" from the Buffalo, NY area. Use my address.

We talked about the Americal Division's role in WW2 and in Vietnam and had a great time.

Besides food booths, there were amusement rides, pony rides, cars on display, tour on a Coast Guard Ship with a Rescue Helicopter, military equipment and vehicles displays.

I ended the day with a tour of the C.E.C. Seabee Museum.



Bill Trubiano [center] & friends

Maria T. McCormick

Rocky Point, NY 11771

July 3, 1993

Dear Dave:

I would publicly like to thank the Americal Newsletter and past Vietnam Editor Mr. Ron Ward for helping my family and myself locate individuals who served with my cousin SSG Russell A. Pedersen. My cousin served in Co B, 3/1st Inf, 11th LIB. He was KIA on Sept 11, 1968 during a mortar attack on a hill in Quang Ngai. Although my cousin served only a short three months in Vietnam, I felt somewhere, someone, might remember him. I wrote Ron Ward explaining my situation. A few times during the year 1991-1992 he printed a few of my adds and articles.

It seems that last August 1992 the right people were reading the right articles at the right time. A year of putting adds in numerous military papers, keeping a post office box and countless phone calls - paid off!

I found three members of that company. Most importantly, I found the Medic from Minneapolis who remembered Russ and was with him at the time of his death.

This information has been a comfort and God sent to our family even after 25 years. Russ's parents, especially was happy, as he was their only child. Last November I went down to the Vietnam Veterans Wall in Washington, D.C. for the Tenth Anniversary. I had the pleasure of meeting Ron Ward. The Medic also flew in for the Veterans Day

ceremonies, and I got to meet him. Again, thanks to the Americal and Ron to help bring to a close a 25 year search to put a mystery to rest.

I encourage all those who are in search for a buddy, or for a family member who seeks information about a loved one who was KIA to "NEVER GIVE UP!" Sometimes it just takes time.

Vietnam was not just about dying. It was about surviving!

Gratefully,

Maria T. McCormick
Rocky Point, New York

A 'MINI' REUNION IN TOPEKA

Dear Dave:

After a wait of 22 years, two Americal Division veterans were reunited at the 1993 ADVA Reunion in Topeka. Tommy Poppell of Panama City, FL., and Gary Noller of Long Beach, CA., both came half way across the country to see each other at the Topeka, Kansas event.

In 1970-1971, Poppell and Noller were Radio Telephone Operators [RTO] in Vietnam with Company B, 1/46th Infantry, 196th LIB, Americal Division. While they served much of their time together, Poppell was the senior of the two and eventually trained and was succeeded by Noller as the Company Commo Chief.

During their time in-country, Poppell and Noller saw action in Hau Duc, Tien Phouc, Heip Duc, and Tam Ky areas west of Chu Lai. Most of their time was spent on, near, or at LZ Mary Ann although they also were at LZ Professional and LZ Young for short stays.

At the Topeka Reunion they were able to catch up on the fortunes and misfortunes of the past two decades or so, as well as recall many events of their tour in the jungle. Currently, Poppell owns and operates his own painting contracting company and Noller is an Operations Manager for Koch Carbon, Inc.

As they departed the 1993 Reunion, Poppell and Noller made plans to see each other again. They hope it will be much sooner than another 22 years from now.

Below is a photograph. Noller on left and Poppell on right.

Thanks Dave,

Gary Noller
Long Beach, CA



Ron Ward

St. Louis, MO 63123-6510

Dear Dave:

RESERVATIONS have been made for the Americal Hospitality room in Washington, D.C. on Veterans day:

OMNI SHOREHAM HOTEL

CONTINUES NEXT PAGE

VIETNAM NEWS NETWORK

RESERVATIONS for individual rooms must be made with the Women's Committee. Call 1-800-447-5199 for rooms and reduced travel rates.

The OMNI is adjacent to Rock Creek Park and within walking distance to the National Zoo. Easy access to all points of interest, museums, shopping and sightseeing. Just 20 minutes from National Airport [that's about \$20 by cab] but you're 100 yards from the Woodley Park Metro Station. Take the Metro for only a Buck!

I tried to get our old water hole, the Hotel Washington, but they are already full. The guy's better get their rooms booked ASAP. Looks like the town will be filling up for this dedication.

I'll be in town myself, November 10 thru 14, staying at the OMNI. It's HQ Hotel for the Women's Memorial Project Committee. We can expect other units to be hosting hospitality at this Hotel also.

I booked our suite for one night only. November 11, Veterans Day. It was \$425.00 so that about shot the \$500 the Association allocated. If we get some Interest from the guy's to buck-up a donation, we have an option for November 10. But - we have to hurry!

Best Regards,

Ron Ward
Past Nat'l Commander.

THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT

To all of you who wrote to tell me you were not offended by my remark about "REMF's" in the last issue on page 17 of the NL entitled "Bloopers & Blunders" and understood, I'd like to say "thanks". But - let me explode a myth once and for all.

I know the term was born in the field by "grunts" who felt that they were being used as "cannon fodder" by the rear echelon "brass" and that the brass had no idea of what a field grunt went through.

These "kids" thought the Vietnam war was the only war ever fought.

The guys in the rear had a real tough job. They had to make sure that everything the guy in the boondocks used, eat, or shot at the enemy with, was in working order, good, and wholesome. It did not bother if it was shots from the medics, food from ration break down, plans from headquarters, anything on wheels, etc., it had to work or it would or could cost a life. That fact alone is what drove the rear echelon troops from sunup to sundown to make sure everything worked. It had to be. If everyone carried a rifle, who would fix things that broke, cook food we eat, procure the things we use, hook us up to talk to each other, build a bridge to cross to come see each other or get to the enemy, and yes - even direct traffic and enforce the laws of the military community. So - it was a trade off. Guy's served where their MOS and TO&E skills were to be used.

The war zone was everywhere. No one escaped. I as a career soldier was and am proud of every soldier who was in Vietnam either as an 11B or other combat arms MOS as well as those who had specialty MOS's that kept them occupied in the rear area. All of you are my Brother. Those who ridicule, those who chant and dap, those who rap, and those who made us well as can be to fix our torn bodies, and who tended our religious needs, all made the wheel turn towards completion of the assigned mission our units achieved in war.

If one of us is offended by what I said, I made my apology, and feel better for it. Think what you will. It

is your right to feel that way. The mark of an intelligent soldier is to have broadened horizons and not be affected by limited or short sighted visions. Grunts did not win the war in Vietnam. We all did as a team through team effort.

When I took this job as Vietnam Editor I told everyone that my column would be representative of all sides. It still is. I just believe we don't have to offend each other with offensive "fighting words" because we lack the ability to express ourselves. The fact men make mistakes is the reason pencils usually have no erasers left when needed.

I recently got a letter from a guy in Iowa who is really "hung up" on his role as a grunt in Vietnam and who "hated" rear echelon people, especially MP's. He said I was the biggest REMF of them all, and his major vocabulary word centered on the F word of REMF. He carries a monkey on his back over 22 years, and ended his nastiness with saying he became a REMF the last two months of his tour as a "clerk and a jerk". With his own word in his own hand, his last word named him best. So - with the ground work settled, I try to avoid "fighting words" and when I get caught and chastised over them, I take my medicine and shrug it off as part of the job. Someone has to maintain and man the complaint department of this organization.

Another fellow from California, who was in WW II as a member of Co E, 164th Inf Regt, Americal Division, was kind enough to send me some copy on Willy & Joe from Stars & Stripes fame who had their own ideas on rear echelon troops to show me that this subject was as hot an issue in WW 2 as it was in Vietnam. He later finished his career in the Navy. And - Willy & Joe were my favorite characters while I was in uniform the same time. I am not a kid California. Spent 25 wonderful years in the Army, capped off with two tours in Vietnam.

So with all this being said, let me say that I would not trade this job and the benefits, good or bad, that each mail delivery brings to me, every day. Sometimes a letter hits the round file immediately, others sometimes those who are lucky, get a reply, and the gems of wit or information, get to see print. I appreciate all the letters of encouragement and even the "where do you get off from" letters, and I read every one of them, sometimes cry, and sometimes roll on the floor with laughter as I did over Jerk from Iowa. And, the stuff California sent on Willy & Joe, I loved every page of it. You made my day pal.

Thanks To All Of You,

Dave Recob

CUT OUT AND POST ON BULLETIN BOARDS

DID YOU WEAR THIS PATCH???

AMERICAL DIVISION veterans association

PO Box 1381 BOSTON, MA 02104



NATIONAL NEWSLETTER NATIONAL COMPUTER NETWORK

REUNIONS

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A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE

MEMBERSHIP KIT

SUPER MARKETS CHURCHES SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER
PLACE ON CAR WINDSHIELDS

VIETNAM NEWS NETWORK

Dave Recob
Vietnam Editor
ADVA
18 Aug 1993

Dear Dave:

I wanted to write to let you and the other members of ADVA to know about the recent [no date mentioned] reunion in Phoenix between the Vietnam Helicopter Crewmans Association and the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association. It was the first time that both outfits had a joint reunion and it went beyond anyone's expectations. The Pilots took over two Hotels and the Crewmen took over the Safari resorts Hotel in Scottsdale. We even got to shoot the M-60 machine gun again along with the wives down at a place called Mandell's gun room. It was the first time in 25 years or more for many of us. It was a 4 day event that will be remembered for a long time to come. Many old friendships were renewed and many new ones started. The camaraderie was tremendous.

On another note. In the last issue of the Newsletter you advised the members to file for any benefits or medals they may be entitled to. I can tell you from first hand experience persistence does pay off. In the March 1992 issue of the VFW Magazine there was an article about certain periods of service in Korea being eligible for the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal. I served in Korea before my Vietnam duty and my dates of service had coincided with the requirements for the Medal, so I filed and got notice from the Awards and Corrections branch that it was under investigation and due to the cut back in federal personnel it would take time and to be patient. Well I got the announcement of the award in July 1993 and a notice advising me that the Medal would be sent to me in about 200 days due to the back log of requests. At least my 201 file will be corrected to reflect it and I will eventually get the Medal. My point is that I would have never known I was entitled to the Medal if I did not belong to the VFW. I am surprised how many vets don't belong to it. You may be missing out on some benefits that are due you or your family by not being aware of all the veterans benefits and changes in the VA. "Just remember: They are not going to come looking for You!"

Sincerely,

Tony Percoskie
178th Door Gunners

Ed note: Tony was an MP in the 23rd MP Co when he volunteered for door gunner duty in 1967. He was an original member of Task Force Oregon in the 196th Inf Bde MP's but was "shanghaied" [sic] to the 23rd MP's. Thanks for the letter Tony.

Edward W. Ostrosky
Tembe Elephant Park
[REDACTED]
Republic of South Africa

7 August 1993

Dear David:

I am writing you after receiving a copy of your letter, dated February 23rd from Randy Murphy in Petoria, South Africa.

It certainly was a surprise for me when I got a call from Randy shortly after I joined the Americal Veterans Association, and as he has perhaps told you, we have had our "second reunion" here in Tembe Park recently. I have been in South Africa for most of the time since I left Vietnam in 1970. I have had little contact with other

veterans, and when Randy and I sat down and talked about our experiences with the 1/46th Inf it brought back many memories. I have been lucky enough to regain contact with a few other men I served with in both the 3/21st Inf and the 1/46th Inf since I joined the Association, and I thank-you for that.

When I left Vietnam I had saved enough for a short hunt in Africa which had been my dream for years. And - a few short months after Vietnam, here I was in the Matetsi area of Rhodesia [now Zimbabwe]. In a few years I had returned to work in the African bush in conservation just as Rhodesia's bush war heated up!

As a Ranger and a Senior Ranger with Rhodesia's Parks and Wildlife Department, I served on three stations in the northern part of the country: Wankie, Chizarira, and the Zambezi Valley. I had a short period of old style game ranger work before the war caught up with me. As a single man I was in demand for service on remote stations, and though our task of conserving wildlife remained the same, my lifestyle was nearly that which I had experienced in Vietnam. As officials we were targets for ambushes, camp attacks and landmines and had to operate accordingly. I remained through the change of government and left Zimbabwe in 1982.

On taking up my post with KwaZulu's Bureau of Natural Resources, I was tasked with establishing the Tembe Elephant Park in Maputaland on the Mozambique border. After gaining the support of the local chief and his tribe of warriors, we spent years dealing with problem animals, fencing, building camps, reintroducing some species, and conducting anti-poaching work. In 1990, the administration of the nearby Ndumo Game Reserve was added to my duties.

As the reserves are located on the border with Mozambique, which has been torn by a civil war for decades, and with the present changes in South Africa, managing the reserves is a challenging task. Security and law enforcement takes up an ever increasing portion of my time and that of my officers and game scouts.

The Tembe Elephant Park is the home of the last natural population of elephant on the coastal plain of South Africa. These elephants have been relentlessly persecuted for years, and are very wild, and can be very aggressive. Many animals are wounded and recently a dedicated game scout was killed when he tried to assist a companion who was charged at close range.

The reserve has been completely fenced to protect local people and their crops from the elephants, and to keep the elephants moving into Mozambique or other areas where they would be hunted by gangs armed with military weapons. Both meat and ivory are in demand.

Ndumo and Tembe both have populations of white rhinoceros, and Ndumo has a significant portion of the world's last remaining black rhinoceros. Both species are endangered due to the demand for their horns which are used for medicine in the Far East, and for dagger handles in the Middle East. It is unfortunate that so much of conservation efforts must now be directed to securing the safety of the last remaining big game and that part of our uniforms is an automatic weapon and a flak jacket.

Having lived overseas for many years, I have had little chance to talk with other veterans from my unit and I wish I could get a few scraps of information. Perhaps you could help me locate a source, as I am unable to do so from here.

Is it possible to "obtain a list of men" who served in Delta Company, 1/46th Inf during the period August 1969 to July 1970? I can't even put names to many people in photo's, but feel that I could match them up with some names from a list or unit roster 1969-1970.

Looking at some of my maps of our AO I can picture some areas perfectly, and match every contour line with an incident, but I can't place where LZ BOXER was. The 1/46th Inf set up a temporary fire base there over looking Dragon Valley in April 1970. I believe I hooked up the last external load when we abandoned it on 2 May 1970. Would LZ BOXER's grid coordinates be available? The same applies to LZ MARY ANN which we started establishing around Feb

CONTINUES ON PAGE 10

VIETNAM NEWS NETWORK

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE SEEKING INFORMATION

Carl and Judy Peterson, [REDACTED], Opal, SD., 57765, tel: [REDACTED] are seeking information on the whereabouts of Carl's good friend "Homer" Roger Christensen, who was with Carl in Alfa company, 26th Engineers at Hawk Hill near Chu Lai. In May 1971 Carl came home and "Homer" transferred to Da Nang to "stand-down" with the division. They believe he lives somewhere in the South United States and has a Wife who is a Nurse. They would very much like to establish contact if at all possible. Petersons Son served in the U.S. Army 1987-1990 and their daughter served 1990-1993. This is an "all military" family, and can use "a little help!" Send them any information you may have. It is deeply appreciated by the editorial staff.

'THE REST OF THE STORY' A QUEST ENDED

Contributed by Mr. Russell M. Erickson

Dear General Menist:

As a rule I am not at a loss for the proper words to express appreciation. Today I am; as I was when I received your mailing of the 59th Scout Dog Platoon tab, and the 11th LIB patch. My search has been completed. Thank-you.

Enclosed is a copy of an article I wrote that was published in a Chicago paper and an article which appeared in a now defunct specialized magazine.

Because I have no copies of the magazine in which my article was printed, I can only send a photocopy.

Please believe me when I say that I shall not forget your understanding and generosity. Certainly I had given up all hope of ever completing my collection of memorabilia related to my sons stay in the 23rd Infantry Division [Americal].

I will also be greatly indebted to Ron Ward the then Vietnam Editor for the Americal Division Veterans Association's Newsletter.

Again, thank-you!

Sincerely,

Russell M. Erickson

cc: Ron Ward

VN Ed Comment: The above letter is printed and the below article published for the reading information of the membership, to show how the grief of the loss of a Son in war was handled by a tightly knitted family group. Mr. Erickson had sought from the day his Son "Rusty" was killed in Vietnam, July 24, 1968, He had sought accurate information and a scout platoon patch of the 59th Scout Dog Platoon and the major unit patch it was worn above. MGen Robert L. Menist, then a Captain, and Commanding Officer of the unit, recently discovered the quest and came immediately to the aid and assistance of Mr. Erickson by sending him his own personal 59th SD patch and a patch of the 11th LIB the major unit at Duc Pho.

The below article written by Mr. Erickson has a little fiction to fill in missing information on how his son might have been killed and how "Silver" his son's Dog may have had to be destroyed so "Rusty" could be recovered and treated. The article itself has a combined publishing in the magazine "Reflecting" "On Memories of War", Second Issue 1987. The magazine ceased publication several years ago. The newspaper article also appears in the ending.

The article is dedicated to Mr. Erickson's son "Rusty". As Paul Harvey, the Radio Commentator says, "And now, you know, the rest of the story!"

CONTINUES ON PAGE 11

1970.

The last thing relates back to my first request. In May 1970, Delta and other companies of the 1/46th were lifted up to the 3/21st Inf AO and were involved in heavy fighting just below LZ WEST. The CO of Delta was wounded and was replaced by another Captain just arriving for his 3rd tour. I believe this new Captain was killed the same day he took the company to the field. Both names escape me. I spent quite a lot of time talking with him the night before and am ashamed to say I cannot remember his name. Is there anyway to find it out?

Thanks again for your efforts as Vietnam Editor and to the ADVA.

Sincerely,

Ed Ostrosky
B 3/21st Inf & D 1/46th Inf

Ed note: GEE-MENY-GOSH DARN! Can anyone help this Brother with information he is seeking? I know he'd like to hear from any of you guy's in B 3/21st and D 1/46 who was with him in Vietnam. Is there an S-3 Ops somewhere who has a map that he can copy for Ed? Write him guy's - he is our brother and he is hungry for information and a contact. Ed lives a life only guy's can "dream" about in their wildest dreams. He is one of God's Angels on earth caring for God's creatures!

ATTENTION RED CROSS LADIES/MEN WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM

A Red Cross Reunion for all who served with the American Red Cross during the Vietnam era will be held Wednesday, November 10 through Sunday, November 14, 1993. The Reunion will be at the Sheraton National Hotel in Arlington, Virginia, and is being held in conjunction with the dedication of the Vietnam Woman's Memorial on November 11, 1993 in Washington, D.C.

In addition to seminars, and ongoing hospitality suite and a Sunday morning ARCOA brunch, there will be a memorial ceremony in the gardens of the American Red Cross headquarters on Friday afternoon, and a dinner banquet Friday evening at the Sheraton National.

For further information on discount airfares and room rates please write to Red Cross Reunion, 13005 Marquette Lane, Bowie, MD 20715, or call Linda Wilson at 301-805-8221.

Linda Wilson
Reunion Coordinator
Americal Div Red Cross
Sept 1968 thru April 1969

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION/ASSISTANCE

Mr. R.M. Vivas, [REDACTED], Missoula, Montana, 59801-4017, Tel: [REDACTED] or FAX [REDACTED] is seeking any information available from Vietnam veterans who used the Limited War Laboratory modified .44 Cal Magnum revolver's that fired "silent" ammunition, tested by the elements of the 1st Inf Div, 25th Inf Div and the Americal Div during late 1969 usually issued to "tunnel rats" or in some instances recon patrols.

This information is being solicited to support Mr. Vivas who is writing an article about the use of this weapon and he is seeking users input. Write him direct call or fax him at above address and telephone/fax numbers. Your assistance to him would be appreciated.

VIETNAM NEWS NETWORK

"WE HAVE THE FOLDED FLAG"

Contributed by Mr. Russell M. Erickson

The squad was scattered along the trail, alert and cautious. Each soldier was in his own protective yet secure position. They were on a routine security check of the area outside Duc Pho. The area was not declared hostile, yet every caution was exercised.

Suddenly, the well recognized blast of a mine was heard. That was close. Too close. Now the small arms and rifle fire should begin. Nothing! Finally the squad leader called out in a suppressed whisper, "All O.K.?"

Someone near the point man responded with, "No, I think the dog handler got it."

"Check it out."

A few seconds later, "Yeah, he's bad."

"Can you get to him?"

"No."

"What's the problem?"

"It's the dog. It won't let me near him. I think it's flipped."

"He's trained that way. Kill the damned thing."

"But, Sarge..."

"Shoot the dog, and now."

The crack of a rifle and then, "O.K."

That is how it could have happened.

Someone out there knows the true sequence of this event. His family only knows what the handler's commanding officer wrote in the customary letter of commendation and condolence. It was his dog 'Silver' that had tripped the wire. The wire had been set high and the dog's tail activated it. The handler's next step was his last.

The dog that he had been assigned, trained and loved was to be the cause of his end. This possibility never entered our son's mind as he accepted his task down at Fort Benning. This was the start of what was to be the "great adventure."

With training over, our PFC came home for a few days furlough. His dog, SILVER had gone on to Nam ahead of his master. In what seemed like only a few hours we, his family, knew it was time for those heart rending farewells and "see you soon's." Did we believe that? NO! But, we had to. Why do parents fear the worst? Mothers and sisters can say with tear what the "manly" father must convey with a handshake.

He was home on leave from Fort Benning. His halfway point in OCS had been reached. It was time for soul searching. So here we were, father and son, having one of our few man-to-man talks. It would be our last and to be our most vital.

We said good-bye, he and I, at the terminal. We departed. Now the stream of tear could flow. Driving home through a mist of emotion I began to

He was 24 years old, a college graduate, someone who had the right to chose his own life's path. What could a father say? What does a 45 year old man know of the drives inside a son who is just experiencing the overpowering "high" of making a major decision, which he knew was to affect his life forever. What does a father know about such a "high?"

We talked about his future in the Army. He was not satisfied with what future the life of an officer promised. He had fallen victim to those rumors about the estimated life span of an officer in Nam. I could not convince him otherwise. He opted for Scout Dog training.

When he told me just what mission Scout Dog handlers had my heart nearly broke. I had had 5 years in the Infantry National Guard and was very well acquainted with the expected life span of a "point man."

In June of 1968 he arrived in Vietnam and promptly went into action. From his letters we gleaned the impression that much went on that was better for his family not to know. He mentioned a "seek and destroy" mission that he was on. That was all -- no details.

On July 24, 1968 he was dead.

His family learned of his death by the arrival of two men from the Fort Sheridan Corps. His mother saw the Army vehicle drive up and it told the whole story. She had to be tranquilized before my arrival. Both of our daughters were dumb-struck. None of his family would accept this verdict. Not us! Not our son and brother! This isn't the way it was supposed to be. But, hadn't we all already accepted it that fateful day when we said our tear filled good-byes?

I met the casket as it was unloaded at the air terminal. I accompanied it to the mortuary. His mother and I said our private farewell to him there, but the reality still had not sunk in. It was what followed which helped us accept the terrible fact that he was gone forever -- except from deep within our hearts.

Standing off at a distance the bugler played "Taps" after riflemen sent two resounding salutes into the sky. Emotions of family, friends, and empathetic observers ran high as the flag covering the steel gray casket was folded, hugged, and presented to the bereaved mother.

This is part of a scene which has been acted over and over at intervals throughout our modern history.

During the past twenty years we Americans have had three major occasions to "wait at the pier" while bodies of slain servicemen are unloaded. This does not take into account the dead from skirmishes conducted for whatever reason in almost every corner of the world.

In regards to the subject of this essay, I refuse to accept a position of casual observer. I, with his mother and our daughters, was an intimate witness to the scene described in the first paragraph. We have the folded flag and crushed hearts to prove it. We live daily with the hurt, the frustration, the haunting idea that it was all

CONTINUES NEXT PAGE

VIETNAM NEWS NETWORK

a bad dream, and that maybe, even today, our son will come home whole, healthy, and ready to take up where he left off.

How did it all start? One set aside hours of contemplation trying to find and answer. Did it begin with the fantasy as depicted by the late Vic Morrow in the T.V. series "Combat?" Did it begin even before then when he saw his dad all dressed up in his National Guard uniform -- medals, bloused trousers and all?

There is a rumor that there is an undercurrent of competition between son and father. Did my son want to outdo me? Or, was he merely trying to get his military stint over with? He had never tried to be a hero before. Was this his attempt to try to be "somebody" and come back to strut his stuff?

Well, he came back but he was no longer with us. We had his image before us a few days and then we committed him to his final resting place. All we have now is a weathered headstone and still vivid memories and grief that won't stop.

Grief as a result of a loved one lost for no purpose is a destructive force which even the strongest of personalities finds impossible to defeat. Even if a life is lost in a worthy cause (preserving one's life and property), the devastating impact is terrible.

Then, and it seems only then, does one reach out to an invisible body and say in all sincerity, "If I had but only one moment with you before you left us forever." Why was I so afraid to accept the reality of the threat of death? But, oh! no! why should we talk about the threat of tomorrow?

Our parting at the airport was casual (neither dared to show emotion - emotion was not part of our life style), but the heartache was almost beyond endurance. I knew I had to let him go. Yet, a force almost greater than I compelled me to reach out and drag him back - back where he was meant to be. Too late! He disappeared into the crowd. All I had left was the sight of his straight, proud back as he stepped into the unknown.

Three months later the official notice of his death was read to us. It was over for him over there.

When it became my duty to gather up our son's clothing, books, collections, hobby gear, paraphernalia, memorabilia, and all the other items that reminded us of him, I experienced such a moral collapse that I sat for over an hour with tears flooding my face, crying deep inside. "Why why, why, -- oh! why you!" The shock of the loss will, in time, become more acceptable, but the answer to "why" will never come. The word "why" will be forever engraved in the minds of those who grieve. The word "why" will be invisibly engraved on every serviceman's headstone.

It is the word "why" that must be asked out loud. It must be asked of our leaders, it must be asked of ourselves. Why must Americans always be part of a group committed by the U.N. or by a governmental edict? Why are other countries not able to take up their share of the responsibilities at "peace keeping?" Why are we as citizens and parents, willing to condone military commitment without demanding an explanation which we can understand and accept.

Why are we being constantly harangued at to save the world from itself when the world we are to save doesn't want to be saved? Why can't people in other lands live the life they have chosen? Who are we to chose for them?

Does the above "smack" of non-interventionism? You bet it does. It smacks of an attitude which your typical barroom brawler (tattoos and all), would tag anti-American. So be it, but I would ask someone to show me what interventionism has accomplished. Don't say peace in Korea. Recent stories belie that claim. Don't point to Vietnam. Europe is no shining example. Lebanon? Granada? El Salvador? Nicaragua? Iran?

It is obvious we cannot save the world, however we can save the United States and our allies in the Western Hemisphere by keeping our human resources here -- not over there where we won't be back until it's over, over there.

Ed note: The article "We have The Folded Flag" is for the reading pleasure of ADVA members who have followed Mr. Erickson's quest to locate any data on information on a 59th Scout dog Platoon tab and unit patch of the 11 LIB stationed at Duc Pho.

The odds of Mr. Erickson ever contacting the Commanding Officer of his late son Rusty were very slim indeed. Thanks to Ron Ward and the Major General Robert M. Menist, then Captain, the quest has come to an end.

The views expressed by Mr. Erickson are his own and do not necessarily reflect that of the editorial staff.



THE ERICKSON FAMILY 1968



Russell (Rusty) with his dog Silver.



SILVER

VIETNAM NEWS NETWORK

REUNION NOTICE

ALPHA COMPANY 1/46 INFANTRY 196-198 LIB

Anyone who has served with or attached to "A" Company in Vietnam is invited to attend our 6th Reunion that will be held in Key West, Florida in July of 1995. We currently have 120 Vets (1967-1972) on our roster.

For full information write to:

Fred Cowburn

Camillus, NY 13031

Or Call

KHAM DUC REUNION

This Reunion will be hosted by Alpha Company 1/46 Infantry Vietnam Alumni Group in conjunction with our 6th Reunion in July 19, 1995, at the Holiday Inn - Beach Hotel, Key West, Florida. This Reunion is for all service branches that fought in the battle at Kham Duc on May 10-12, 1968. To receive a mailing list of those who may attend and reunion updates contact:

Fred Cowburn

Camillus, NY 13021

Bill Schneider

Barnhart, MO 63012

ATTENTION ATTENTION ATTENTION

There are thousands of eligible members of the Americal Division Veterans Association that have never heard of our organization. I am are trying to contact those men and I need your help.

Dig out those orders - citations - awards - travel orders - anything form that has names and addresses or even just names and serial numbers. Send them to me and I will conduct a search to try to locate these men. Send copies of these forms to:

PNC Roland L. Castronova

Peabody, MA 01960

Write if you have any questions.

5 BATTALION 46 INFANTRY 198 LIB LZ GATOR
E (Recon) Company C Company

I would like to hear from members of E (Recon) Co. and from members of C Co. I was the platoon Medic with E Co from the latter part of November 1969 thru May of 1970. I was wounded on June 10, 1970 while serving with C Co. David Conception-Nieves was KIA on that day.

I would also like to hear from any members of B Co., especially those the were wounded on that terrible afternoon when "Porky" was KIA. I did the best I could for "Porky".

Write to:

Arthur Castillo

Ridgecrest, CA 93555

LRPs --- RANGERS

It has come to my attention that there is some confusion as what the term "LRPs" mean. This has been discussed with other LRPs/Rangers and we have come to the conclusion that LRPs and Rangers are one and the same.

The overwhelming facts are as follows:

1. Settlers of the Eastern British Colonies of America were the first to give a description of "Ranging Men" as far back as 1654. The men of Captain Gorman's Militia were seen moving throughout the woods in small patrols as if stalking deer. They continued this attitude five miles down river. The settlers referring to them as "Rangers."

2. In 1776 Major Thomas Knowlton was ordered to send Long Ranging Patrols (LRPs) deep behind enemy held territory for the purpose of gathering information about the enemy during the Revolutionary War. The information was used to plan and react against British rule over Americans.

3. During the assignment of the 5307th (Provisional) "Merrill's Marauders" later changed to the 475th (Provisional) "Mars Task Force" and then changed again to the 75th (Ranger) Infantry "Long Range Penetration Special" in the Pacific/Asia theater. The term LRPs was first used around 1943.

4. Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP) Platoons was the next terminology used during the era from 1966 to September 15, 1967.

Although these Reconnaissance Soldiers performed as LRRPs, they were not considered Rangers until September 16, 1967.

On this date, the orders of General Westmoreland read: Company size "Ranger-Type" elements will be formed to perform Long Range Patrol missions in support of intelligence gathering efforts. It was at this time that reconnaissance was dropped due to the missions becoming more and more combat missions.

The term LRP lineage was traced to the 74th Ranger Infantry (SSF) and the 75th Ranger Infantry (LRPs). On January 2nd, 1969 LRP Companies were re-aligned as Ranger Companies under the parent organization 75th Ranger Infantry (Airborne). Their mission continued to be Long Range Patrols (LRP). The men performing LRP missions were now officially called "Rangers".

5. There is no question that men serving in "Ranger-Type" LRP Companies are Rangers. It was so ordered on 16 Sep 67. Exceptional work from LRP men was a major contributing factor to press for Ranger Companies back into the Army. "Sua Sponte"! Rangers Lead the Way! Airborne!

John "Gunner" B. Starnes
SFC E-7, US Army (Ret)

Your Vietnam Editor is always happy to hear from readers with stories of interest. Do you have one to share?

VIETNAM NEWS NETWORK

DMZ TO DELTA DANCE '93 HONORING WOMEN WHO SERVED

Sheraton National Hotel
Columbia Pike & Washington Blvd.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1993
8:00P.M. - 1:00P.M.
\$20.00 per person

Hosted by:
VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
CHAPTER 227, NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Includes: Complimentary edibles, Cash Bar,
60's and 70's Music, FREE Parking

For more information write to:

DMZ TO DELTA DANCE

ARLINGTON, VA 22205

OR CALL:

Photo-Copy From Here To The Last Lines Below.

SURVIVORS OF COMBAT TRAUMA

To: Combat Veterans of Any Conflict Diagnosed with Battle Fatigue, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or Shell Shock, and their Families.

Needed: Essays, Art, Poetry, for a new book to help vets:

A Survivor's View of Combat Trauma.

From: The National Trauma Institute At Baltimore, MD, P.O.
Baltimore, MD 21203-1764.

During the war, you risked everything to save the life of a fellow American. You ignored your own pain and fatigue to give comfort to another. Perhaps its the proudest memory you have. "Coming home" - things weren't the same. Something inside felt like it was still up "on the line", still "back in the zone". You felt angry, depressed, alienated, guilty; haunted by dreams and flashbacks. Sometimes you took it out on your family. They told you that you needed help. Maybe they shoved help down your throat. You didn't understand how deeply your wartime experience could still affect you. Maybe you denied it at first. It wasn't easy for you or your family, but you began working through the pain. Now, you know more about Combat Trauma than anyone. Now you can help. The National

Trauma Institute [A non-profit organization governed by treatment professionals, a veteran recovered from PTSD and his spouse] is asking combat veterans and their families to share their experience through their words, art and poetry. We wish to publish a collection of writings and drawings to educate war veterans, their families, medical professionals and the general public about Combat Trauma. Your identity will be kept anonymous. Royalties from the sale of the publication will be used for research and education in the field of Traumatic Stress. Submissions from the veteran and his family should be returned with this form. Some suggestions follow. Please share:

* What having PTSD, Shell Shock or Battle Fatigue means to you; to your family.

* How Combat Trauma makes you feel; how it makes you see your world.

* What you wished you knew about Combat Trauma when you were first diagnosed.

* The most helpful aspects of therapy or the healing experience. What you think family members should know.

* For family members: What you would like to share from your experience with a loved one or friend suffering from Combat Trauma. How you coped.

Putting your experience into words or art isn't easy. What you did during the war or to help your veteran come home wasn't easy, either. But you did it. Give back the help that you received. It made a difference in your life. Make a difference in someone else's.

Note: This whole column can be photo-copied by the veteran and used to cover the stories, art work or the poetry being submitted to the National Trauma Institute.

Make sure you photocopy the data above, plus the form below - which must accompany the data being submitted. Thank-you. The Editor.

AUTHOR/ARTISTS WARRANTY

I expressly warrant that the writing or work contributed to this publication is original, that I am the sole author, and that it has not been previously assigned or published. I understand that the work attached is a contribution to a collective work [also known as a "Work Made for Hire"], that the copyright will be owned by the publisher, and I assign the copyright to my portion of the collective work to the Publisher. I understand the National Trauma Institute is a non-profit, volunteer organization, and that no member, or I will receive payment for the work. I give permission that my work may be edited as necessary for publication. I understand that my identity will be disguised in accordance with professional standards of confidentiality.

Signature. Anonymous constitutes permission to publish. Date

Print Entire First Name, Middle And Last Name.
Check off War duty as applicable:
WWI_WWII_KOREA_VIETNAM_LEBANON_GRENADA_PERSIAN_GULF
OTHER RANK
USA_USAF_USCG_USMC_USN_OTHER
Please limit your response to no more than four 8.5x11" sheets and return to:

The National Trauma Institute at Baltimore, P.O. Box
1764, Baltimore, MD 21203-1764.

"Thank-You For Making A Difference!"

Photo-copy to this Line And Attach to Paperwork submitted.

An Honorary Membership will be awarded to Mrs. Mary Lane at the ceremonies in Washington, DC this coming Veterans Day. Mrs. Lane is the mother of Nurse Lt. Sharon Lane who was KIA in Vietnam on June 8, 1969.

Ronald A. Lipschitz has been appointed by the National Commander to be the coordinator for POW/MIA affairs. Contact him at:

Ronald A. Lipschitz

Bronx, NY 10467

ARE YOUR DUES PAID?

MY APOLOGIES!

On page 10 of the July - August 1993 issue I took the Marines to task for not fulfilling the wish of Sgt. Vouza's son David, by bringing him to visit the United States. (I had met David in August of 1992 and he said that his dream was to visit United States of America.

Harry Horsman, National Historian of the Guadalcanal Campaign Veterans has brought me up to date and I quote from his letter;

The article by Jim Buckle is in error....David Vouza was in the United States and with the MARINES earlier this month. In fact he was quartered in the VIP area of Camp Pendleton. On August 6th he was in Washington, DC accompanied by Major Bill Fisher prior to the 1stMarDivReunion in Houston. He returned to the Solomon Islands on the 19th.

A photo furnished by his escort at Pendleton, Will Bewley (and Ltc Joe Mueller USMC) taken at the Officer's Club and sent into Joe Micek, the Editor of the ECHOES, shows without doubt that it certainly is - David Vouza.

Rest assured that it had been "picked up on" by the Marines.

Sincerely,
Harry R. Horsman

Ed Note: The Marines landed first again! Thanks for correcting me Harry. I didn't do my homework on that one. But then there always was a lack of communication between the Army and the Marines.

MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAL

When my mother (Winifred R. Brabrook) died, I wrote to the Americal Newsletter so that her death could be listed in the "TAPS" section of your Newsletter. Mother was very proud of her service in New Caledonia in a MASH unit, and very proud of her membership in the Americal.

I received two very nice letters of condolence, which were much appreciated. I was also put on your mailing list. I have enjoyed leafing through it and have passed it on several times to a Vietnam vet at work, but I am afraid the names and stories don't have the meaning for me that they had for Mother, so I would appreciate your removing me from your mailing list so that the efforts and cost can be better spent on other veterans who need the contact with your very caring group.

Thank you for your many years of support, to Mother and to all veterans of the Americal Division.

Mary R. Griffin

Ed Note: Thank you for your very kind words. Your wishes will be carried out. (Winifred R. Brabrook was a member of the 109th Station Hospital and she passed away in June of 1991.)

THE AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION
MAKES A GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION TO THE AMERICAN
CANCER SOCIETY AND THE AMERICAN HEART FUND
IN HONOR OF OUR DECEASED MEMBERS

26 SIGNAL COMPANY

The son of John F. Murphy sent in a collection of pictures that had belonged to his father. Included in this collection was the picture below. It was taken on an Observation Post on Guadalcanal that overlooked Sealark Channel. Shown in the picture, from left to right: Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, General Alexander M. Patch, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Admiral William F. Halsey and General Lawton Collins. (The Editor will give a big cigar to the first man that correctly states what is wrong in this picture)

John F. Murphy was a member of the 26 Signal Company and he passed away on April 19, 1989. As soon as more of the pictures are identified they will be put in the Newsletter.



93 INFANTRY DIVISION

A Ph.D candidate in American history at the University of Michigan who is writing a doctoral dissertation on the all-black 93rd Infantry Division's experience in World War II is seeking ex-93rd members to interview.

Former members of the division who to wish to participate may write: Robert F. Jefferson, [redacted], Ann Arbor, MI 48105.

The 93rd served with the Americal on Bougainville. If any Americal member knows a former member of the 93 Infantry Division please pass this info on.

TAPS 101 MED BN. TAPS

Charles A. Drenzo
[redacted]
Newbury, MA 01950
August 23, 1993

F COMPANY 182 INFANTRY

On Sunday afternoon, April 25, 1993, Veterans of Company F 182 Infantry and their guests held their annual Reunion at the Cottage Crest Restaurant in Waltham, Massachusetts.

Americal Division Veterans Association members attending were, Bernard C. Chase, Joseph Chin, Hugh Murnaghan and Kenneth Turner. A group of H Company men, led by John Groppi, also attended.

Red and White long stem roses, provided by Allan Pierce, were presented to the ladies. Music for dinner/dancing was presented by Tony Stifanelli. A melody of Irish and Italian songs were rendered by Co. F's talented Si Iannetti.

The welcoming address and dinner grace were given by John 'Jack' McIsaac.

The traditional moment of silent prayer was given for John LeVert and Joseph Graffeo, whose death occurred since last year's Reunion.

The after dinner speaker, Co-Chairman Joseph Papa, introduced the Co. F committee of Paul Miele, William Vinci, Buddy Lorenz, Hack Cohen, Jack McIsaac, Frank LaValle, and Joe Siano.

Joe Papa announced that this reunion dinner was a "Tribute to John LeVert", and then went on to say, As most of you know John LeVert passed away on October 26, 1992. I would like to take this opportunity to talk about John for a little bit. John and I had been co-chairmen of the Co. F Reunion Committee since 1977 when Joe Siano, in his unique style, informed Joe and me that we had, quote, 'volunteered to be co-chairmen of the Co. F Reunion Committee' unquote. Through this co-chairing John and I became close friends. There was not a week that went by that we would not be on the phone talking.

Without John being here today, it has not been as much fun working and planning for this afternoon's reunion dinner.

Co. F people were a big part of John's life. We had a Co. F foursome consisting of Paul Miele, Frank Rourke, John and myself. It was quite a sight to see these four F Co. men walking down the fairway. In place of field packs and ammo belts, we were now pulling golf carts.

On many occasions we would go out to lunch with John and Agnes, my wife Josephine, myself, and Lefty Mitchell. I am sure Lefty would agree that these luncheons were very enjoyable with a lot of reminiscing and a lot of laughs.

In April of 1991 John and Agnes celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. It was a gala party with live orchestra for dinner and dancing. At this affair there was a Co. F table for John's Co. F buddies and George and Mary Barron sat at the head table.

John's military career began in 1933 when he joined the Co. F National Guard at the age of 17. Then came the often told story of induction into Federal service, on to Australia, New Caledonia, Guadalcanal, Bougainville, and the Philippines. John was among the few men from Task Force 6814 that made it to the Philippines. John came out of the service at the end of World War II. He went back into it in 1949. He retired in 1969 with the rank of Sgt/Maj. John did a lot of overseas duty in Korea, Cambodia, and Japan.

John's family consists of his wife Agnes and his daughter Jean. As you can well appreciate when your loved one is overseas, you do not see much of each other. And when you do have the chance to join them it certainly isn't a place of your choice. Agnes and Jean were able to be with John for a short time in Cambodia and Japan. With John being away so much, Agnes had to be both a mother and a father to their daughter. And there were months of loneliness and sacrifice. And through the hard times, with loyalty and love, she stood by her man.

And it is on this note that it gives me great pleasure to introduce a most gracious lady: Agnes LeVert.

Mrs. Agnes LeVert acknowledged the introduction, thanked the Committee for this tribute to John, and added that Joe Papa had said it all.

Lefty Mitchell made a brief comment about his and his brother Bob's long association with John and stated that John was the perfect looking soldier and with the embodiment of honesty and loyalty.

Good-byes were said and all the attendees look forward to seeing each other again next year.

Joseph Papa, Co-Chairman
1993 Reunion Dinner

OLD AGE IS HELL

Your body gets stiff
You get cramps in your legs
Corns on your feet as big as an egg
Gas on your stomach, elimination is poor
Take Ex-lax at night, and then your not sure
You soak in the tub, or the body will smell
Just like I said, "Old age is hell!"

Teeth start decaying, eyesight is poor
Hair falling out all over the floor
Sex life is short, it's a thing of the past
Don't kid yourself, friends, even that doesn't last
Can't go to parties, don't dance anymore
Just putting it mildly, you're a Hell of a bore
Liquor is out, can't take a chance
Bladder is weak, might pee in my pants
Nothing to plan for, nothing to expect
Just the mailman, with your Social Security Check

Now be sure your affairs are in order,
And your will is made out right
Or, on the way to the grave
There will be a helluva fight
So if this New Year you feel fairly well
Thank God you're alive, although old age is hell

The above poem appeared out of nowhere in our apartment building---94 units of Senior Housing.

Alphonse A. Hudon

TAPS 247 FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION TAPS

Chaplain Arthur O. Hoppe
August 6, 1993

Chaplain Hoppe was a member of Task Force 6814 and when the Americal Division was formed he was assigned to Division Artillery and then to the 247th. Chaplain Hoppe stayed with the Americal until Fiji at which time he returned to the States with a Cadre

AMERICAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

Ms. Lara K. Sweedo
[REDACTED]
Schnecksville, PA 18070

Dear Lara:

As the National Commander of the Americal Division Veterans Association, I am pleased to inform you that you are the first recipient of our Scholarship Foundation Grant, in the amount of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00).

The Trustees of the Scholarship Foundation Board were greatly impressed with your application and its enclosures. There is no question in their minds as to your scholastic aptitude.

The attached check is payable to the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

Lara, may you continue to excel in your academic achievements.

Sincerely,
John H. DeGroot
National Commander

BLACKIE HALLIGAN --- MESSENGER PIGEON

I was reading in the AMERICAL NEWSLETTER of March-April 1993 an article sent in by Bill McLaughlin. It was about the messenger pigeon, BLACKIE HALLIGAN, who was taken on a patrol by the 164th Infantry on Guadalcanal.

My brother, 1st Lt. Alvin Paulson lead a patrol for Co. F, 164 Infantry and we carried a pigeon with us, as radio reception was very limited in the dense jungle. I was a Squad Sgt. at that time.

We made contact with the Japanese and needed artillery support, but we were unable to contact Headquarters by radio. We then fastened the message to his little leg and turned him loose. When he rose above the jungle, we hoped that he knew where he was supposed to go. He got through with the message and we got the artillery support we requested.

We didn't know that the little fellow had a name or that he had been wounded. At least I didn't until after the war when my brother and I read about him in "Under the Southern Cross". Alvin was sure it was us that sent that message with Blackie. It would be nice to know if this is true.

Blackie survived the war and was retired to the Signal Corp Breeding and Training Station. He is probably in an Army Museum now.

My brother Alvin passed away two years ago.

Also in the Jan-Feb 93 Newsletter there was a story about the insignia for the 2nd Battalion, 164 Infantry -- "THE AVENGING 2ND" -- taken on Bougainville.

About May 1944 a prize was offered to whoever made the best insignia. This insignia was to be placed in front of battalion headquarters.

I was Platoon Sergeant of the 1st Platoon of Co. F, 164 Infantry and the men in this platoon, under the guidance of Staff Sgt. Frank Godava, who was from Columbia Heights, MN, and one of my squad leaders, went to work and won the prize.

The prize was a quart of whiskey, which Lt. Col. Samuel E. Gee, the battalion commander, delivered personally. He visited with us for some time and after he left the PRIZE soon became a casualty.

When these events were happening, so long ago, I never thought I'd be writing about them now.

Let us never forget our courageous Combat Medics. Their devotion to duty saved many lives, under the most dangerous and difficult conditions.

John M. Paulson
[REDACTED]
Carrington, ND 58421

P.S. I'm looking for Bernard Cohen from Lowell, MA and Edgar Collins from Windsor, MO. If any one knows these men please call collect [REDACTED].

DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH AMERICAN HISTORY
IS BEING TAUGHT IN YOUR SCHOOLS?

Below is the reply to Bernard Elmore, an Americal member, from the Chrysler Corporation in regards to a suggestion he had mailed to Chrysler.

Dear Mr. Elmore:

Your letter addressed to Mr. Lee Iacocca has been directed to this office in compliance with our policy regarding the handling of suggestions from outside the corporation.

Patriotic themes have been used in advertising programs over the past several years to sell cars and trucks, as well as other "Made in U.S.A." products. This type advertising has worked to a degree. Patriotic buyers usually buy American with minimal encouragement from advertising.

As of today, about 32% of the U.S. car market has been captured by imports. That doesn't sound like patriotism means much to a lot of buyers! Perceived quality and cost are much more important to these folks, and that's understandable. The news media hype on imports and the high dollar-to-yen value have been very important in increased import sales. The dollar is weakening, however, so import prices will increase in the future. Much more needs to be done, though, especially on the part of Congress and the President in addressing our national debt and trade balances.

A final point on patriotism which I believe you'll find of interest. A recent study was conducted on why younger Americans are buying import cars in increasing numbers. One significant fact revealed by the study was that the teaching of U.S. history in our schools is declining. The study of our history has continuously been the primary stimulus for patriotism in young people from the beginning of our country. Today, this subject has been practically removed from the curriculum of many schools. The degradation of U.S. history in education, as well as in the movies and on television, has had a devastating influence on young people regarding patriotic thought.

Thank you for your interest in our country and in Chrysler Corporation.

Sincerely,
R. E. Springer

UNITED STATES ARMY TRANSPORT JOHN ERICSSON

132 INFANTRY REGIMENT

You were kind enough to publish in the March-April edition of the Americal Newsletter my letter regarding the USAT John Ericsson. Your comment at the end was a hope that I would hear from some of the members.

I just want to let you know that I did, and from one of them received the letter, a copy of which I enclose. You can believe that receiving thanks for a small deed over fifty years ago is beyond all expectations. Believe me, it is a letter that I will cherish.

While my contribution to the Americal Division was limited to the carrying of them on a ship on which I was working I would like to subscribe to this Newsletter. Perhaps in the Old timers letters I will find mention of a few of the other friends I made on that trip. Enclose is a check to help cover postage.

By the way I hope you enjoyed the book. Thank you again.

Peter Chelemedos

Ed note: You are now a member of the ADVA. Thank you very much for the book which I intend to read as soon as I get this Newsletter in the mail. Below is a copy of the letter you enclosed.

June 18, 1993

I am answering the article that you had in the Americal Newsletter. My name is Jim Congdon and I was a member of Co. I, 132 Infantry that was aboard the John Ericsson.

I remember very well lining up twice a day for chow, and passing by the crew's messroom, and although I can not remember faces, I remember one of the crew handing out sandwiches because I was a recipient of one of them. "A filet mignon could not have tasted better." I have related this to my wife and children many times.

I was also at Latoka, Fiji on R & R from the Guadalcanal campaign. So perhaps our paths crossed once more.

Although it's been 50 years, it's still not too late to thank you for your kindness.

God Bless you and your family,
Jim Congdon

Commanding General
U.S. Army Combined Arms School
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027



Dear Sir:

On June 25, 1993, the Americal Division Veterans Association, former U.S. Army Troops of World WW II and Vietnam, who wore the patch on their left shoulder on active duty, seen above, toured the School and Post area after a delicious luncheon at the Cross Roads Leadership Club.

It was noted in the Museum that in the parade of Divisional Flags on display, the Americal Division flag was not flown. The Americal Division has a rich and highly decorated career behind it in three wars. It was born in New Caledonia in 1942 from two task forces and was the first division

left unnumbered in the annals of military heraldry. It commenced its battle record on Guadalcanal, where it relieved the Marines in 1942, through the South Pacific to the surrender of Japan in 1945. It was called to active duty in 1950 to provide security for the Panama Canal during the Korean War. In 1967 it was again called to active duty and designated the 23rd Infantry Division (Americal) and fought in I Corps area. During the Vietnam War the division was at a strength of over 22,000 men, equivalent to two divisions and a brigade. It was the biggest straight leg infantry division in the history of the U.S. Army.

The more than 100 delegates who attended the 1993 Reunion of the division in Topeka, Kansas, June 24-27, 1993, were shocked, hurt, and humiliated to think our divisional colors were not flown in league with other divisional colors. Our former Commanding General, 1969-1970, Major General Lloyd B. Ramsey, and former Provost Marshal General of the Army, was aghast and joined us in sorrow our colors were not flown or shown with other proud divisional flags.

Is this an oversight? Or - is it because of other reasons? If we were to offer the museum an Americal Flag for display, would you display it proudly with the other divisional flags?

I have been appointed by our National Commander, John D. DeGroot to make this inquiry and iron out a workable solution. I hope we can work out a solution agreeable to all.

Sincerely,
David L. Recob

ANTI-TANK 132 INFANTRY ANTI-TANK

CAN YOU HELP ME! I am searching for three men that served with me in Japan.

1. Lloyd Perkins--he came from West Virginia and I am pretty sure his home town was Huntington.

2. Arthur "Moose" Beidman--Delaware was his home state and he lived in the Wilmington-Harve De Grace area. His wife's name was Virginia (Ginny) and she came from Wilmington, NC where she lived on Hale or Hail St.

Moose was a jockey at one time and an exercise boy. He might still be around some of the bigger horse tracks.

3. Envil Farrow--was a carpenter and his home had been North Platte, Nebraska.

Please contact me at:

D.C. Stewart
[REDACTED]
Waterville, KS 66548

My phone is [REDACTED]. Call after 7:00 PM

ATTENTION ATTENTION ATTENTION

If you have sent a deposit to the Turner Publishing Company for a copy of the Americal Division History and have not received a copy as yet --- DO NOT PANIC ---. The book has not been printed as yet. It is still in the editing stage and will not be in print before early 1994.

THE HEROES OF BOUGAINVILLE

FIFTY YEARS AGO, INTELLIGENCE GATHERED BY TWO AUSTRALIANS 'SAVED GUADALCANAL, AND GUADALCANAL SAVED THE SOUTH PACIFIC'. THEIR EXISTENCE WAS NEVER ADMITTED DURING THE WAR.

On a gray winter's day, rain drips disconsolately on the pink camellias in the garden of a Sydney home. Indoors there are memories of another time and place: Honey-colored tropical shells, woven baskets, albums, diaries and books on the Solomon Islands filled with photographs of white beaches and bright waxy flowers. Nineteen years have passed since the death of Paul Mason, coast watcher. His wife Noelle, who married him after World War II and went to live on Bougainville at their beautiful Inus plantation, grew to understand why he loved these islands with a special kind of passion.

"When I first arrived in the tropics," she smiles, "and saw that wonderful evening light, smelt the heavy sweet air, I turned to Paul and said, 'Oh my goodness, I think I am going to fall in love twice'."

She did. Mason, older than his bride, became her teacher and eventually she came to know and the history of the coast watchers. And, along with the Australian War memorial, war historians and commemorative sites, she would become guardian of the coast watchers memory. "All of the coast watchers did an absolutely wonderful job," she says, "but as Paul always said, he and Jack Read had the grandstand seat."

The first six months of 1942 were dark days for Australia as the seemingly unstoppable Japanese war machine swept south. The Philippines fell in early January, Rabaul (on the island of New Britain) three weeks later and Singapore on February 1. Darwin was bombed on February 19.

By April 1942, the Japanese were lapping the Solomons, the chain of islands that stretches from Bougainville to San Cristobal, 1000km to the south east. The next stop would mean more than gobbling up territory: the Solomons were the fence that guarded Australia, only 1300km away. If the Japanese gained a foothold in the Solomons, they could block the convoy routes between the US and Australia--which would spell disaster. The local white population began to evacuate, leaving 24 men to report on Japanese troop, air and ship movements using portable tele-radios. They were members of the Australian Coast Watching Service headed by Lieutenant-Commander Eric Feldt of the Royal Australian Navy. A mixed bag of soldiers, naval personnel, traders, planters, missionaries, colonial officials and locals, there were all thoroughly familiar with the area: many of them considered the South Pacific their home.

Of the 24, only two were stationed on Bougainville, the most exposed island in the chain, only 320km from the big new Japanese air and naval at Rabaul. Bougainville, 240km long and 60km wide, was typical of the Solomon Island chain--hostile jungles and rugged mountains. In late 1941, the population consisted of 70,000 islanders and 150 Europeans and Americans, including plantation workers and missionaries. The small island of Buka, separated from Bougainville by a narrow strip of water known as Buka passage, was 50km long and 16km wide and home to 10,000 islanders and several dozen Europeans.

For Jack Read, who covered the northern end of Bougainville, and Paul Mason, who covered the southern end, life was tense. Capture meant certain execution for the two, but they were not allowed to take any offensive action themselves; in fact, Feldt's codeword for the Solomon Islands' coast watching activities was "Ferdinand", named after the fictional bull who preferred smelling flowers to fighting in the area.

Supporting them was a small Australian Imperial Force (AIF) unit which had originally been assigned to guard an Allied airstrip being built on Buka. The Japanese captured the strip and the soldiers were forced to retreat to Bougainville. The only other friendly presence on Bougainville was a small group of islanders who remained loyal to the planters; but they became fewer as the Japanese strengthened their grip on the island.

According to Walter Lord, author of *Lonely Vigil -- Coastwatchers Of The Solomons*, Read and Mason survived by moving from hill to hill, while somehow managing to keep up a flow of intelligence. Besides the increasingly aggressive Japanese, they faced the tropical jungle--a mass of tangled vines, slippery mud, steep hills, mosquitoes, rain and more rain. There were no roads, only trails known to the islanders, and no reliable maps.

But invaluable intelligence was gained and ship and aircraft movements were promptly and accurately reported. The reporting, without radar, of aircraft movements, prevented the Japanese in many instances from achieving surprise attacks. Activities were extended to guiding attacks on enemy aircraft and shipping, to evacuating civilians and servicemen who had been overrun and to rescuing Allied airmen who had been shot down.

Many coast watchers and their soldiers throughout the islands suffered torture, betrayal and death. The Japanese tried every means to halt their activities, from bribing and torturing islanders to hunting them like dogs. Ultimately, 27 coast watchers and soldiers and 20 islanders were killed and 18 European and 40 islanders were captured. Yet between them and the guerrilla forces they organized, they accounted for 5414 enemy dead, 1492 wounded and 74 captured. The group also rescued 75 POW's, 321 airmen, 280 naval personnel, 190 missionaries and civilians, and 260 Asians, as well as a large number of native refugees.

"The intelligence signaled from Bougainville by Read and Mason saved Guadalcanal," wrote US Admiral William F. Halsey, "and Guadalcanal saved the South Pacific." But as Feldt wrote in his book *The Coast Watchers*: so secret was this organization of coast watchers, operating behind enemy lines, that its existence was never admitted during the war. Few realized that when the first waves of US Marines landed on the bitterly contested beaches of Guadalcanal, coast watchers on Bougainville, New Georgia and other islands, were sending warning signals two hours before impending Japanese air raid.

Somewhere in the yellowing pages of World War II history, someone dubbed Paul Mason "The Fox of Bougainville". They were wrong; foxes were not to be found in the jungle and besides, foxes have maximum cunning--and minimum courage. Mason had both cunning and courage. To many, he was responsible for more damage to the enemy than all the other coast watchers combined and ultimately he became the most famous of their ranks.

He was 41 when he joined, a short, serious, bespectacled man with the benevolent air of Henry Fonda playing a bank clerk. But appearances are deceptive. He was a loner; calculating, tough, self-reliant, strong as an ox and a man of action who never carried a gun -- even when hunted by the enemy. He had spent most of his life working as a planter on Bougainville and knew the islands inside and out. He was an excellent radio technician and understood the indigenous population.



PAUL MASON



JACK READ

His close relationship with the islanders, and the great regard in which they held him, contributed to his success as a coast watcher and probably saved his life. "I found the loyalty of the people of Bougainville toward Paul very touching," says Noelle Mason. "Of course, near the end, with the Japanese army hounding them, it was very hard for them to remain loyal, especially when they saw the coast watchers on the run -- hiding and being hunted up and down the island. The fact that Jack and Paul managed to keep the loyalty of those few who stuck by them to the end is a great tribute to them both -- and to the islanders and police boys who shared the hardships and the dangers."

Whenever the local tribesmen were questioned as to Mason's whereabouts, they would point south and repeat "Sydney, Sydney." Boros, one of Mason's supporters, was beheaded by the Japanese because he refused to betray him. Years later, Mason placed a small stone in front of the Australian memorial at Kieta, on Bougainville, in his memory.

Once, when Mason discovered a tribe had collaborated with the Japanese, he marched back into the village and publicly tanned the backside of the tul-tul, the chief's right hand man, thereby symbolically punishing the whole village. They did not collaborate again. Another time, Read arranged to have a pro-Japanese village "attacked" to stop their collaboration: A Catalina raided the village, dropped two bombs nearby and couple of depth charges. It was executed to perfection; only one man was slightly wounded, and the resulting shock value served its purpose. When he was under orders with which he did not agree, Mason simply ignored them; he had the capacity to inspire enormous confidence and co-operation in the men he commanded.

A Japanese intelligence officer Tashira, may have deliberately saved Mason's life. He had worked in the islands posing as a trader for some years before the war and knew Mason well. After Wang You, a Chinese merchant and close friend of Mason's was captured, he was interrogated by a

Japanese officer determined to find Mason's hiding place. Tashira intervened: "How can you expect this man, who has known Mason for 20 years, to betray him to you -- someone he has only known for 20 minutes?" The interrogation ended.

Read entered New Guinea public service in 1929 and over the next 12 years acquired a first-hand knowledge of the territory before his appointment as assistant district officer at Buka Passage. Dark, wiry, brisk and gregarious, he arrived on Bougainville only a month before the Japanese. He was, nonetheless, captivated by the sheer beauty of the islands and while Mason's report were pragmatic and factual, he always included descriptions of his surroundings--even when the Japanese were closing in.

His transfer to the region was his introduction to the tele-radio, a heavy, unwieldy radio and telegraph combination set. It was battery-operated with a voice range of 650KM and a telegraph range of around 950km. the radio was sturdy and efficient but because of its weight -- as well as batteries, charging engine and benzine fuel -- it needed several men to carry it.

When war broke out, Read tried to evacuate the European community, mostly planters and missionaries, who had lived on the islands for years and who would prove, in some cases, almost impossible to shift. "Paul always said that Jack had the hardest job because he had the European and Chinese civilians to look after and he worried about their welfare," says Noelle Mason, "but Jack thought Paul had the harder job because he knew so much about radio and he had to keep the stuff in order. He had to trail up and down through the island in very difficult conditions."



COAST WATCHERS ON BOUGAINVILLE

When the war came to the South Pacific with the bombing of Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941, an excellent intra-district communication network had been established on Bougainville. A daily radio schedule was maintained between Buka Passage and stations along the east coast of the island. This reporting system, put into effect by Feldt, was destined to become the nucleus of coast watching activities on Bougainville for almost two years.

As manager of the Inus plantation on the east coast of Bougainville, Mason had been recruited as a volunteer coast watcher three years earlier and had positioned native lookouts high in the hills, where they were able to view the coastline from Teop to Kieta in the east.

When the Japanese finally invaded, their main objective was to seek the elusive enemy who flashed their movements to Allied headquarters at Port Moresby. Mason dodged the patrols and skipped to the town of Buin, in the south, where he found he could do even more damage to the

enemy. Malabita Hill, near Buin was a few kilometers inland with a clear view of the shore and anchorage enclosed by the Shortland Islands. Rabaul fell to the enemy on January 23, 1942, and two days later, with a call sign of JER -- his daughter's initials -- Read made his first real enemy report from a post at Aravia, in the north of the island, 300 meters up a jungle covered mountain, while Japanese naval and air forces were attacking Buka passage. High on Malabita Hill, came on the air as STO -- the first three letters of his sister's name -- the same day.

The two men began their game of espionage ping-pong in earnest -- Read reporting aircraft and shipping passing Buka and Mason confirming their arrival in Buin. Between the two men, Allied headquarters had complete information on most enemy movements in the area. Mason passed on messages from isolated lookouts on Bougainville where he could see Japanese aircraft flying between Rabaul and Kavieng to attack Allied warships at Tulagi and Guadalcanal: his messages were relayed through Port Moresby, Townsville, and Canberra to the US base Pearl Harbour. A thousand kilometers south, Allied commanders recorded the enemy moves and planned counter attacks. In mid-July the coast watchers were ordered off the air as the Allied invasion of Guadalcanal was imminent.

Then at 11:37am on August 7, 1942, Mason decided to break radio silence and warn the Allied fleet off the beachhead: "Twenty four bombers headed yours." His message was flashed to all Allied ships in Guadalcanal waters. They dispersed, readied their guns and waited. Planes from the US aircraft carrier climbed to maximum altitude ready to pounce. When the 24 bombers came in, shells from ground fire and sea ripped through them and fire from waiting planes riddled them. Only one returned to base at Rabaul. Twice more that day, Mason's voice warned of the approaching Japanese fighters while Read confirmed Japanese losses.

The next day it was Read's turn. His reports, as well as Mason's, in *Coast Watching in the Solomon Islands -- The Bougainville Reports December 1941 - July 1943*, edited by A.B. Feuer, makes riveting reading: "In a matter of moments the largest aircraft formation I have even raced across a break in the jungle," he wrote. "With their propeller blades glistening in the sun, 27 Japanese dive bombers roared across the sky in the direction of Tulagi. Minutes later, another 18 aircraft passed only a few hundred feet over our heads..."

His message was relayed from Port Moresby and Townsville to the Tulagi control in ten minutes. With the luxury of two hours warning, fighters were refueled and dispatched from carriers to high altitudes in readiness for attack. Read listened as the radio operator, unable to control his excitement, gave a blow by blow description of the battle. ("Boy! We're shooting them down like flies...What a sight!") Read added: "The reporting of these flights soon became routine, but I shall never forget the thrill and euphoria of that first morning." Each evening, the coast watchers would be notified of the score when there had been a strike against Guadalcanal. The aircraft losses were usually 20 to 1 against the Japanese.

Throughout September, the Japanese feverishly prepared an airfield at Buin as a base for the counter-attack they hoped would recapture Guadalcanal. Mason sent Lukabai, an islander, to

assist the enemy: "Twice a week Lukabai returned to our base and gave detailed progress on the airstrip," he wrote. "On September 23, I sent the following message to Port Moresby: 'Aerodrome expected to be completed in 10 days. Stores and fuel dumps under camouflage between Ugumo to Molika Rivers. Anti-aircraft batteries near mouth of Ugumo'." The message contained precise detail. Shortly Allied Hudsons flew over and bombed the airstrip, blowing the dumps sky high.

The Japanese knew someone in the hills was radioing their positions to the Allies and sent out patrols with orders to get Mason. The Japanese were said to have landed cages of tracker dogs at Buin. Mason's spies located them and he radioed their positions to headquarters. A Catalina duly flew over, dropped a bomb on the cages and killed a lot.

In October, 1942 both men were surprised to hear that General Douglas MacArthur had awarded them the US Distinguished Service Cross in recognition of their efforts. "We never had a chance to savour the taste of publicity," Read wrote, "The conflict was like a steamroller -- out of control -- with Bougainville in the middle." Mason noted that: "Coast watchers like Jack Read and myself continually operated under a great amount of stress and consequently we had a tendency to grow



MRS. NOELLE MASON

stale. However, when we were told something of the conflict's overall picture, our interest and incentive revived and our team work improved. It was not that we expected 'pats on the back', rather we could tackle the job with fresh enthusiasm when we knew our reports were helping the Allies to score a goal or two."

Mason continued to report on the development of the Japanese naval base in the Buin region: pages of Janes Fighting ships were photographed in Townsville, hastily parceled and dropped to him. He later identified every vessel. In early November, with Japanese patrols hot on the trail of Read and Mason, Read spotted 12 large passenger ships loaded with Japanese soldiers, headed to Guadalcanal in the major Japanese bid to recapture the island. He urgently reported the convoy, and Mason soon signaled from Buin that he had spotted, "At least 61 ships: two Nati, one Aoba, one Mogami, two sloops, 33 destroyers, 17 cargo, two carriers, one 8000 ton passenger liner." In the morning, the Japanese transports were found by dive bombers and later US warships moved in and "mopped up."

The Japanese air, sea and land forces were savagely mauled, but despite mounting odds both men held onto their posts. The Japanese attributed much of the blame to the coast watcher -- and turned their attention to Mason. Officer Tashira organized a search party of "black dogs" -- so called disloyal islanders around Kieta -- to track him down. They raided villages and combined with the Japanese to wipe out the last remaining Europeans and Chinese. The first combined Japanese-Kieta expeditions aimed at capturing Mason got underway during December.

While loyal islanders kept Mason informed of the plans being made, headquarters advised him to leave Malabita Hill and make the two week trek overland to join Read, who was still watching Buka passage. During this time, Read had managed another difficult evacuation of European and Chinese women and children, including several nuns. The US submarine Nautilus took the evacuees out of Toep harbour. It was New Year's Eve and Read paused long enough to share a swig from a bottle of brandy with the crew before returning to the evacuation which passed undetected under the nose of the enemy.

Things were not going so well for Mason. By the time the attackers finally struck from three sides he had been gone three days, leading his party in a hard climb over the western mountains. Pro-Japanese islanders led the enemy to coast watchers weather hideouts and Read had hide in the jungle until the troops departed. He then returned and retrieved his radio.

Mason's trek to Read's camp was a tough 160km struggle through jungle infested with Japanese patrols. A septic cut on his foot slowed him down, and after limping for 36 hours, he removed the boot only to watch the flesh come away with the sock. He rested for two days and then moved on, a faithful islander carrying his pack. Four weeks after his nightmare began, Mason reached a safe camp and a group of soldiers sent by Read to meet him. On January 28, 1943, after six weeks of radio silence, the news flashed that his party was safe. Despite all they had shared over the past year, Read and Mason barely knew each other. As Mason rested while his foot healed, they compared notes and a friendship developed.

In March, Read again safely evacuated women, children, missionaries, soldiers, and Chinese in two shipments. The group assembled at Read's camp now included a fresh group of AIF troops landed secretly on the island, including Sub-Lieutenant Jack Keenan, Lieutenant George Stevenson, Lieutenant Douglas Bedkoher, Sergeants W.V. Florence and G.W. McPhee and Corporals A.R. Little and N.L. MacLeod.

Read and others worked out a plan to cover the island with a network of watchers, and dispersed to take positions. A month later, Read's party was raided by the Japanese assisted by native scouts, and spent a tortuous day and night clinging to a cliff edge. After a terrifying ordeal, the party survived, along with their hidden radio, only to find that Bedkoher and his party had been betrayed to the Japanese and subsequently shot and or captured.

By now Mason's party was off the air, McPhee's party was in hiding and there was no news of Keenan. In a fortnight, coast watching on Bougainville had been shattered. Mason's party had been hampered by soldiers who made newcomers mistakes -- lost equipment, wasted supplies -- and

Stevenson had been shot dead by a Japanese patrol. They were hunted and hungry, constantly dodging patrols, and it was several weeks later -- after more hard walking and climbing -- that Mason's party miraculously reappeared; for the third and last time he had somehow managed to wriggle through the Japanese net.

Ferdinand headquarters advised that an evacuation submarine could be available within four days and, on a calm night in late July, 1943, Mason and the rest of his party, including downed flyers, police and loyal islanders, collected on the beach. Quickly afterwards, 60 people were evacuated by the US Guardfish which transferred its passengers onto a subchaser bound for Guadalcanal and returned the next night to pick up Read. The 17 months of Allied intelligence from behind the Japanese lines had finally come to an end. The Europeans were returned to Australia for recuperation while the islanders rested on Guadalcanal. Later, Read returned to New Guinea where he served with a guerrilla link unit. After being hospitalised in Sydney, Mason was back in Bougainville in 1944 to lead a band of island guerrilla.

Coast watchers filtered quietly back to civilian life after the war. They assumed the same low profile they had as fighters and were hardly ever seen to march -- and almost never to tell tales around the bar of the local RSL.

Mason died in Brisbane in January 1973 and his ashes were transported back to his beloved Inus plantation and placed in a memorial near his house. Sadly, the Inus homestead was burned to the ground by Bougainville insurgents in 1990.

Read, 86, died in Ballarat, Victoria, on June 29, this year, just five weeks before the unveiling of a memorial commemorating the achievements and their Allies during the Guadalcanal campaign. I broke the news to Noelle Mason. She was silent for a few moments before she could speak, "It's the end of the story, then, isn't it?" she said quietly. Well, maybe not. Because if the judgement of Admiral Halsey counts for anything, then we should honour their memories for life.



Written by Heather Brown as it appeared in the AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINE - Sent in by Geoffrey Tierney

Ed Note: Many historians now agree that the Australians have not been given enough credit for their contribution toward winning World War II and this certainly includes the Coast Watchers. Many Americal veterans possibly owes his life to the early warnings we received due to their efforts. This story is included in the Americal Newsletter to honor this group of dedicated men.

Mrs. Noelle Mason has been an Associate Member of the ADVA for many years.



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