



FOUNDED 1945

AMERICAL NEWSLETTER

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

Editor-in-Chief: James C. Buckle
Vietnam Editor: Gary L. Noller

APRIL – MAY – JUNE 2002

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



VIETNAM VETERANS NATIONAL MEMORIAL

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TAPS

196 LIB D/4/31 INF

Mr. Joseph Antone
Tucson, AZ
October 2001

182 INFANTRY E CO.

Mr. Robert C. Brown
Wakefield, MA
January 12, 2002

182 INFANTRY H CO.

William J. Coursey
Boynton Beach, FL
April 6, 2002

132 INFANTRY

Clifford S. Fennell
Greensburg, PA
February 3, 2002

164 INFANTRY

Mike M. Gabriel
Grand Junction, CO
November 21, 2000

182 INFANTRY

Norman F. Hall
Shrewsbury, MA
Date Unknown

164 INFANTRY L CO.

Charles Kretchun
State College, PA
January 27, 2002

182 INFANTRY E CO.

John J. McGlynn
Missoula, MT
April 25, 2001

182 INFANTRY H CO

Herbert Nelson
MA
March 2002

182 INFANTRY E CO.

Fred C. Rodekamp
Sterling, IL
April 13, 2001

11 LIB 3/1 INFANTRY

Col Leslie Stottle (Ret)
Honey Grove, PA
March 18, 2002

121 MEDICAL BN.

Joseph Varco
Buffalo, NY
Date Unknown

TAPS

182 INFANTRY E CO.

Mr. Robert K. Brown
Miami Lakes, FL
Date Unknown

182 INFANTRY M CO.

Mr. Joseph Chin
Lincoln, MA
March 21, 2002

182 INFANTRY E CO.

Carl Cutler
Medway, MA
August 23, 2001

39 MILITARY POLICE

Edward J. Flynn
Annapolis, MD
May 5, 1999

182 INFANTRY E CO.

James F. Griffin
Tacoma, WA
April 3, 2002

196 LIB D/4/31 INF

Daniel Henning
Springhill, LA
May 2001

182 INFANTRY MED DET.

Henry Maroney
Woburn, MA
January 1, 2001

182 INFANTRY E CO.

James P. Nardone
Wakefield, MA
June 15, 2001

57 ENGINEERS HDQ CO.

Edward J. Rockowitz
Fort Pierce, FL
January 29, 2002

182 INFANTRY D CO.

Carlo W. Spallucci
Bellmawr, NJ
Date Unknown

21 MECH. CAVALRY

Glenn F. Underwood
McAlester, OK
Date Unknown

Harry F. Wysocki Sr.

Alpena, MI
December 26, 2001

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

TAPS

LAST ROLI CALL - 164th INFANTRY

Arthur K. Amos

Len A. Clemons

Melvin Eidum

Philip Engstrom

Roger L. Calvin

Arthur L. Ford

Ralph L. Gaugler

Lloyd L. Gillespie

Maurice Hanum

John C. Keller

Arlen W. Lane

C.J. Livingood

Charles J. Maxwell Jr.

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Arthur H. Ojala

Ted Ouradnik

Peter Patrick

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Lawrence D. Webb

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San Antonio, TX

Spokane, WA

Covia, CA

Moorhead, MN

McCook, NE

Enderlin, ND

Bismarck, ND

Grafton, ND

Powell, WY

Harvey, ND

Billings, MT

Grafton, ND

Greetings from the Commanders,

As this newsletter reaches you my term as commander will be about over. It has been a pleasure serving such a great organization as the mighty Americal Division Veterans Association. I can't tell you how much I have enjoyed serving the Association. But that goes along with all the help I have had from the members and the past National Commanders. Without their support I could not have been successful.

There were many days when I would ask myself "What am I doing in this office?" But I feel I have finished on a high note. With the new officers coming in soon I feel we will continue to be a strong organization. I will be only an E-Mail away if some help should be needed. I have many thanks to everyone who lent a hand and given me advice when needed.

I will be looking forward to seeing you all in Washington D C in November. That will be a special reunion. There are lots of sights to see and places to go.

We have had several veterans of the ADVA pass away the in past couple of years including several that were very instrumental to the Association. We must remember the families and keep them in our thoughts and prayers. See ya in D C and remember to hug a vet.

Ronald R Ellis, National Commander

I just don't know what to say or do, except that we have to pay more tribute to our Older Brothers. As I first starting going to the Americal reunions the number of Vietnam vets were out numbered 30 to 1 by our WWII vets. I don't know by how many Korean vets. But as the years go by the numbers have been changing and the many faces that we have become so familiar with, at the reunions, are slowly disappearing. These are faces of the people that have taken us under their wings and have shown us that we belong to one of the best organizations in the world and that we are welcome. To these veterans and their families and want to say thank you. And we the younger Brothers have to be able to follow the leadership that has been shown us and keep the organization alive and well. With that, I bid you all good health and safe and fun summer. See everyone in November.

Richard Scales, Senior Vice-Commander

NEW ITEM FROM THE ADVA QUARTERMASTER

Just in time for summer. Now you can proudly wear this handsome cap embroidered with the Americal Division shield and the division name. It is available only through the ADVA Quartermaster.

Only \$12 each

Price includes postage and handling.

Please send your check or money order payable to ADVA along with your name and address to:

Mr. Wayne Bryant

Greensboro, NC 27405

FAR WEST CHAPTER
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Larry O'Boyle

Rancho Santa Margarita
92688

SEC/TREAS
Gene McGrath

Pahrump, NV
89048

Vice Commander - Don Shebesta
Sergeant-at-Arms - John Bowley
Chaplain - Paris Tognoli

REUNION - ATLANTIS CASINO RESORT - RENO, NV

SEPTEMBER 29, 2002 - OCTOBER 2, 2002

The Far West Chapter officers and Reunion Committee invite you, your family, and guests to attend our annual Reunion this year in Reno, Nevada. The Atlantis is one of the newer Casino resorts offering lodge or tower accommodations, and a hospitality suite will also be available for us to gather informally, have refreshments and visit. In addition to the regular business meeting, a banquet dinner, with featured entertainment, and a prize drawing is planned. Choices of dinner entrees include steak, chicken and halibut.

A highlight of the reunion is an optional historic tour to Virginia City on Monday, September 30th. The package includes transportation from the Atlantis with lunch and entertainment included at the famous Tyson Ranch--all for just \$45.00 per person. In addition, our 23rd MP unit will conduct a flag ceremony. We need a minimum of 25 people to sign up not later than July 31, 2002 to book this event.

Registration forms have been mailed to all Chapter members in April. For additional forms or more information, contact our reunion Chairman: Larry Levy, 69 Rimfire Circle, Reno, Nevada 95809. Telephone: 775-746-2296

Note: Attendees are responsible for making their own room reservation prior to August 30, 2002 by calling Atlantis Casino Resort at 1-800-723-6500 and referring to "Americal" to obtain the group rate (Lodge \$49 or Tower \$69). Rates double and availability limited after August 30th.

Committee Members: Chairman Larry Levy, John Bowley, Kurt McFadden, Don Shebesta and Pat Tognoli.

Far West Chapter Unpaid Dues Are Now Past Due

Our nominal dues of \$10.00 per year are payable not later than May 1st according to our Chapter By-Laws. These funds support the administration expenses of our Chapter, such as postage and printing. We are able to keep in touch with our members and publish our Newsletter, The Canon. Our Reunions can also be kept affordable.

If you have not already done so, please make you check for \$10.00 payable to ADVA Far West Chapter, and mail it to:

Gene McGrath Sec/Treas
ADVA Far West

Pahrump, NV 89048

Other Chapter News

The Stockton Elks Lodge #218 Exalted Ruler has appointed Far West Chapter Past Commander and

current Vice Commander Don Shebesta to head the Lodge Veteran Service Committee. Don has been working hard seeking donations of books, clothing, personal care items and cash. Funds obtained have been used to defray the cost of a wheel chair and wheel chair pads and gloves from medical supply vendors at discounted prices. Initial recipients of this help will be residents of the Livermore, California Veterans' facility.

I received the following letter addressed to our Chapter Secretary April 4, 2002 and thought it might be worth sharing:

Gene,

I live in New York. Last September I attended the Far West Reunion from September 30th to October 3rd. I was hoping to see some of the men from my platoon. We went to a Flag Ceremony and said the Pledge of Allegiance. Some people would say, "So what's the big deal?" But even though I didn't know anyone, and was a long way from home, you people welcomed me. I left Nevada with a new outlook on being an American. Pride does not begin to tell of my discovery. For the first time since I returned from 'Nam in '68, I am proud to be a Vietnam Vet. I bought an American Flag. When the weather improves, I will fly it. God bless America and the Americal Division Veterans Association.

Steve Cross

[REDACTED]
Le Roy, NY 14482-8911

SOUTH MID WEST REGIONAL CHAPTER

COMMANDER
Cameron Baird

[REDACTED]
Stonewall, TX 78671 78624

VICE COMMANDER
Bill Bacon

[REDACTED]
San Antonio, TX 78250

Alfred (Bruce) Mobley - Sergeant-at-Arms
Rev. Perry M. Woerner - Chaplain

Because of the turmoil caused by recent world events, the winter stand down at South Padre Island planned for January was a non event. We will continue to work on the concept and try again next year.

In the meantime, a group of vets in Abilene recently sponsored the 15th annual "Tet" Reunion at the Taylor County Fairgrounds. Wil Ascencio and the Abilene Grunts Association put on the event on the first weekend of February. An invitation was extended for everyone to attend.

The 60th anniversary observance of the attack on Pearl Harbor last December in Fredericksburg was a real gem. I invited every known WWII ADVA member in the region to attend with the hopes of fielding a float in the parade. Unfortunately not enough people were available to make the effort worthwhile. Those who did attend included Bill Bacon and about one hundred of his friends from the Military Order of the Purple Heart, National Commander Ron Ellis and Chapter stalwarts Roger Gilmore, Bruce Mobley and Alan Duglosch. The speeches, a fantastic parade and flyovers by modern and vintage aircraft were all great, but by far the most memorable aspect was meeting and speaking with the old timers. Every single PH survivor I spoke with was very complimentary of the reception they received from an adoring public. I will never forget the look on those men's faces as they passed down Main Street with

several thousand spectators waving and cheering. My cynical self said, "maybe a few of these guys are true heroes, but most of them just happened to be at a time and place when the excrement hit the fan". Then my rational self spoke up: "Yeah, but these guys didn't join the military after the war was declared, they were already in". They were the old hands who taught millions of new recruits and led them to eventual triumph. They were the heroes not for surviving a sneak attack, they were heroes for providing the backbone of the forces who brought a long and bitter conflict to a successful conclusion, they had the foresight to rebuild the shattered economies of our former foes thereby creating reliable and enduring allies. Every one of those men was fully deserving of the fine tribute they received, and I was privileged to witness it.

Hug Somebody, especially if he is a WWII vet!

Cameron Baird
Chapter Commander
South Mid-West Chapter

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David Eichhorn
[REDACTED]
Fleming, OH 45729

SECRETARY
Joe Tunis
[REDACTED]

VICE COMMANDER
Jay Flanagan
[REDACTED]

TREASURER
Mark Deam
[REDACTED]

Cranford, NJ 07016

Leo Orfe - Sergeant-at-Arms
Everitt Williams - Chaplain

Reunion Chairman, Robert Cudworth reports that plans are underway for our Chapter Reunion on September 23 to 27, 2002. This year we are meeting in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

We are invited to travel deep into history at the award-winning Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour.

Celebrate a living legacy to American ingenuity at Steamtown National Historic Site. The only National Park dedicated to the history of steam locomotion. Steamtown features a working roundhouse, History and Technology Museums, theatre, locomotive restoration shops and train excursions.

Track the history of the American trolley system at Electric City Trolley Station and Museum. An impressive collection of antique trolley cars, interactive exhibits, photographs and artifacts preserve the history of the electric trolley system that began in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Itinerary, Schedules and Reservation forms will be sent to Chapter members by mid-summer. Anyone interested in joining us may contact any of our Chapter officers.

Once in the area the nearby Pocono Mountains offer a wide array of experiences to expand a visit to this area.

Occasionally we receive correspondence from our members: Mrs. Joseph Piscopo has written to inform us that her husband, Joe Piscopo has passed away. Our sympathy goes out to her and her family.

Leonard Graham writes that he and his wife are doing well, in their eighties and still getting around locally. He informs us that he served in the Army during World War II, Korea and Vietnam. He retired after twenty (20) years service, in 1966.

Joe Tunis
Secretary

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

COMMANDER
John Mathews
[REDACTED]

Verona, WI 53593

ADJ/FIN OFF
Terry Babler
[REDACTED]

New Glarus, WI 53574
[REDACTED]

The Great Lakes Chapter will be your hosts to the Americal Division National Reunion in Washington, DC during Veterans Day Weekend - November 8-12, 2002, at the Doubletree Hotel. Reservations may be made by calling 703-416-4100 and ask for Operations LZ/DC 02 for discount rate. This Americal Newsletter should have all the information on the Reunion for everyone to make their reservations for rooms, airfares and events they want to do at the Doubletree Hotel and elsewhere in DC.

Expectations are very high for attendance. We have a lot of surprises planned. Make sure you get your registration forms to Terry Babler at the above address very soon as banquets, buses will be filling up. All buses are handicap accessible. We are looking forward to this event.

The Great Lakes Chapter will be sponsoring other planned mini-reunions during the year:

July 5-6-7, 2002 - All Veterans Reunion at Southgate, Michigan at the VFW Post 9283. Lodging at Holiday Inn, [REDACTED] or [REDACTED], Southgate, MI 48195 - Call [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. \$89.00 a night. Hospitality Room, Bus trip to Northern Wall in Canada where the Canadian's Vietnam veterans will be having a celebration. The Southgate VFW will hold a Steak dinner on Saturday afternoon followed by music Saturday night. Free van service from Hotel to VFW. For more information call: Bill Allen - [REDACTED] or Paul Stiff - [REDACTED].

September 19-22, 2002 - Kokomo, IN - 20th Annual Veterans Reunion. Locator/Sign-In at the big tent on Friday and Saturday. We had 130 Americal veterans sign in last year and we will have many hospitality camp sites planned throughout the Reunion. Group picture at 3 P.M. on Saturday by the big Flag. 30,000 veterans were in attendance last year.

January 16-19, 2003 - New Glarus, WI - Friday night: Hospitality Room at Hotel and at Swiss Lanes, Burning of Winter Ceremony, Parade, dance at the Fire Station. Saturday: Village wide Poker run, Auction at Hotel, Annual Group picture at Sportsman's Bar front outside at 3 P.M. and banquet Saturday night at the New Glarus Hotel with new improved sound system. The Great Lakes Chapter will have their meeting at Jimmie's at 9 A.M. All Americal Veterans, whether you are a member or not, are welcome to attend. We will be selling Americal stuff afterwards.

Don't miss this one! One of America's best kept secret reunions. You'll never forget this one,

Memorial Day- Thoughts

By Rick Ropele

There are several versions regarding the origins of the Memorial Day observance, initially designated as 'Decoration Day'. Based on my research, I chose this version to begin my remarks:

In 1865, Henry C. Welles, a druggist in the village of Waterloo, NY, mentioned at a social gathering that honor should be shown to the patriotic dead of the Civil War by decorating their graves. In the spring of 1866, he again mentioned this subject to General John B. Murray, Seneca County Clerk. General

Murray embraced the idea and a committee was formulated to plan a day devoted to honoring the dead.

Obviously too young to join the service, but just as obvious, Jack Lucas must have successfully lied about his age. Because at that tender age of 17 years, Jack Lucas was

awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor

for service to his country and service to his

fellow man for his actions during the battle of

Iwo Jima.

Townspeople adopted the idea wholeheartedly. Wreaths, crosses and bouquets were made for each veteran's grave. The village was decorated with flags at half-mast and draped with evergreen boughs and mourning black streamers. On May 5, 1866, civic societies joined the procession to the three existing cemeteries and were led by veterans marching to martial music. At each cemetery there were impressive and lengthy services including speeches by General Murray and a local clergyman. The

ceremonies were repeated on May 5, 1867.

The first official recognition of Memorial Day as such was issued by General John A. Logan, first commander of the Grand Army of the Republic. This was General Order No. 11

establishing "Decoration Day", as it was then known. The date of the order was May 5, 1868, exactly two years after Waterloo's first observance. That year Waterloo joined other communities in the nation by having their ceremony on May 30.

What do you think about on Memorial Day? Hopefully, you don't just look at it as another holiday, a day off, to catch up on things to do around the house.

I think about men like Jack Lucas, Henry Pickett and Don Prien. Ordinary men who, when the opportunity presented itself, did extraordinary things in behalf of their fellow man.

Jack Lucas was born in Plymouth North Carolina in 1928. Shortly after the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, Jack Lucas joined the United States Marine Corps. If you're doing the math now, you'll see that Jack Lucas was only 14 years of age.

Now you have to ask yourself, what would prompt a boy to want to do a man's job, to put himself in harms way at such a tender young age? The answer to that question is the essence of Memorial Day. I suppose one thought might be that like all Americans of

that time, Jack Lucas had a heightened sense of patriotism. He must have felt the need to pull his share of the load that was placed upon the country when it was forced to fight these two enemies in the Pacific and in Europe.

The words 'patriotism' and 'sacrifice' have to enter into your thought process, to put your life, ambitions, and dreams on hold in order to aid your country and your fellow man. A different time and a different culture of people than what we are used to today. I believe that the men and women of this era were a special generation of people that were saved and put on this earth to be available for these circumstances.

Obviously too young to join the service, but just as obvious, Jack Lucas must have successfully lied about his age. Because at that tender age of 17 years, Jack Lucas was

awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for service to his country and service to his fellow man for his actions during the battle of Iwo Jima.

Jack Lucas was initially assigned a non-combat MOS and stationed in Hawaii. This is where he met up with the men of the 5th Marine Division who were in training for the assault on Iwo Jima. Many of these men were already veterans of previous military campaigns in the Pacific, Tarawa, Guadalcanal, etc. Jack Lucas was not. The 5th Marines shipped out in February 1945 for the invasion, Jack Lucas shipped out also, by stowing away on one of the troop transport ships.

When it came time to climb down the cargo nets into the Higgins boats to assault the island, Jack Lucas was right there again. Because he had been a stowaway, he didn't have any of the standard equipment, a steel pot, a gun, ammunition, food rations, or even a life vest. Secondary issues to a man who wanted to do his part. He did have the

courage of his convictions that a job needed to be done, that he joined the Marine Corp to serve his country and his fellow man. Jack Lucas stepped up to the bar, and by his actions told everyone, 'I'm ready, I'm willing, and I'm able'.

When the landing craft hit the beach, Jack picked up a rifle, web gear and ammo, and a steel pot from a dead Marine on the beach and joined himself up with a squad of Marines who subsequently fought their way off the beach into the cover of the jungle. Several days later while on a patrol his squad was ambushed by the Japanese. Two grenades were thrown into the middle of the patrol. Jack knew that the explosion would kill every man in the squad, unless someone did something.

Without hesitation, he threw himself on top of those two hand grenades and absorbed the full impact of the explosion with his 17-year-old body. The explosion threw him six feet into the air, tore apart his insides and riddled him with shrapnel. Miraculously, Jack Lucas didn't die and neither did the rest of the Marines in the patrol, thanks to his selfless act.

Jack Lucas was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, at the young age of 17, for his actions that day. He was the youngest man to be awarded the nation's highest military award for valor. He was the only Medal of Honor winner that enrolled as a freshman in high school after the war.

Jack Lucas always comes to my mind on Memorial Day. He was one of those ordinary men who, when the opportunity presented itself, did an extraordinary thing in behalf of his fellow man, irrespective of the consequences. A lot of men and their posterity are alive today because of the actions of Jack Lucas.

Closer to home for me, I think about Henry Pickett and Don Prien.

We were hit on the morning of January 31st, 1968, the infamous TET offensive, just outside of the village of An Ton by elements of the 2nd NVA Division. Their objective was to destroy a bridge and kill as many of us soldiers as they could. Our objective was the opposite. They started to work at 4:30 a.m. with mortars, rockets and automatic weapons. In some cases, from almost point blank range because they had previously infiltrated into the village directly adjacent to our positions.

We began taking casualties almost immediately. Don Prien (Doc) was the platoon medic; he left the protection of the command bunker to sprint across 30 yards of open ground to get his medical gear. I saw him as he ran across the front of my position. The NVA were so close you could hear their voices. Doc was hit by three rifle rounds as he was returning to his covered position. I remember the instance as if it were yesterday; I can see it all in my mind's eye. Doc went down immediately. I can still hear the surprise in his voice and every word he spoke.

Then I heard another voice yell, 'DOC! NO! NOT DOC!' That voice belonged to Henry Pickett. Henry, without hesitation, immediately ran from the command bunker, across this same 30 yards of open ground to assist Doc. Henry acted on pure compassion and instinct, just like Jack Lucas did 23 years earlier. Henry certainly didn't think about race. This great African-American man was ready to make the ultimate sacrifice to aid a friend. It didn't matter that Doc was white and Henry was black. Both men were soldiers. Both recognized their responsibilities to every other man in the squad. Someone needed to help Doc and Henry Pickett stepped up to the bar.

Almost immediately after Henry got to Doc's side and cradled him in his arms, there was a tremendous explosion. I can still see the reds, the yellows, and the blackness of that blast that killed Doc, showered Henry and I with multiple hot and sharp rocket fragments. I can still smell the acrid odor of the explosion and I can still see and hear every word and sound from that morning.

Don Prien died that morning at 22 years of age because he did a soldier's job. He was a medic, trained to help and heal. He exposed himself to danger because the men in his unit needed his help, because he was a soldier. Henry was wounded, and almost killed that morning because a friend needed his help.

These are some of the kinds of things I ponder on Memorial Day. Jack Lucas, Henry Pickett and Don Prien always come to my mind. All three men stepped up to the bar and by their actions said 'I'm ready, I'm willing, and I'm able' to make the ultimate sacrifice. And when the opportunity presented itself, all men did an extraordinary thing in behalf of their fellow man.

I also think about men like Hugh Thompson, Mike Andreotti, and Lawrence Colburn and women like Sharon Lane. I challenge you to find out about them and put them in your Memorial Day thoughts.

Now today, in light of the September 11 mass murders, a lot of us are again stirred up to a patriotic fervor. We want to participate in holding the perpetrators accountable for their actions. If I could, I would go again. But in reality, I'm not what is needed today. War is a

young man's game. Are you willing to encourage your sons or daughters to step up to the bar?

You should be! The cause is just. It's time to stand up for our country, for our fellow man, to say 'I'm ready, I'm willing, and I'm able'.

Too often in life, there are groups of individuals that stand in the back and report on the efforts of those who put themselves on the cutting edge. These are people that some have placed on pedestals, people that they look to for opinions and answers because they don't have the courage to step forward on their own.

The individuals on the ground, making split second decisions based on immediate circumstances that few of us can ever put into perspective will win this struggle against terrorism. Sometimes these decisions involve life and death.

Read the following passage from Theodore Roosevelt, and think of it when you listen to the news. Having Dan Rather (or someone like him) reporting from the 'field' on the decisions and actions of others doesn't compare to the insight that the man on the front line has.

Theodore Roosevelt said: "It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strongman stumbled or where the doer of deeds should have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by the dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again;

who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who, at worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly; so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory or defeat." (Theodore Roosevelt, Paris-Sorbonne 1910).

We've heard the expression numerous times; 'Freedom is not free'. Someone had to pay the price for it. We're fortunate to live in the greatest country in the world and there are countless millions of people alive today throughout the world because of the sacrifice and dedication of the men and women of the United States Military. I'm proud to have been a part of that great cause of preservation. I'm proud of those men and women today who wear the colors of the United States of America.

The pure essence of Memorial Day is to honor those that gave their life for their country and for their fellow man, men and women who laid their lives on freedoms' doorstep that other men, women, and children would be free to live their lives without tyranny, without fear, and without encumbrances on their religious beliefs.

We enjoy the freedoms we have today because our fathers, neighbors, and family answered the call to serve.

Richard A. Roppe
E. Co. 1/6, 198th LIB
1967 - 1968

Book News

WHERE WE WERE In Vietnam

WHERE WE WERE In Vietnam
A Comprehensive Guide to the Firebases, Military Installations and Naval Vessels of the Vietnam War - 1945-1975
By Michael "M-60" Kelley
Paperback, 8 1/2" x 11", approx 850 pages
Cover Price: \$39.95 (\$29.95 if pre-ordered)
To pre-order call [REDACTED] or visit Hellgate Press

About the book: Hellgate Press announces publication of THE definitive guide to the installations & warships of the Vietnam War. The culmination of over seven years of research, it is the ultimate guide to the military geography of the American War in Vietnam. It also includes references to numerous battle sites and forts of the French War as well. With more than 10,000 entries, it covers the entire Indochina theater, including Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and both North and South Vietnam. Each entry attempts to provide as much of the following as could be identified: name, grid coordinates (95%?), relative location, a.k.a. names, origin of name, dates built and dismantled, who constructed the base, major units sited there, dates of major attacks, unique features, alternate grids, province and military region. Listed

within the text are some 6,000 firebases and LZs, over 2,000 airfields/heliports, as well as over 700 US and ANZAC warships and merchant contract transports.

About the author: Michael "M-60" Kelley served as a rifleman and machine gunner with D Company, 1st/502d Infantry, 101st Airborne Division from Nov69, until badly wounded, Sep70. Drafted immediately upon graduation from Sacramento State College (BA Art), Mike has since established himself as one of the better-known artists whose focus has been the Vietnam experience. His artwork hangs in numerous museums and private collections around the world, including the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum in Chicago. Between 1984-91, Mike was one of two associate members of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial Commission (the \$2.5 million memorial now sits in Sacramento's Capitol Park). A focus of his art and writing has been to dispel the myths surrounding the Vietnam veteran. During the 1990's, his art took a back seat to writing, and his articles have appeared in the Washington Post, Boston Globe, Chicago Sun Times and Vietnam Magazine, among others. His military awards include the Combat Infantryman Badge, Bronze Star, Purple Heart and Air Medal.

Basic Combat Infantry Training

The following is not an indictment or an accusation. It is a remembrance of the Basic Combat Infantry Training that I completed at Ft Campbell, Kentucky. The cycle started in October 1967 and ended in December. This was at the time of the war in Southeast Asia and training was rigorous and vicious. All our DIs were combat veterans and every one of them had combat badges and ribbons.

The US Army of the 1960s was brutal and harsh. The first time they told you and showed you what they expected from you. The second time if you didn't do it right they would verbally tear your ass out. The third time you failed they would reason that "this guys trying to screw with me." Then you would get the crap beat out of you.

Lyndon Johnson was president. The TET offensive that would change the war psychologically for American public opinion was a few months away. Army training camps were full of new draftees and first term RAs. Thousands of guys that would be dead in the near future were still alive and training at US Army training centers.

We had arrived on buses and trucks after getting our first haircuts and uniforms. When we passed by the PX, the door opened for an instant and music from the jukebox "I got sunshine on a cloudy day" was clearly audible for an instant. Overhead and in the distance dozens of training paratroopers made their jump out of slow moving C-130s. It was that kind of time.

The Monday of the first week the DIs introduced themselves. Don't look at them in the eye; don't look at them in the eye. Once off the buses we were standing and milling around and BSing like guys do. Four civilian cars arrived and parked on the other side of the parade ground facing us. Five guys got out. All were stiff starched OD green uniforms and hats like Smokey the bear. One SFC with a white sidewall haircut and a clip board and stayed on the other side of the parade ground. The others walked about half way up to us and stopped and gave us hard stares with hands on their hips their DI hats pulled low over their foreheads.

The SFC stood on the edge of the parade ground; his shiny GI belt buckle glistening in the sun, the spit shined toes of his boots in contrast with the dirt ground. The patch of the drill sergeant on his stiff starched fatigue shirt pocket had the words "This well Defend". He said in a loud, contemptible voice "The following trainees will line up in alphabetical order in front of each drill sergeant as I call your name."

We were still milling around. The first names were called and three guys started to saunter across the parade ground dragging their duffel bags behind them. It seemed as if when you crossed the middle of the parade ground you passed over an invisible line from civilian to army. Three DIs jumped on the first three guys whose names had been called. They ran to them and started shouting and shrieking and cursing at them. They got in their face nose to nose and shouted orders for them to fall in, which, of course, the trainees did not know how to do. That just whipped the DI's into more of frenzy and they started to shriek and shout at the trainees who were already there and the ones who had started across. The trainees waiting on the other side of the parade ground watched with extreme foreboding and anxiety as the introduction to our DIs took place.

There was one guy who didn't learn from what he saw and when they called his name he made the stupid mistake of dragging his duffel bag instead of carrying it over his right shoulder as instructed. The SFC saw it, stopped calling names, threw his clip board on the ground, and with the other DIs ran toward the duffel bag dragging trainee with clenched fists. They made a tight circle around the trainee so we could not see what they were doing. The last DI to join them screamed to the ones blocking our view "Get away this ones mine, he's mine." Blows fell. They made sure we couldn't see the blows by forming a tight circle around the trainee. This demonstration and the way of hiding it was ominous to us who observed. I wasn't really surprised but I knew I better watch myself very close from now on.

The SFC picked his clipboard from the ground and bellowed to the rest of us remaining on the other side of the parade ground "You better not drag that damn duffel bag you damned trainees, on your right shoulder and you double-time over here." He went on shouting off names and the rest of us made sure we placed our duffel bags on the right shoulder and double-timed in the proper manner.

Our training continued under similar conditions. There was a guy in 1st platoon that just could not make it. He couldn't run and he couldn't march in step. Once we doubled timed out to the rifle range at port arms with M-14s. He committed the unpardonable sin of falling out and lying by the road. As the rest of the company double-timed past him two platoon sergeants started kicking him in the legs. They worked their way up to his chest and shoulders. He still did not get up. The two DIs grabbed him by each shoulder and dragged him the rest of the way down Kentucky Avenue and miles beyond. The toes of his boots were white from dragging on the asphalt road.

One afternoon about two weeks later the field first blew his whistle for the company to assemble. We stood at attention as the Commanding Officer, First Sergeant, and Platoon Sergeant walked briskly to the barracks where this guy's bunk was. There was silence for a moment then a crash and bang and the whole company stood at attention with eyes front while they beat the crap out of him. Afterwards they told him he could call a court martial. They got in his face and snickered, "But whom do you think they'll believe: a private E-1 or someone who has twenty years in?"

The trainee was recycled but he went back into the same training company. As the trainee would know by now they could do this at any time and there was nothing he could do. The unsettling fear of knowing they could do this with impunity only added to the terror.

I wrote this for my grandchildren of the future so they would know of life and times and activities in the very turbulent violent years of the late 1960s. Life was harsh and violent and sometimes mortally dangerous. There was no peace or happiness but only very anxious times.

Warren Lucas; 196th LIB

Chu Lai Today

A two hour video of my return to the Chu Lai area

I have returned to Vietnam and the Chu Lai area three times: 1997, with my 23 year old son, Aaron; 1998 with my 20 year old daughter, Michelle; and 1999 with C. Co., 1/6th Inf., 198th LIB platoon sergeant, Jim Kelleher. During the trips I took 28 hours of video.

I have taken parts of each trip to give you a two hour video that will show you the Chu Lai area bases, LZs, hills and bridges. The areas in the video were important to me as an E Co. (Recon), 1/6th Inf., 198th LIB member from May, 1968 to May, 1969.

A few of the areas are Hwy. 1; hills 54, 69, 76, 270, 707, 410, 352; Fat City; Rocket Ridge; An Tan Bridge; Chu Lai base; LZs Bayonet, Bowman, Professional, Center, Dottie; My Lai; Creek below hill 707.

To raise money for my next trip I am selling this video for \$19.99 plus \$3.50 priority mail. Contact me if you have further questions. Kurt McFadden, [REDACTED], Minden, NV, 89423, [REDACTED], e-mail [REDACTED]

Kurt McFadden

Military Order of the Purple Heart

The Military Order of the Purple Heart is a Congressionally chartered veterans' organization with members and chapters throughout the world. To join, obtain a membership application and submit your DD-214 or other proof of purple heart, and \$20 annual dues to MOPH, [REDACTED], Springfield, VA 22151. Additional information and applications can be obtained from Mr. Bill Bacon, [REDACTED], San Antonio, TX, 78250, [REDACTED]

LZ/MOTOWN 2002

The LZ/Motown 2002 All Veterans Reunion will be held in Southgate, MI on July 5-7, 2002. The reunion will be held at VFW Post 9283, [REDACTED], Southgate, Michigan. The VFW post can be reached at [REDACTED].

Pre-registration is requested. Information and pre-registration forms can be obtained from William Allen, [REDACTED], e-mail [REDACTED], or Paul Stiff, [REDACTED], Troy, MI 48099, e-mail [REDACTED].

Lodging is at Holiday Inn, [REDACTED], Southgate, MI, 48195. Reservations can be made at [REDACTED]. Be sure to ask for special reunion rate of \$89 per night plus taxes. The hotel is close to the Henry Ford Museum, Greenfield Village, and large shopping malls.

A hospitality room will be held at the hotel on July 5. On July 6 a country breakfast will be held at the VFW hall at 0800. At 1000 a bus will depart for a trip to the North Wall at Windsor, Ontario. Bring proof of citizenship for the trip to Canada. The bus fare is \$12 per person. In the evening there will be a steak dinner cookout at the VFW hall followed by music, dancing, and brotherhood. A free van service will run from the hotel to the VFW.

Paul Stiff, 23rd M.P. Company

Hill 4-11 Association 2002 reunion

The Hill-411 Reunion will be held in San Antonio, TX on July 18-21, 2002. The reunion will be held at the newly refurbished Emily Morgan Hotel located near the historic Alamo in downtown San Antonio. (See their web site at <http://emilymorganhotel.com>.)

Make your room reservations by calling the hotel at [REDACTED]. Be sure to say you are with the Hill 4-11 Association to get the special rate of \$109.00 single or double [+16.75% tax]. The memorial service, banquet, and business meeting will be scheduled as usual.

There is plenty of free time for you to visit what you like. Information will be provided to help you select what to see. Some may wish to see the many museums and historical sites. Those attending with children, grandchildren or just the young at heart may plan to go to Sea World or Six Flags. There are so many things to see and do in San Antonio the choice is yours.

More information on the reunion is available on the internet at <http://www.zyworld.com/lobo6869/CALDWELL1/REUNION.htm>. This includes a list of veterans coming to the reunion.

The Hill 4-11 Association is asking vets to give them some indication of how many will be attending. Please contact: Hill 4-11 Association, Dick Hill, [REDACTED], Kent, Ohio 44240-2664.

Johnny Caldwell; Co. D, 3/1st Inf., 11th LIB

9th Support Battalion

Dear editor,

I was in Vietnam in 1967-68. My first station was Duc Pho. I spent the rest of my tour in Chu Lai. I was with the 9th Support Battalion, 198th Lt. Inf. Bde. I arrived on the USS Gordon in October, 1967. I worked at ration breakdown, Class I supply.

I'm trying to locate some of the guys in my outfit. I drove a duce and half with Bostonian painted on the front. My friend Johnny Hayes from Florida had Double-Trouble on his truck.

I can be reached at [REDACTED], e-mail at [REDACTED]

Write to me at [REDACTED]

Gilmanton, NH, 03237.

Dennis R. Longo, Sr.; 9th Support Battalion, 198th LIB
Gilmanton, NH

Operation Meade River

Dear editor,

I am requesting information and unit members who participated on "Operation Meade River." I am writing a book about the 26th Marines, Iwo Jima - Vietnam. I heard the Americal Division was in on Operation Meade River in Nov.-Dec., 1968.

Could you please put something in your newsletter about this and have members contact me. I sure appreciate it! I am also working on a reunion for September 2002. Write to me at Gary A. Gruenwald, [REDACTED] New Market, Maryland 21774, [REDACTED]

Gary A. Gruenwald; USMC
New Market, MD

OP-1

Dear editor,

I was on OP 1 in 1968-69. Do you have any body else that was in that area that is a member? I would like to hear from anyone who was on OP-1. Write me at AJ Morris, [REDACTED], Brasstown, NC 28902, [REDACTED]

A.J. Morris
Brasstown, NC

Looking for Larry Lyford

Dear editor,

I am looking for 2LT Larry Lyford, 23rd Admin. Co., Chu Lai, 1970-71. I was a SP4 in the Orders Section at Chu Lai from December 70 to May 71. I am trying to verify that I also served as a courier for the Admin. Co. flying documents between Chu Lai and Quang Tri with stopovers in Da Nang.

Write to me at John Ryals, [REDACTED], Ardmore, Oklahoma 73402, or call [REDACTED]

John Ryals; 23rd Administration Co.
Ardmore, OK

LTC William G. Walby

Dear editor,

Thanks for the website. I hope you can help me. My dad was attached to Task Force Oregon, Americal Division, Vietnam during 1967. I am trying to develop some information about the unit's activities and him during that time. He was at that time LTC William G. Walby. I believe he and was Division G-2.

I found a plaque among his personal items with the following inscription under the Americal patch:

Presented to LTC William G. Walby
ACOFS GI Americal Division
19 February - 27 November 1967
Major General S. W. Koster
Commanding General Americal Division

My dad passed in 1988. We have been given permission to have a graveside service for him at Arlington after having a memorial headstone placed there to his memory. My dad was a veteran of WWII, Korea and Vietnam. Understandably, he almost never discussed his time in Vietnam. I would like to fill in the void of this part of his experience to know and share with my kids and immediate family. Call toll free at [REDACTED], [REDACTED] or e-mail [REDACTED]

Chris Walby
San Diego, CA

KIA unit data to go to National Archives

By Richard Coffelt

Editor's note:

Mr. Richard Coffelt will participate in a special ceremony on June 5, 2002 to present Vietnam killed-in-action data to the National Archives. Coffelt, a Korean War veteran, led an effort for the past several years to identify the unit of each U.S. service member killed in Vietnam. The data links each casualty with a company level unit.

The Americal Division had about 4,000 members killed in action in Vietnam. The lists of these casualties with unit data will SOON be available on the ADVA website at www.americal.org/history.shtml. You are requested to notify Mr. Coffelt or the ADVA of any corrections or additions to the lists. Contact information will be available on the website.

The ADVA extends its gratitude to Richard Coffelt and his associates for their tremendous accomplishment. The casualty lists will be extremely valuable to veterans, families, friends, and historians. Mr. Les Hines, ADVA Vietnam Historian, will include the casualty information with the Vietnam history files. The following is Mr. Coffelt's description of undertaking this monumental task.

I began this in 1986 after my wife and I visited Washington DC and saw the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Like everyone else, we knew persons on that Wall and relatives of others. When I came home I tried to find out more about the circumstances of death of our local KIA. I ran into a stone wall. All I found were incomplete newspaper obituaries on microfilm in the Hays (KS) public library.

I assumed that somewhere out there was one big file that would tell me what unit everyone belonged to and give me information not available to one with simple intellectual curiosity. It took me five years of letter writing to figure out that I was wrong.

Instead, I discovered one set of records giving a lot of information but no unit (CACF) and another giving only major unit information but filled with errors (TAGCEN). The National Archives had reams of material. But was in boxes and in such form that they would be impossible to use because of the volume of material, access limitations, and the cost factor.

In the early 1990s the internet came along and gave me someone to talk to about these problems. With the internet came newly formed associations of people from the same outfit but who had previously had no way of finding the people they had been with during the war. Most of them had no idea of the names of their own KIAs were. The tour of duty was one year but the unit was in Vietnam for as much as seven years. This meant the people organizing the association had a very limited knowledge of the unit's history in Vietnam.

I began giving my lists to these associations in an effort to provide them a base from which to work. This would assist them in getting their own memorial list information. My lists were incomplete but they were better than nothing. Most of the association people, like me, had no idea where to start.

Along the way I met Dick Arnold of Co. A, 1/35th Inf., 4th/25th Infantry Division and Dave Argabright, CO of Co. D, 2/60th Inf., 9th Infantry Division. The three of us have worked almost daily for several years now getting our material ever closer to perfection. The three of us will go to Washington in June for a ceremony at the National Archives building on the Mall (where the U.S. Constitution is kept).

Our lists now use material from Central Identification Laboratory at Hickam Field, Hawaii (mortuary records); Casualty Disposition Forms (DD Form 1300 DA Form 2496) as attached to Presidential Letters of Condolence from the LBJ Library, Austin, TX (1964-1968); and the Presidential Letters of Condolence from the NAR Nixon collection College Park, MD; feedback from Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, and some 30 unit associations. They have been

invaluable, as none of the record sets mentioned above are anywhere near complete.

In addition, there are errors, especially in TAGCEN, where file clerks did not know the difference between the 1st Infantry Division, 1st Infantry Regiment (2/1 and 3/1 Americal Div.), 1st Infantry Battalion, etc., etc. It used to cause a lot of confusion. Not so much anymore but we do need some central repository of reasonably reliable information in this area. Since no body else was doing it--I did.

Although I believe these lists are +98% complete and +96% accurate, there will be errors, and allegations of errors which are not errors. We will be asking for Americal veterans' input to help us complete, once and for all, these lists to the greatest possible degree of accuracy. Some errors are easily corrected. Others are not so easily found or straightened out as mistakes in this kind of work seem to take on a life of their own. We have basically merged CACF, TAGCEN, CIL (mortuary records), input from veteran's societies like your own, and library and web page unofficial information and come up with a 3,000 or so page central file.

What I have sent the ADVA is the Americal part of the 58,000 names of the dead in Southeast Asia.

Dick Arnold, David Argabright, and I deeded the whole file to the National Archives at their request. We will be having a reception on June 5th of this year in the main National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) building in Washington, DC. The government had not done this, and had no plans to do it, so we did it. It took years.

New book on WWII U. S. Army divisions now available

A book concerning the U.S. Army Infantry Divisions in WWII will be published Helion & Company in June 2002. Orders can be made on the publisher's website at <http://www.helion.co.uk/usinfantrydiv.html>. It may also be available on U.S. sites such as www.amazon.com and www.bn.com.

The title of the book is U.S. Army Infantry Divisions 1943-1945, Volume 1, Organization, Doctrine, Equipment by Yves Bellanger. In the first of a two-volume study, the author presents an extremely detailed record of the organization, doctrine and equipment of U.S. Army infantry divisions during the latter part of World War II. The second volume will provide capsule histories for all U.S. Army infantry divisions during this period.

After examining the state of the U.S. Army during the 1940-43 period, Bellanger focuses on the 1943-45 period, and presents each of the division's sub-units - from the divisional HQ to an infantry battalion, from the divisional artillery to its combat engineer element. For each, the author examines their organization (down to the lowest level possible), their training and tactical doctrine, in addition to listing all the equipment, vehicles and weapons they were issued. The first volume concludes with a comprehensive set of appendices, including sample command rosters.

The publisher lists the following points about this historical work: No equivalent book is available which covers the 1943-45 U.S. Army infantry divisions in comparable detail.

An extraordinarily detailed guide - lists all equipment issued to all elements of the infantry division, from an infantry battalion's HQ company, to the division's military police platoon, thus including much information on rear-area units usually ignored or forgotten.

Includes a large number of organizational charts, plus detailed sample command rosters.

Tactical doctrine is covered in detail, drawing extensively on contemporary US field manuals.

The author received extensive assistance from US veterans in writing this book.

It is an essential reference for re-enactors, modelers, war-gamers, researchers and anyone who requires a detailed guide to the U.S. Army during the 1943-45 period. (Information provided by Yves Bellanger.)

Travel Log: Vietnam

By Bill Shugarts

Editor's Note: Bill Shugarts works for Reynolds/Alcoa in Richmond, VA. A recent business trip took him to Hong Kong, China. From there he decided to take a personal trip to Vietnam. He spent three and one half days in Hanoi and in the Americal AO. The following is his travel log from March 4, 2002.

Monday – March 4

I got my free breakfast at the hotel, which was not bad, with various fruits, breads, meats, eggs, etc. I joined a large Japanese tour group in the breakfast line. My driver then picked me up at 8:00AM to begin an all day tour down Hwy. 1. The final destination would be My Lai following several stops along the way in Tam Ky, Chu Lai and Quang Ngai. These were some of the checkpoints used in running convoys on Hwy. 1 during the war. The total distance is about 100 km and took four hours each way due to the traffic, road conditions, stops for pictures and lunch along the road in a local Vietnamese restaurant in Quang Ngai.

Tam Ky has grown considerably since the war with new construction everywhere and even a traffic light now in the main section along the highway. The building and expansion is all government controlled. Many of the new buildings are government related according to my driver. They even have a new divided highway section going west which looks like a typical US highway. What is unusual about this is it is probably the only one for the 100 km route. Also, the orphanage that was there during my tour is still there and apparently doing well in helping various victims of the war, which was nice to see.

Chu Lai, the headquarters for the Americal Division (23rd Infantry Div.), the largest division of the entire Vietnam War, has grown as well. The village system is larger and has more buildings. The most amazing thing though is that our base camp, which covered several miles in all directions, is now a Vietnamese Army base, which looks kind of deserted. A colorful red Vietnam insignia and a limited guard system have replaced the "main gate" we were used to during the war. I asked my driver to stop in the opening of the gate and was amazed that no guard was posted and you could literally drive into the front without getting stopped. I was nervous to say the least, so I just walked inside and took a couple of quick pictures.

The outlying areas, which were our base camp perimeters, were still there. The areas where we pulled guard duty were somewhat visible but really worn over time. You could see where the sand dunes were and the asphalt coverings but there were no remaining guard towers or wire reinforcements like we had to defend

ourselves. It was very eerie in that it was as if nothing ever happened—no signs of war other than the provincial monuments in each provincial capitol and probably funded by the government of Vietnam. But otherwise no real trace of us really being there. All the materials are gone, rusted, stolen or whatever. I did see some of our old trucks running on parts of the highway but very few.

We continued on south to Quang Ngai area. At the intersection of one of their main rivers and Hwy. 1 is a large hotel and in front of the hotel sign is another sign for Son May (My Lai) indicating another 10 – 11 km. The driver commented about the road over to Son May being somewhat new and it was a very beautiful drive among the rural farms of rice, corn, maize, water buffalo, fishermen, and various vegetable farms and typical village houses in "neighborhoods." As we approached the little village of Son Mai we passed a hospital, which appears to be fairly new and then came across a gated entrance to a quiet park setting. They have a front entrance and charge \$2.00 to tour the area. It is very beautiful and very peaceful unlike what occurred there in 1968. It is also very humbling as this site can be equated in some degree to Auschwitz in Germany.

The Vietnamese government has constructed a large statue and has two fairly large buildings on these peaceful grounds. One building is a reception center where you can sit down and have complimentary Vietnamese tea and sign a guest book and leave your thoughts, reactions, or whatever in their book of hand-written comments. You can also leave your business card, which I did as well as writing some thoughts and reactions in the book. I also said a quiet prayer as this can't help move you being one of the key turning points of the Vietnam War.

My driver wanted to know if I wanted a cigarette and coffee after the meal. I took him up on the coffee, which was Vietnamese style—strongly steamed coffee and drips into little receptacles and then you add water, crème and ice if you want it. It reminds me of a strong—New Orleans style chicory coffee and is sure to "put hair on your chest".

After the late lunch we headed back up to Da Nang stopping at some temples in the Chu Lai, Tam Ky areas as well as war memorials. The trip back was later in the afternoon and the rice farmers where herding their water buffaloes across the road to other parts of their farms so we had to slow down and stop different times but it gave me great opportunities for pictures.

The afternoon sun was hot and the weather humid. It took me back to the old heat and smells from my previous tour. We ended up with another drive over to China Beach so I could get a few early evening pictures. I then arranged for my driver to meet me early the next morning to catch the morning flight back to Hong Kong. I was dead tired, dirty from a full day road trip and was in need of a shower and sleep. So, I did both and wound up missing dinner but that was fine with me.

We the Americal
Four stars on blue,
Humped the Southern I Corps
Coastal plains and mountains too.

Would I survive the missions?
And not be a drag?
Or would they medevac me back
In a plastic body bag?

Quang Ngai, Chu Lai,
Tam Ky and Fiddlers Green,
These are some of the places
We recall in our dreams.

LZ's Baldy, ross
West and Ryder,
Beaucoup NVA out there
Make perimeters tighter.

Heip Duc, LZ's Center and East
And Hawk Hill,
LZ's West and Siberia
Haunt us still.

LZ's Bayonet and Minuteman
Dottie and Gator,
We are going on the offensive
God help us make it back later.

In the north, an NVA stronghold
Was Firebase Mary Ann,
Those who last came there
Knew their troubles just began.

The division base at Chu Lai
Was always within reach,
Of mortars and rockets
Which struck them on the beach.

And Hill 97...
None will ever forget,
Of being over-run
Just months after Tet.

Editor's Note: SGT Mitchell Samples served with Co. B, 5/46th Inf., 198th LIB from July 1968 through July 1969. He was awarded the Silver Star, Purple Heart, and Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry during his tour with the Americal Division. He returned to his native West Virginia where he has worked in state government for the past 30 years.

Vietnam AmericalBy Mitchell Samples
Copyright 2002

Batangan Peninsula and
Operation Russell Beach,
Battlefield tactics
Someone forgot to teach.

Casualties and casualties
And... KIA,
Thousands of Purple Hearts
Were the order of the day.

Cobras and Artillery
Pounding the ground,
I can't hear my buddy crying
Because of the sound.

Mass confusion all around
Grenades exploding along the line,
Bullets flying up and down
Look and see if it's my time.

Each day is different
For weeks at a time,
Each place is unexpected
Of what you may find.

Sights and scents...
What you see and smell,
It could be danger
Heaven or hell.

Day after day I wonder,
"Is it my time?"
Will it be a bullet
Or will it be a mine?

Back to base for a stand-down
For just a couple of days,
A chance to separate my mind
From all of that haze.

What's to expect
When the chopper sets down,
Will all hell break loose?
Or just a peaceful sound?

Your buddies are leaving
Their time is up,
But here in Vietnam
I seem perpetually stuck.

Back in the states
Things are different I've heard,
Can't wait to get my chance
To fly on that Freedom Bird.

Leaving my buddies
Who are left behind,
I hope they will make it
But I have to clear my mind.

Things in America
Are just not the same,
At times I'd like to be back
With all those "what's their names?"

In all these years since
To this year of 2002,
I have always wondered...
All those things, did I really do?

I keep putting one step
In front of the other,
Keeping things from everyone
Including my mother.

Getting older
Always out of sorts,
I'm still on a mission
And life's getting short.

A short-timer then
And a short-timer now,
I wonder how I made it
Why and how.

Life's getting dimmer
Haze rolling in the sand,
Just like it did
In Vietnam.

MEMORIES

By Tom Waterbury

It was August 13, 1994. We were attending my son's graduation from Army Infantry boot camp at Ft. Benning, Georgia. Twenty-five years earlier, after completing OCS and Airborne training, I had been stationed there at the Infantry School on main post. As a young second lieutenant, I was waiting for the inevitable orders for Vietnam. My wife Anita and I both knew Vietnam would be my next assignment. Little did I know that twenty-five years later I would be back at Fort Benning as a civilian with memories as fresh as yesterday. Seeing the young soldiers sparked many memories, but my concerns then were for my son and not myself. I hoped his training would go untested. However, I was sure he was better trained than the soldiers from my period, and I knew if the time came, he would do his duty as I did mine and my father did his.

On August 13, 1969, Anita and I left Ft. Benning and headed to Ashland, Kentucky, for a thirty-day leave. My orders for Vietnam had come through. My report date was the 12th of September, but I wasn't to go directly to Vietnam. My orders had me TDY (temporary duty) to Panama to attend Jungle Expert School for two weeks. After Panama I headed to Travis Air Force Base in California for a chartered flight to Vietnam on the Flying Tigers airline.

It was a long flight but many of my OCS classmates were there with me. There were over two hundred second lieutenants on that plane and fifty or so enlisted men. None of us knew what to expect. I am sure we all wondered who would live and who would die during the next year. For many that would be a one-way ride. The only question was which ones.

Personally, I had never questioned the legality of the war. To fight for one's country was something you did with pride and without question. Smarter men than I had made the decision to go to Vietnam. Being an American, it was my responsibility to do what my country asked me to do. The biggest fear I had was being responsible for so many young men. There I was, a second lieutenant with no combat experience, going to Vietnam to take charge of a light infantry rifle platoon.

The plane landed at the Ben Hoa Air Force Base just outside Saigon. When I walked off the plane, a wall of heat engulfed me. It was awful. As we approached the metal hangers, we could see a large group of soldiers. They were waiting to go home. The men standing on the runway were laughing and yelling "Short!" "Going home!" and "Welcome to 'Nam." One thing was for sure - I could tell that they were anxious to get on the plane.

Another thing I noticed was that they looked aged beyond their years, much older than the nineteen and twenty years that most of them were.

We were all assigned to the 90th Replacement Center to await our permanent assignments. There we filled out our "dream sheet," a list of the units that we preferred. I listed the 173rd Airborne first because they were on jump status which would have meant \$110 extra a month. My second choice was the 1st Air Cav because they didn't have to walk very much. My third choice was the 101st Airborne for no particular reason. Of course, the Army assigned me to the Americal Division and several of us were flown by C-130's to Chu Lai where we were given a week's training and again asked to fill out a dream sheet for which of the three brigades we wanted. My first choice was the 198th Brigade because they were stationed around Chu Lai and appeared to have the lightest fighting. Next I put the 196th Brigade because the other brigade, the 11th, always had the most casualties. I was assigned to the 11th Brigade.

LT Stephens, LT Hardy, five other lieutenants and I caught a C-130 to Duc Pho where the 11th Brigade headquarters was located. Brigade personnel asked which battalion I wanted to be assigned to. At that point I said, "Put me wherever you want to. I'm not filling out anymore dream sheets!" Stephens and I were assigned to Delta Company 1/20 and Hardy to Alpha Company. We were all driven in a jeep to the battalion area. Because of his four deuce (4.2) mortar training, Hardy was reassigned within a week to Echo Company as the 4.2 mortar platoon leader.

Our choppers headed down and hovered over the tall elephant grass. We stepped out onto the skids and jumped to the ground. I couldn't believe how tall that grass was. Even though the top of the grass was touching the body of the chopper, when we jumped we fell several feet to the ground. It was a free fire zone which meant anyone there who wasn't one of us was a bad guy and we could shoot without question. The only living things we saw were a couple of small deer and lots of birds. It didn't feel like a combat zone but I knew the VC were there. All day long I expected to be ambushed.

We searched the area for the hospital to no avail. That night we set up in an NDP (night defensive position). The other men were relaxed but I don't think I slept at all that night. It was my first night in the field, and my adrenaline was pumping. I didn't feel safe; I didn't know what was going on or what to expect. All the training in the world can prepare you for combat, but no one can teach you to deal with the emotions you feel once you are really there.

couldn't send anyone up as they were taking small arms fire from that direction.

02:51 LNO 1/46 (RTO) reported that his location (1/46 BTOC) was on fire and they were abandoning the structure. Contact lost with LNO 1/46.

02:54 FDO 3/82 called FDC 3/16: reference delay in firing from C 3/16. 3/16 FDO stated that data had been passed to the battery and the delay was from that location (Pleasantville).

03:00 Radio contact reestablished with LZ Mary Ann through relay at LZ Mildred (Method 46).

03:10 The 155's at LZ Pleasantville fired their first round of illumination for LZ Mary Ann.

03:15 Aircraft requested checkfire so that they could go into the LZ. Checkfire denied by FDO 3/82 (AES). Aircraft were given air data. Aircraft then stated that they could not locate Mary Ann and requested the illumination be continued to guide them in.

03:20 MAJ Godwin, S-3 3/82 was briefed on the situation by the FDO 3/82.

03:25 Checkfired HE for gunships and dustoff.

03:53 Received a report that mortar fire was coming from vicinity 9698 grid square, processed fire mission (AES) on grids 965985 and 962982. 04:00 LNO 1/46 (RTO) reestablished communications with LZ Mildred.

04:10 Checkfire for dustoffs.

04:15 LNO 1/46 (RTO) reported attack had ended at 04:05, 1/46 BTOC destroyed, 155 howitzer positions destroyed and burning, estimated 10 KIA and 40 WIA, requested as many dustoffs as available.

05:00 Checkfire lifted, grids processed for FM's on suspected evasion routes by 105, 155, 8inch and 175's.

06:30 Briefed LT Hary about the night's actions. Estimated 33 Killed and 77 wounded of the approximately 250 American men on LZ Mary Ann. All officers killed or wounded. Relieved as FDO by LT Hary

Glossary:

AES- The initials of the Fire Direction Officer. They accompanied authorization and orders to fire. All consequences of the order whether good or bad were the responsibility of the FDO. In the extract, only those instances where the calls were subject to controversy or were otherwise near the limits of authority under the rules of engagement are noted. All authorities and orders issued by the FDO- were also noted in mission logs.

Battery- An artillery unit, usually with six howitzers with the mission of direct artillery fire support of an infantry battalion. Led by the battery Commander.

BN- Battalion, a military unit that consists of several (3-5) companies batteries.

Company- An infantry unit consisting of several platoons, about 144 men. Led by the company commander.

CPT- Captain

CS- Tear Gas.

Direct- Wire line (like a telephone) as opposed to radio.

Dustoff- Helicopter used to evacuate the wounded.

FA- Field Artillery.

FM- Fire Mission, a request to attack a target with artillery.

FDC- Fire Direction Center, the command center of an artillery unit. It is where all fire missions are processed, coordinated and cleared for execution.

FDO- Fire Direction Officer, artillery officer in charge of FDC. FDO 1/16- FDO 1/16 artillery was the fire direction officer in charge of a 155mm howitzer battalion whose mission was to reinforce 3/82 artillery. 1/16 had artillery batteries on LZ Mary Ann and LZ Pleasantville.

FDO 3/82- FDO 3/82 was the fire direction officer in charge of all artillery fires between the South China Sea and Laos in an area of Southern I Corps that was the Area of Operations (AO) of the 196th Infantry Brigade of the Americal (23rd Infantry Division). Combat operations in this AO were usually conducted against the North Vietnamese Army's 2nd Division and its 324B Division. The 3/82 artillery was made up of four batteries of 105mm howitzers. The FDO could also call on other artillery battalions with 155mm, 8inch and 175mm guns for reinforcement.

FD net- Radio frequency where artillery fire direction was coordinated.

B/1/4- Bravo one one four (B battery, 1st Battalion, 14th Regiment) had been located on Mary Ann but had been removed to LZ Mildred a few days earlier at the recommendation of CPT States who felt the fire base was not defensible. This action not only removed B/1/4 from a position of great risk but put it in a position to defend Mary Ann.

FSE- Fire Support Element. the operations center at Division Artillery Headquarters.

Fire Base- Where the artillery is located. Usually co-located with an infantry battalion headquarters and surrounded by barbed wire and mines.

Gunship- Helicopter armed with mini-guns and rockets. Airborne Artillery.

Illumination- Artillery rounds that eject parachute flares used to light up an area. After the flares are ejected the artillery round continues on to impact. Its impact location (grid) must be plotted to avoid impact in a friendly area.

LNO- Liaison Officer. In this case, the artillery officer located at the infantry battalion tactical operations center (BTOC) that coordinates the actions of the infantry and the artillery.

LNO 1/46- The artillery liaison officer with first of the forty sixth infantry battalion.

Method 46- Radio call-sign of the battery commander of B/1/4 artillery, the 105 mm battery on LZ Mildred.

Oncalls- Preplanned fire missions, usually defensive targets around the perimeter of a friendly unit.

LZ- Landing Zone. LZ Mary Ann was a fire base located on a ridge line deep in the jungle and mountains southwest of DaNang. It was the field headquarters (Battalion Tactical Operations Center or BTOC) of the First Battalion of the Forty-sixth Infantry Regiment or 1/46 infantry (pronounced one four six infantry or first of the forty sixth infantry). - Mary Ann also the location of C battery 1/16 Field Artillery, a 155mm howitzer battery and an South Vietnamese artillery battery.

LT- Lieutenant

S-3- Operations Officer

RTO- Radio Telephone Operator. The soldier that actually carries the radio. With his antenna, he makes a good target.

Americal Division News Sheet February 5, 1969

The AK-47 assault rifle was the basic individual weapon of the Soviet Army until the introduction of the 7.62mm assault rifle around 1958. Copies of the AK-47 are in use by most of the Communist countries and by the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong units in South Vietnam. The AK-47 assault rifle was adopted by the U.S.S.R. for its forces in 1947.

The rear sight is adjustable from 100 to 800 meters in 100-meter increments, and has a battle sight setting for 250 meters. 7.62mm, air-cooled, gas-operated, magazine-fed, automatic or semi-automatic shoulder or hip weapon. 30 round capacity magazine. Overall length 34.2 inches. Weight: (loaded) 10.6 pounds. 400 meters maximum effective firing range. Rate of fire: (semiautomatic) 40 rds/min. (automatic) 100 rds/min. Muzzle velocity - 710 meters/sec.

From the Vietnam Historian

Dear members,

I am concerned that the rich history of the Americal Division found in many publications issued by the Americal Division Information Office will be lost. This year as we completed the work on transcribing division IO materials that began nine years ago, I realized that we may have obtained copies of all Division IO publications that can be found in government archives.

It is critical to get help from our ADVA members to help provide copies of these lost publications. We need all ADVA members to look through their footlockers for any materials published by the Americal Division Information Office. "Southern Cross", "Task Force Oregon", "Americal Daily Newsheets", brigade Newsletters like the 11th Brigade "Trident", 16th CAG "Falcons", Unit albums, and etc.

Here is a list of "Southern Cross" issues that we need copies:

Vol 2/20 13 Aug 69 All 8 pages
 Vol 2/34 21 Nov 69 All 8 pages
 Vol 2/36 04 Dec 69 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/02 09 Jan 70 only Pages 3 & 5 missing
 Vol ??? 03 Apr 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/12 10 Apr 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/14 24 Apr 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/15 01 May 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/16 08 May 70 only Pages 7 & 8 missing
 Vol 3/18 22 May 70 only Pages 7 & 8 missing
 Vol 3/19 29 May 70 Only Pages 2,3,4,5,7,8 missing
 Vol 3/20 05 Jun 70 Only Pages 1,2,4,5,6,7
 Vol 3/21 12 Jun 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/22 19 Jun 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/23 26 Jun 70 Only Pages 2,3,4,5,7,8 6 missing
 Vol 3/24 03 Jul 70 Only Pages 2,4,5,7 missing
 Vol 3/25 10 Jul 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/26 17 Jul 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/28 31 Jul 70 Only Pages 2,3,4,5,7,8 missing
 Vol 3/29 07 Aug 70 Only Pages 2,3,4,5,7,8 missing
 Vol 3/30 14 Aug 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/31 21 Aug 70 Only Pages 7 & 8 missing
 Vol 3/33 04 Sep 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/35 18 Sep 70 Only Pages 2,3,4,5,7,8 missing
 Vol 3/37 02 Oct 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/38 09 Oct 70 All 8 pages
 ??????? 16 Oct 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/39 23 Oct 70 All 8 pages
 ??????? 30 Oct 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/40 06 Nov 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/41 13 Nov 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/42 20 Nov 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/43 27 Nov 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/45 04 Dec 70 Only Pages 4,5,7 missing
 Vol 3/46 11 Dec 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 3/48 25 Dec 70 All 8 pages
 Vol 4/3 15 Jan 71 All 8 pages
 Vol 4/16 03 Apr 71 All 8 pages
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 Vol 4/36 10 Sep 71 All 8 pages
 Vol 4/39 01 Oct 71 All 8 pages
 Vol 4/40 08 Oct 71 All 8 pages
 Vol 4/41 15 Oct 71 All 8 pages

Vol 4/42 22 Oct 71 All 8 pages
 Vol 4/43 29 Oct 71 All 8 pages
 Vol 4/44 06 Nov 71 All 8 pages

My address is: Leslie Hines; [REDACTED] Des Moines, IA 50312-2609. Phone [REDACTED] after 6:00 p.m. weekdays. If you miss me by phone leave your phone number (say it slowly and clearly) with a time you are available to be called. My e-mail address is [REDACTED].

Artillery Combat Log

FSB Mary Ann; March 28, 1971

I was the battalion fire direction officer of 3/82 Artillery when Mary Ann was hit. Shown below is an extract from my combat log from that night.

I had been to Mary Ann several days earlier at the request of my battalion commander. My mission was to determine if Mary Ann was defensible. After observing the location and condition of the base and discussions with LTC Doyle, MAJ Smith, an infantry CPT, 1LT Hogan the artillery forward observer, and 1LT Layton of the 3/16 artillery battery, I determined that it was not and recommended that our artillery unit (B 1/14) be withdrawn. It was transferred to LZ Mildred where it fired the illumination and counter battery the night of the attack.

I then went on to command A Battery, 3/82 Artillery on Hill 151 in DS of 2/1 Infantry and back into the Que Son Valley with the 1/1 Cavalry in 1971. I am now a wheat farmer in Hays, Kansas.

Alan E. States

Combat Log (extract)**Battalion Fire Direction Center****3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery**

Subject: Attack on LZ Mary Ann, 28 March 1971

02:40 LNO 1/46 (RTO), "Be advised, we are taking incoming at this time."
 02:40 BN FDC started processing counter mortar grids and advised FSE, which happened to be on the direct the time, of the situation.
 02:41 FDO 3/82, "How many rounds have you taken?"
 LNO 1/46, "Beaucoup, to many to count."
 FDO 3/82, "Where are they coming from?"
 LNO 1/46, "No way to tell, there's to much all around us."
 02:45 LNO 1/46 reported that his position (1/46 BTOC) had taken 5 direct hits and the position was taking CS.
 02:45 Fired first rounds of counter-mortar program in defense of LZ Mary Ann from B 1/14 at LZ Mildred. Firing data was passed for all counter mortar grids with order (AES) to fire all targets then to repeat the series if definite targets were not yet available upon completion of the series.
 02:45 LNO 1/46 (RTO) called for illumination from 3/16, clear ELM. 3/16 requested clearance for the impact grids. I gave clearance initials AES and ordered them fired.
 02:47 Illumination shot by B 1/14 at LZ Mildred for LZ Mary Ann.
 02:50 LNO 1/46 (RTO) stated that Mary Ann was undergoing ground attack from the NW in the vicinity of the garbage dump.
 02:50 FDC 3/16 came up on the FD net and started asking about the 155 position on Mary Ann. He requested that someone be sent up to the 155's to have them call their FDC (at Pleasantville). LNO 1/46 (RTO) replied that he had negative contact with the 155's and

7 July 1969 "Ready, aim, fire....duck"
LZ CENTER

The VC fired five mortar rounds at an Americal Division base on a distant mountain top, and seconds after the explosions their own valley position was blasted with thousands of searing fragments of shrapnel. The enemy probably never knew what hit them, but if there were any survivors they'll be talking about a super quick reacting artillery battery for years to come. At any rate they would have to be wondering what it takes to carry out a successful mortar mission on a 196th Inf. Bde. fire support base like LZ Center.

Actually, Battery B of 3rd Bn., 82nd Arty., had a practice alert turn into the real thing. The artillery unit was performing one of their usual test fire missions to check the accuracy of their howitzers. During the test, Capt. Richard Madsen, the artillery commander, called for a practice alert. All the gunners scrambled for their flak jackets, protective masks, and steel pots and prepared themselves at their positions.

No sooner had the men manned their guns when the enemy mortar rounds hit inside the perimeter. In a matter of seconds, the first of a salvo of artillery rounds was on its way to the enemy position. "We could see the fire from the tubes deep in the valley," explained Madsen. The enemy rounds landed near the mess hall but no damage or casualties were reported. The battery's 105mm shells silenced the enemy tubes.

July 1969 RVN's one safe forecast: it won't snow today
TAM KY

A storm system, pushed across Laos and Thailand by the winds of the southwest monsoon, boils over the mountains to drench the Vietnamese coastal plain. A squall washes over a mountaintop, while a patrol watches from a nearby ridge. An isolated cold system gets frustrated in China and moves south.

There isn't an American in the Republic of Vietnam who hasn't said, "Man, the weather is all messed up over here," at one time during his tour. And to the infantry commander, a sudden shift in the weather can bog down an operation that was going smoothly half an hour before.

Keeping the ground troops informed is the job of the 5th Weather Squadron, U.S. Air Force. Sgt. Joseph P. Lally is weather liaison for the 101st Airborne Division's 1st Bde. S2 section. "There's more to the job than just giving daily forecasts," Lally explained. "I have to give the commanders a general weather picture whenever we move into a new area."

This picture requires a study of the area's climatology (the weather pattern in an area over a period of years) to use as a basis in forecasting the current year. We have to rely on records for our studies," Lally continued, "In Vietnam these records only go back to the early 1900s and are oriented to agriculture. They deal with rainfall and the like. "We average all the records and get a general picture of what the weather is like: how many clear days, how often it rains, the most likely time of day for showers, stuff like that."

Of equal interest to commanders are daily forecasts. "I get predictions from the big air bases close by, take the readings from my own instruments, combine them and figure out what the weather will be like here at Tam Ky," he said. "But the weather five miles away might be completely different."

The instruments at Lally's weather station include a wind measuring set, thermometers, wet and dry bulbs for measuring temperature and humidity, a set of barometers, and calculators. "The instruments and forecasts give me something to work with," he concluded, "but to give a forecast myself, I have to rely on experience and common sense."

7 July 1969 Scope 'sees' approaching sappers
LZ LIZ

An NVA sapper attack on this Americal Division firebase five miles north of Duc Pho was successfully repelled by soldiers of the 11th Brigade's 1st Bn., 20th Inf. The action lasted six hours and resulted in 12 NVA killed, two AK47s, two RPGs and over 100 Chicom hand grenades captured.

The fighting began in the south side of the perimeter when 12 enemy were spotted by members of Co. B manning the southernmost bunker. "We had two men awake and were pulling guard from the top of our bunker. I was scanning the area with a starlight scope when I detected a reflection," said Pfc. Walter Swain. "Looking closer, I counted 12 of them coming through the wire."

I alerted the others and gave the starlight to them and they confirmed what I saw. We called it in and opened up on them with machinegun, M79, and automatic weapons fire." Sgt. Larry Sopczynski took up the story. "We called for illumination and continued to fire on the NVA. They tried to get back out through the wire, but we kept picking them off."

On the northern side of the perimeter, one of the sapper squads had managed to penetrate the concertina wire and fired an RPG into the artillery's communication bunker. Two of the NVA took over a small fighting position, but three neat rounds from a 90mm recoilless rifle put an end to their fighting.

At daybreak an NVA soldier was found hiding in the chapel. Under interrogation he revealed he was a member of an 18 man sapper unit that had been broken down into three six man squads. Each squad was equipped with an AK47 and an RPG2. The other men served as ammunition bearers. The morning search also netted the two RPGs and confirmed a body count of 12 NVA killed. They were clad in dark shorts and their bodies had been camouflaged with soot. Several blood trails were found leading from the perimeter.

4 July 1969
Vietnam communiqué June 23-29

Americal Div Americal troopers June 28 killed 65 NVA and 30 VC soldiers as fighting flared in the Tam Ky area shattering a week of relative calm. A 1st Armored Cav. light observation helicopter (LOH) was fired upon as it flew over the island June 27. Returning the enemy fire, the chopper called for infantry support to engage the enemy. A rifle platoon from Troop A was air assaulted onto the island to check the results of the LOH's contact. Nine VC were killed by the scout ship.

The command and control helicopter of the 4th Bn., 31st Inf., while on a reconnaissance mission 14 miles west of Tam Ky, spotted movement in the dense overgrowth below and led Air Force jets and Americal ground forces to an NVA bunker complex. The chopper directed the jets on an airstrike of the area and then steered companies A and B of the 4th Bn. to the remnants of the NVA force.

Division soldiers, sweeping an area 15 miles northwest of Quang Ngai City on June 29, came upon an occupied NVA hospital. Troopers of the 5th Bn., 46th Inf. discovered the hospital, complete with three patients, in a large hut and found the bodies of 12 NVA at the back door. Evidence indicates that the enemy hospital personnel were in the process of burying the dead NVA when the Americal soldiers approached. In their hurried flight from the area, the enemy left behind two wounded NVA soldiers and one wounded VC who were detained by the infantrymen. Captured were a host of medical supplies, litters, and some cooking utensils.

In sporadic fighting throughout the divisions area of operations, 42 NVA and 35 VC soldiers were killed by division infantrymen.

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07 Jul 69 Photo Caption INTERESTING PATTERNS FORM when a time exposure is made of gunships bombarding enemy positions outside the perimeter of LZ Bronco. The gunships are from the 174th Assault Helicopter.

07Jul Quick reaction foils attack

LZ BALDY The dark morning stillness exploded for the 196th Inf. Bde. recently at this Americal Division fire support base (FSB) when a company of NVA attempted an unsuccessful sapper attack that resulted in 43 enemy killed.

The enemy invaders were credited with damaging several bunkers and hootches, two jeeps and a battalion chapel with satchel charges and rocket propelled grenades before quick reacting Americans derailed the attack.

Volleys of fire lashed out until dawn's light yielded temporary peace. Morning patrols of the perimeter discovered 125 Chicom grenades, more than 25 satchel charges, 8 AK47s, RPG launchers, 3 AK50s, a .45 caliber pistol, an M79 grenade launcher, an M16 rifle, and a bangalore torpedo. Firing erupted initially when a 15 man enemy force penetrated perimeter defenses silently and thrust towards a ranger camp located on a remote sector of the base.

As the NVA stealthily scaled the hill behind the camp, the rangers' pet mongrel, "Crash," began barking fiercely and ruptured whatever plans the enemy may have had for an undetected entry. The 11 long range patrol soldiers, members of Co. G, 75th Rangers, asleep in the camp, quickly moved to firing positions and proceeded to pepper the enemy with heavy weapons fire. Bitter fighting raged within the camp until dawn when the sapper attack was finally repulsed.

During the first moments of struggle, other squads of enemy were storming different points on the perimeter. Bunkerline guards were successful in beating off the enemy lunges on the southern and eastern sides of the base. The enemy that did penetrate were first held at bay and then repelled by the stiff resistance of an alerted FSB.

Mr. Les Hines, ADVA VIETNAM Historian, has acquired Vietnam history documents such as THE ARMY REPORTER. They are available to you on compact disc for a nominal fee. See the ADVA directory for contact information.

7 July 1969 Vietnam communique
June 6-22 Americal Div

A combination of gunships and infantrymen killed eight North Vietnamese Army soldiers June 18, five miles west of Duc Pho. Teaming up for the fight were infantrymen from Co. B, 1st Bn., 20th Inf. and gunships from the 123rd Aviation Bn.

Three days earlier, a division forward air controller and mechanized troops teamed up to kill 13 NVA soldiers. The forward controller, flying an aircraft of the 198th Light Infantry Brigade, was flying over hilly terrain 10 miles southwest of Duc Pho when he received fire from an unknown number of NVA troops concealed in the dense jungle below. The aerial observer called the NVA position to tankers of the 3rd Platoon, H Troop, 17th Armored Cavalry, and armored personnel carriers were immediately dispatched. The artillery and helicopter gunship fire directed by division troopers killed 13 of the enemy.

7 July 1969 Black Death's plaguing fleas get dustoff and take powder PHU BAI

Bubonic plague, the "black death" that killed a quarter of the population of Europe in a series of epidemics during the fourteenth century, is seldom thought of in the United States today outside of history classes. But wherever there is war and destruction with an accompanying decline in sanitation standards this fearsome disease reappears.

Modern medical and sanitation measures have combined to fight this menace. While these have not succeeded in eradicating it altogether, they have managed to reduce its depredations and stop its spread when it appears.

This has been one of the primary tasks of the 172nd Preventive Medicine Unit of the 44th Medical Brigade. Laboratory confirmed cases of plague were recently reported from various populated areas of Thuan Tien Province in the I Corps area. After coordinating with provincial officials, Army and Navy medical personnel took immediate measures to control the outbreaks. Under the direction of preventive medicine unit personnel, procedures focusing on flea control were quickly initiated. Vietnamese villages and hamlets and military cantonments along Highway QL1 from Lan Co to Hue were dusted with Diazinon insecticidal dust using back packs, truck mounted dust blowers, and hand dusters.

Scientists have long known that plague is caused by a microorganism transmitted to man by the fleas which live on rats. For that reason, when plague appears in an area, it is most important to eliminate the fleas before beginning rat control measures. Killing the rats first would only allow the fleas to leave the dead rodents in search of another warm blooded host like man.

The idea behind dusting operations is simple. Insecticidal dust is blown along rodent runways and into enclosed spaces, rat harborages, and other places where rodents congregate. The dust is picked up on the fur of the rodents while they are moving about, especially during their nighttime foraging. The dust clinging to the fur of the rats will kill the fleas living on them and will also be carried to nesting places where more fleas will be destroyed. Elimination of the fleas thus breaks the plague chain of infection.

The organized plague control program takes the following priorities for its task: Immunizing the population; eliminating fleas through dusting; and finally, eliminating rats by poisoning, trapping, and maintaining high standards of environmental sanitation. As performed by preventive medicine units, these steps help keep U.S. and Free World fighting men as well as the Vietnamese population free from disease. (Note: Aviation units from the Americal had helicopters operating from Hue and Phu Bai.)

A week later, after working the valley without success, Captain Holmes received a call from Battalion saying that we had a new mission, a combat assault into a VC village, went along to show me where this NCO club was. We worked our way up the hill along a dark path. I was led to a wooden shack where the enlisted men could go to buy beer during their free time.

We entered the shack and immediately the PFC in question saw us and ran out the other side. I followed and ordered him to stop. He did. As I approached him, I could tell he was plastered. I started talking to him and he hit me with a right to the jaw. Before I knew it, he was on the ground. Frye had decked him and was on top of him, holding him down. Frye asked if I wanted to have him arrested. I said, "No, let's take him back to the bunker and I'll get it straightened out in the morning."

The next day I ordered the PFC to report to my bunker. He looked like a whipped puppy. He didn't remember what had happened but he had been told about striking me. I just looked at him for about a minute, and then I asked,

"What the hell is the matter with you?" He said he was sorry but he had some personal problems. When I asked him what they were, it turned out that his wife had been due to give birth the two weeks before and he hadn't heard anything. I told him that he should have come to me about this instead of getting drunk and striking an officer. I went on to tell him that I would find out about his wife's condition, but in the meantime he would be on shit burning detail for the next two weeks that we were on Liz. After our talk, I asked SGT Wade to contact the Red Cross to get me some information ASAP. It only took a couple of hours before we found out that we had a new daddy in the platoon. His wife had written about the baby, but in Vietnam you could never count on the mail. Pressing charges wouldn't have solved anything. In fact, I believe by handling this incident myself I showed the men that I was worthy of command.

Shortly after I took over the platoon, the Battalion changed tactics and we started working as separate platoons instead of company-sized units. That was new for the men so it put me on an even keel with them. Over the next few weeks, the men learned that I wouldn't ask them to do anything I wouldn't do myself. I really feel that as minor as that was, it was the one thing that really gained me their respect. I not only walked point and did the dangerous things in the field, I also filled sandbags, put out tanglefoot, and everything else the men had to do when we were on the firebase.

My first time on Firebase Liz was quite an experience for my men and me. We were responsible for seven bunkers which meant that my platoon had to man each of those bunkers day and night. There was an access road just inside the bunkers, but at night it was dark and most people stayed inside. The first night I was there, I checked each bunker at about 2100 hours. The men were really surprised that I came around. The other lieutenants didn't bother to check the bunkers.

As I made my rounds, one of the men complained that one of the other men wouldn't

The above story is one of four submitted by Tom Waterbury. Look for others in future editions of the Americal Newsletter. Submit your stories to Gary L. Noller, Vietnam Editor, 1305 SE Willow Tree Dr., Blue Springs, MO 64014, e-mail to glnoller@aol.com. Photos are welcome but cannot be returned. Stories may be edited for length and style.

In memory of Jay Zitzow

I only knew Jarvis (Jay) Zitzow for a few weeks. We were radio-telephone operators (RTOs) in Co. B, 1/46th Inf. We carried the radios for the company commander (CO). The two of us worked well together.

Jay was a draftee, 26 years old, married, and a schoolteacher. I often asked him what he did to aggravate his draft board and get sent to Vietnam. He replied that he came from a very rural area of Minnesota and there was no one else left to go.

One day the CO selected Jay and I to be with him in the lead helicopter on a combat assault (CA). We explained to him that it was not our turn to go on the first chopper because we had done so on the last CA. We thought two of the other RTOs should go first this time. The CO insisted we do it.

Jay and I reasoned that the CO wanted us with him because we were both over six feet tall and made good shields for him. Miffed, we decided to have a little fun with the captain. When the helicopter landed Jay and I simply got off and stood still. The CO looked at us and waited for us to go. But we did not move. Finally the CO made a run for a nearby paddy dike and dove on the ground. Jay and I looked at each other and smiled.

I remember Jay as a calm and competent soldier. He had been in-country longer than I and had seen much more action. I was comfortable being close to him. I knew he could take care of things for both of us.

When Jay was headed for home he went through his rucksack and disposed of several items. One of the items that he pulled out was a US olive drab hammock. They were rare to find. Most hammocks were made and sold by the local Vietnamese and were not the same quality as a US hammock. Jay told me that he had found the hammock in an enemy location after a firefight. He asked me if I wanted the hammock. I told him "Yes."

I slept in the hammock only a few times. I was never comfortable in a hammock so I slept on an air mattress on the ground. I brought the hammock home with me and I still have it. I have taken it out a few times just for the memories. It's in the same condition as when I received it from Jay.

Jay retired from teaching two years ago and had recently been ordained a Deacon in his church. He made contact with a group of veterans from his platoon and was looking forward to corresponding with them. He and his family were enjoying life as it should be.

Jay passed away in August, 2002. He died of a massive heart attack. He was 57 years old. He was my friend. He is greatly missed.

His wife Theresa, son Erwin, and daughter Kristen survive him. May he rest in peace.

-GLN-

REUNION - EASTERN REGIONAL CHAPTER - REUNION

September 24, 2002 to September 27, 2002

Scranton, Pennsylvania

Steamtown National Historic Site - Coal Mine Tour

Electric City Trolley Station and Museum

More Information:

Joe Tunis

Ariel, PA 18436
Tel: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]REUNION - FAR WEST CHAPTER - REUNION
September 29, 2002 Thru October 2, 2002

Atlantis Casino Resort - Reno, Nevada

Check Far West Chapter under Chapter News for complete programs. For reservation forms and further information contact:

Larry Levy

Reno, NV 95809
Tel: [REDACTED]

REUNIONS - GREAT LAKES CHAPTER - REUNIONS

July 5-6-7, 2002 - All Veterans Reunion at Southgate, Michigan at the VFW Post 9283. Lodging at Holiday Inn, [REDACTED], Southgate, MI 48195 - Call [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. \$89.00 a night. Hospitality Room, Bus trip to Northern Wall in Canada where the Canadian's Vietnam veterans will be having a celebration. The Southgate VFW will hold a Steak dinner on Saturday afternoon followed by music Saturday night. Free van service from Hotel to VFW. For more information call: Bill Allen - [REDACTED] or Paul Stiff - [REDACTED].

September 19-22, 2002 - Kokomo, IN - 20th Annual Veterans Reunion. Locater/Sign-In at the big tent on Friday and Saturday. We had 130 Americal veterans sign in last year and we will have many hospitality camp sites planned throughout the Reunion. Group picture at 3 P.M. on Saturday by the big Flag. 30,000 veterans were in attendance last year.

January 16-19, 2003 - New Glarus, WI - Friday night: Hospitality Room at Hotel and at Swiss Lanes, Burning of Winter Ceremony, Parade, dance at the Fire Station. Saturday: Village wide Poker run, Auction at Hotel, Annual Group picture at Sportsman's Bar front outside at 3 P.M. and banquet Saturday night at the New Glarus Hotel with new improved sound system. The Great Lakes Chapter will have their meeting at Jimmie's at 9 A.M. All Americal Veterans, whether you are a member or not, are welcome to attend. We will be selling Americal stuff afterwards.

Don't miss this one! One of America's best kept secret reunions. You'll never forget this one,

Call Terry Babler - Tel: [REDACTED]

VIETNAM MEMORIAL IN NEED OF FIVE MILLION TRUST

Fund Interest Would Keep Site Operating

The founder of the Vietnam Veterans National Memorial in Angel Fire, NM wants to raise Five Million Dollars in hopes of establishing a trust that would keep it permanently open.

The Memorial, a father's tribute to his son killed in the Vietnam War, sees between 70,000 and 100,000 visitors a year and is the site of ceremonies on Veterans Day and Memorial Day.

Built and dedicated in 1971, it has been operating on the kindness of donations from community and visitors to the site since 1998, said Richard E. Ottis Sr., the Memorial's volunteer general manager.

"This is our only means of support." Ottis said. "It takes about \$80,000 to \$100,000 (a year) for the electricity, plus we do have to have a regular staff here."

Ottis, a door-gunner with the 101st Airborne Division during the Vietnam War, said banks have told him that a Five Million Trust would provide enough annual interest to keep the Memorial running in perpetuity.

Thirty years ago, Victor Westphall built a chapel in Angel Fire dedicated to his son, Victor David Westphall III, a Marine Corps officer who was killed in action in the Vietnam War on May 22, 1968. The elder Westphall and his wife, Jeanne, used the insurance money from their son's death to finance the construction.

In 1982, they turned the chapel over to the Disabled Americans Veterans, which added a visitors center and a gift shop in 1986. Congress recognized the Memorial as a national symbol a year later.

However, for financial reasons, the veterans group in 1998 gave the Memorial back to Victor Westphall and a new foundation named for his son. The Memorial had closed of two months but reopened under the new manager.

In recent months, Ottis and Westphall, 87, have begun an open-ended campaign to raise money to keep it open.

The Angel fire Resort donated about \$2000 to create some public service announcements that are aired on KOAT-TV, Channel 7

Donations may be sent to the:

Vietnam Veterans National Memorial

Angel Fire, NM 87710

Information on the Web is available at www.vietnamveteransnationalmemorial.orgAlbuquerque Journal
John J. Lumpkin

Ed Note: I visited this Memorial several years ago and it is indeed beautiful! It is also in a beautiful location.

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

A MEMORIAL DAY MESSAGE

Today I ask you to think about the meaning of Memorial Day.

I charge you with a duty to learn about, to know and to honor those who served in wars.

Almost a century ago - 81 years - World War I, the "War to end Wars," ended with the loss of 20 men from this area.

A half century ago - 54 years - World War II, called the "good war," ended with the loss of 86 men and women from this area.

47 years ago - The Korean War, often called "the forgotten war," ended with the loss 9 men from this area.

25 years ago - The Vietnam War - the war we lost, ended with the loss of 9 men from this area.

9 years ago - with hearts filled with dread, we watched and waited through Desert Storm.

Today we marched, we saluted, we sang, and now we stand before this Memorial Monument, to recall those of each war who did not return; and cannot stand here with us today in celebration. In celebration? Yes, in celebration!!!

They served and died so that we need not fear the loss of our great heritage. Our heritage, our legacy can be joyously celebrated because of the sacrifice of those who served.

Their sacrifice assures us the privilege of being educated in schools of our choice, to worship where we choose and to travel as we desire - but more than all of that, we have the right to live in a free country free from fear.

Those who served in our wars feared leaving home, leaving families, leaving lovers; most of all they feared the enemy! Those who watched then go feared the loss of loved ones. Because they feared then, we are free from fear today.

We owe them our gratitude. As the architect of the Korean Memorial in Washington, DC, Jirair Yousafian, interpreted his work there said, "War! Innocence lost...american casualties on foreign soil...those are the things our children do not know...and our children's children. What will they remember of American youth gallantly fighting for world peace?"

War is about young men in poison gas attacks, and the stench of trench warfare of World War I, young men slugged it out in the hot humid jungles of the South Pacific--in battles for Guadalcanal, Bougainville and the Philippines, and in the Battle of the Bulge, and in the bloody carnage of Omaha Landings, and the thousands of "missions" flown by the Air Corps in World War II. War is about the bone chilling, bugle blowing night attacks of the Korean War. Mark Bowden, in his 'Black Hawk Down' said about the Vietnam War, "the pointlessness of battle takes nothing away from honor and valor of those who fought it".

I was saddened when someone was heard to ask, "What is Memorial Day?" A question not too different from the boy's who asked, "Granddad, what is this picture of you in uniform?" When told, "Son, that was me in World War II," the boy asked, "World War II? Did we win? There's also the girl who asked, "Uncle Bill, did you ever hear of a guy named Hitler?"

Memorial Day is a day set aside to remember those who served, to think about those who have died, those who were wounded and those who were prisoners of war--those whose lives were changed forever.

All gave some! Some gave all!

This ceremony is about knowing the past so that we can shape a future. We each have a roll to play. While playing their rolls, the 118 men and women whose names are on the Monument behind me faced the ultimate challenge and gifted their lives to us. Our roll is to remember.

Before we drift away from here today--picture the American woman during her trip to Vietnam after the war. Feel her sorrow, hear her anguish as she stands looking up at a mist covered jungle mountain and says, "This is where you died Sam, so young, so scared, so far from home."

Visit Washington, DC to see the Vietnam Memorial, to see the Korean Memorial, to see the Navy Memorial and the Marine, and the inspiring monument to our care giving nurses.

Grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, mentors, friends--take your young family members to see these monuments--and talk to them about those who served and about those who are now serving for all of us.

Ed Note: John B. Fitzgerald - Company K, 132nd Infantry - gave this speech on a past Memorial Day in Radnor, PA at the Memorial Monument.

After reading the speech in the 132nd Infantry Newsletter I called Mr. Fitzgerald and was given permission to print it in the Americal Newsletter.

Mr. Fitzgerald received the Purple Heart for wounds received on Guadalcanal. From here he returned home, graduated from OCS, returned to combat with the 7th Division in Okinawa and here was awarded a Silver Star. After occupation duty in Korea he returned home for discharge.

Recalled to active duty he served as a 1st Lt. with the 7th Division in Korea. Here he was awarded a Bronze Star. He returned from the Korean War in 1952.

Mr. Fitzgerald's message is: TELL YOUR CHILDREN!

CAN YOU HELP THESE MEN?

164th Infantry

Seeking information of fellow veterans of K Company 164 Infantry. Please contact:

Eliseo Martinez

[REDACTED] Sun Valley, CA 91375

182nd INFANTRY

Would like to contact anyone from K Company 182 Infantry. 1/16/41 - 11/1/44 Please contact:

Joseph Richards

[REDACTED] So. Portland, ME 04106

Tel: [REDACTED]

101st MEDICAL REGIMENT - 290th AGF BAND

Who Needs Guadalcanal?

On December 8, 1942 at 7:00 a.m. we debarked "a la 1st Raider Battalion" style, down the rope ladders and on to the waiting LST boats to bring us ashore. Fortunately we didn't meet with any trouble at all. The Chief's first combat order to the Band was "stick together"! The heat is terrific and in ten minutes we were lathered in sweat.

We set up temporary tents in a Lever Bros. coconut grove and shortly began to assist with unloading and moving medical supplies. The beach is cluttered with debris and some Jap bodies and putrid beef. The stench is sickening. Our troops are using several Jap trucks and tons of Jap equipment all around us. We are six or seven miles from the present combat lines but plenty of snipers and hostile aircraft around us. Tulagi is in plain view across the bay and Henderson Field is but a mile away.

Our 2nd Battalion, who came in earlier with the 182nd Infantry, has seen plenty of action setting up aid stations, etc. We met some of the boys tonight and their stories are so numerous they'd fill a book.

December 9: Still loads of work to do in unloading and setting up. We got our first air raid at 1:00 p.m.. Nothing happened, other than a funny feeling deep down! Tonight we had a real monsoon that raised havoc with out little camp. Blew down our "shelter-halves" and we were all night trying to stay partly dry. Two more air raid alerts at 2:00 and 3:00 a.m. but still no action.

"Washing Machine Charlie" is very well known here. Often drops a few small bombs and sometimes supplies to his own troops. We heard him overhead. Then we have "Pistol Pete" on the other side of Henderson who lobs shells at random daynd night.

December 10: The band moved from our uncomfortable beach position to our new location at HQ. and Service Co., about two miles from the front lines. Now we can hear firing all around--like a war movie. We are in a bad area, but at least we have the big tents to sleep in. Next to us is a large Jap warehouse and a Jap ice plant with all U. S. machinery. The warehouse has provided lots of souvenirs for all. Everything is Japanese in this area--our supply tents, our air raid shelters, and latrines--even dozens of Jap bodies still in the Lunga River beside us.

December 11: We met "Ziggy DeMarco from the 182nd Infantry Band and he told us the bum deal his Band got. Seems that, for some reason, the bandmaster, Joe Freni, got out of coming to the "Canal" and the Band was sent here as Infantry snipers. Two of the Band boys were killed, being the first casualties the 182nd Infantry received here. Hope our luck fares better, but things sure don't look good.

December 13: Our I company has set up a new mobile hospital back at the beach near where we landed and some of us will be transferred shortly to work there.

Last night "Charlie" visited us. Our AA unit nearby had him in the lights and fired hundreds of rounds but couldn't hit him. The cheering from the dugouts sounded like a football game. Also, some Japs infiltrated Henderson Field and set one of our P-38's on fire a la Indian style.

Another raid tonight--one plane for two hours or so--our AA still can't hit the side of a barn door.

Many in the Band became ill from double doses of atabrine we received this morning.

December 16: Several Band, myself included were transferred to I Company. Looks like our HQ is really down on us for reasons unknown. At present it's a real bad area--loaded with mice, ants, crabs, and mosquitoes. Mice keep us awake at night running "pari mutuals" on the tent tops.

December 18: "Charlie" hasn't bothered us for several nights now, but the incessant pounding of our 155 guns keeps us awake at night. They fire every half-hour shelling the Japs above in the hills.

Tom O'Donnell's playing, in the moonlight, on top of our air raid shelter, in between bombing runs, will always be remembered!

Things not pleasant at I Company for the Band. We seem to be getting the brunt of the real dirty work. We dig latrines, seepage pits, repair bomb shelters, set-up work tents, and other choice jobs. The five Americal Bands have done well--snipers, infantrymen, latrine diggers, and maybe someday--musicians.

December 20: Each day the place looks more like Noumea with several ships coming in and out with troops and supplies. Our aircraft are bombing the Russell Islands daily and yesterday some newly arrived B-17's bombed the Japs nearby heavily--sounded like a thunderstorm.

Roberts took three more men from us today, leaving only 16 men to do all the work at I Company. Tonight a few of us organized an "jam session" before "Charlie" arrived. We mainly played for our own amusement, but shortly we attracted a hundred Marines from nearby. They were amazed and happy to hear live music as their Band stayed back in Noumea.

December 21: Several Jap prisoners (casualties) were brought in to our hospital today and what a mangy lot. They were mostly shot down flyers and all skin and bones. I talked to one who spoke English and had lived in Boston while attending B.U.. Just as the conversation got interesting, our M.P. officer said "No further communication with prisoners."

Met a prewar friend, Don Nichols, from Arlington. Quite a surprise. He was hurt when a mortar shell went off and threw him about 20 yards. Could hardly walk and his nerves were shot. We talked for a couple of hours of "old times".

December 23: My turn to run one of the wards today. The Band supplies five men per shift each day for general duty, from temperatures to bed pans. Boys at HQ aren't having much fun either. They had a terrible accident at our HQ area yesterday. A truck carrying about 100 mines blew up killing all eight men on the truck, all beyond recognition. Some of the Band had to assist in the clean-up--a sickening experience for them.

"Charlie" came by last night and dropped bombs all around us. Our AA has yet to come close.

The land battle is doing better. The Japs are being pushed back to the coast. The Marines are being replaced by us and they have grown to really respect the Americal Division. To know us is to love us!

ready to shoot. We decided it was probably a coconut falling from a tree,

Tonight we played for a CB Battalion and we enjoyed some good American beer. Several from this outfit are from the Boston area. Finally our shipment of new instruments arrived today including six clarinets, an Olds trumpet and trombone, a Martin coronet and a nice Reynolds baritone for yours truly.

January 7: Things are still popping at the front. It's estimated that there are between five and seven thousand Japs still here. Last night they tried to land supplies just above us. The Navy sank two destroyers and damaged most of their transports. It appears that we are starting to play second fiddle to Bougainville (?) these days as hundreds of planes, ships and troops are landing there daily. We still have at least 30 thousand troops here. The Americal, 25th Army Division and various Marine, Naval and Air Corp units--have all but beaten the Japs to a standstill.

There are over 200 hundred planes of all types stationed a Henderson Field and Fighter Strip #2 and we are situated right between both fields.

We were told today that a cadre of this Regiment, including the Band, has been submitted to Washington for approval. If accepted it means we will go stateside this summer.

January 11: I'm still trying to convince the powers that be to transfer me back to I Company. Conditions are better than at HQ and there isn't any 24-hour guard set-up to interfere with our sleep. The noise and confusion is unreal at HQ. Planes roar in and out day and night and two more 155mm "Long Toms" have been placed in our area, banging away all the time.

On January 13th Pete Terry and I went over to Henderson to assist in loading casualties on three DC-3's for evacuation to New Caledonia. They appear to be all bad cases.

January 14: The beat goes on. Tonight our small combo played at H Company. Half way between H Co. and HQ we were attacked by several planes very close to us and over toward I Co. We all dove over the side of the truck into a mud bank and ducked. The planes, Jap Zeros, roared directly over us at about twenty feet. Several minutes after the planes passed, our famous AA batteries went into action--of course much too late. That's all we knew until the news came in later.

Several Jap planes blasted I Co., killing four and wounding nineteen others--one of them being Ed LeBlanc, who was hit with a hot piece of shrapnel, burning his hand. Normand Leblanc was on duty in charge of the Officer's ward where three were killed. He said he had a premonition a minute before and made for the nearest shelter--yelling to all who could hear him to take cover. Normand wasn't hurt but a soldier running for the shelter beside him was badly hit by shrapnel.

One of those killed was a Jap prisoner in the malaria ward. The Band detachment working at I Co. were recommended for their effective work in handling the wounded (and the dead).

A lieutenant from our quartermaster regiment, whom we all knew well, named Lt. Pappas, was decapitated. Tom O'Donnell was up all night assisting our surgeons. Mervin Gold was at I Co. Hospital for malaria, and shrapnel ripped his tent to shreds.

CHRISTMAS DAY 1942: Ah yes! Christmas in the tropics! Temperature 103 degrees! Humidity higher! Today some of us dragged out our instruments to play Carols at various religious services. Last night, we had a little party in our tent. The course consisted of G.I. beans, G.I. tomatoes, cheese and fruit cocktail (stolen from HQ!). Sid Feldman mixed a great cocktail of G.I. alcohol and grapefruit juice (also stolen from HQ) in his helmet! We drank to the un-health of the Japs, nearby, with loud and uncouth toasts! Don Pantaleo added some crackers, tuna and a nice fruit cake he had received from home--all very fine and appreciated!

On December 31st the Jeep unit we had played for in New Caledonia were the spear head of a new Americal offensive, but minus their Jeeps. They were sent in as infantry and were ambushed with very heavy casualties. Roberts is set on trying to make the entire Band litter bearers. Arthur Bizer is so disgusted he has applied to G Co. as a surgical technician!

January 1, 1943: We played at the dedication of a new huge Marine Cemetery. The temperature was over 110 degrees! We were dressed in light chinos and dying of the heat. The 7th Marines provided the honor guard in full dress. About eight or nine of them dropped like flies from the terrific heat.

Later today we saw a "PBY" crash (on landing) in the bay, killing three or four men. It was later towed near shore and several of the Band swam out to have a look.

January 2: "Maytag Charlie" dropped in on us with almost no notice tonight. Our first warning was a whistling bomb on its way down. The Military Police area about 150 yards from us was hit. Shrapnel flew all around us. We couldn't make our shelter so we all "hit the deck". Gabe Colangelo flew through Len Sullivan's mosquito bar like superman. Our radar unit hasn't learned the difference between our planes and the Japs. Our anti-aircraft units are still very ineffective.

January 3: The last straw was drawn this morning. At 4:00 a.m. eight of the Band (working at I Co.) left for the front as litter bearers. The 132nd Infantry has had a lot of casualties. An emergency call came in from our HQ for help. The chief called for volunteers at first. No one was anxious to go but finally five of the eight volunteered--Jimmy Buckley, Joe Drozdal, Ed Viera, Dick Carney and myself. Three more men were picked by the Chief. We were told we might be gone for up to two weeks (or forever!). As luck would have it we returned tonight with no Band casualties.

The details for history's sake--we arrived at Captain Bain's rear base camp at 9: a.m. and promptly split up into litter squads--mine being Dick Carney, Mervin Gold, Tom O'Donnell and myself. We then went on to our Regimental Aid Station on the edge of the combat area. From here we started a relay of squads, each one covering three or four hundred yards apart to form a chain of three miles or so. We were almost two miles out on the edge of a jungle clearing, living on K rations, chocolate and water all day. Snipers were just ahead of us and shots were too close for comfort. We settled in while waiting for casualties. Before long we heard rustling sounds in the thick brush nearby. The four of us were now on "super alert". Dick and Marvin had the .03s (rifles) and we were now set to battle Tojo.

We strained every gram of hearing for hours, whatever it was never presented itself. Mervin was

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These same Jap planes also hit our "K" Co., the 164th, part of the 182nd, and the 18th C.B. Battalion--tremendous damage occurred.

After returning to our H.Q., I was on guard from 3:00 to 6:00 a.m. Our shift was very concerned because we could hear heavy Naval gun fire over toward Savo Island. I called the Communications Center for the Division several times to inquire on our alert status but no "condition yellow" or "red" was ever received.

On January 15th the Japs almost duplicated their surprise action of last night. This was even more clever and incredible. Several Jap planes tailed in with our SBD's (dive bombers) at dusk, again dropping several bombs in the Band area at I Co. and the adjoining 39th Military Police area. One M.P., a good friend of ours, Noel King, was killed and several were hurt. Shrapnel flew through the Band tents but no one was seriously hurt.

Some of the Army patients in our hospital ward are pleading to be sent back to the front, where they all say they would at least have better odds to live than in this hell hole!

The Japs are using a deadly anti-personnel bomb we call the "leveler." They are loaded with American made scissors, door knobs, spring shackles, Gillette blades, and you name it--it's there. They maim and cut to ribbons.

January 17. Another land action to keep us off guard happened tonight. Our enemy broke through our closest defense perimeter, a mile from us, at the fighter strip, trying to blow up the Ammo Dump at the end of the runway. After a lot of machine-gun fire we found out the Japs were stopped in their tracks and driven back again.

The Japs are starting to soften up under our terrific bombardment. We also are starting to soften up from complete lack of sleep!

It is rumored that one of our artillery units shot a thousand rounds from several guns to knock out a lone Jap gun and they failed. Leaflets are being dropped daily inside their lines and we have amplifiers telling them to surrender.

One unfortunate incident happened this week in this regard. Units of the Americal and a Marine Company were holding adjacent flanks when the Army had finally enticed a large group of Japs out in the open to surrender. As the Japs entered the clearing the Marines opened fire on them. Before they could be stopped, many of the surrendering Japs were killed. After an investigation the Marine C.O. claimed it was a "mistake in orders."

January 21st. We had a long "condition red" tonight --from 8:30 p.m. until 4:00 a.m. "Charlie" and a few of his friends flew back and forth at half-hour intervals. Only twice did they drop any bombs. Our I Co. was nearly hit again on the first run, but the bombs landed out on the beach nearby. The second run hit fighter strip 2 and five were killed. Again our A.A. units were "off the mark."

January 23rd, and our first anniversary overseas. Our slant-eyed friends were at it again.

Two planes, way up high, harassed us all night but tonight we sent some P38s after them. We heard the P38s take off and could see their exhausts as they climbed. No visible action occurred, but the Japs were chased off.

Also today, both air fields received about 120

planes from the "Saratoga" and the "Enterprise" carriers. The "Saratoga" was hit yesterday and according to its pilots was still floating. The "Enterprise" is the luckiest of all the carriers--has never been hit--so far!

On the 24th we had another long hard night--a continuous "condition red" from 10:30 p.m. until 5:00 a.m. Several larger bombs were dropped nearby and started a tremendous fire. Out anti-aircraft was much better tonight and drove off the first two or three waves of bombers. Much larger four engine bombers came over tonight--something new.

It appears that "Red" Roberts will be leaving us soon for home as he is quite ill and unstable. It's amazing that more of us aren't in the same condition.

January 27th. We couldn't even finish our dinner today, as an overhead air battle ensued. Although it was fairly overcast, we were able to see the whole thing. How they can find one another darting in and out of the clouds I could never understand. The Zero's can walk away from any of our planes--except the twin-engined P-38s.

We lost four planes to the Japs seven--small time stuff--but this was our private little air war right over our heads!

January 30th. The Japs are finally pushed out of their last real strong hold-Kokumbona. The 182nd, the 132nd and part of the 25th Division were credited with the drive.

Hundreds of dead Japs up there and they're not being buried. There are "souvenirs" galore up there and our "big-wigs" are trying to "corner the market." Last week, the Japs were hollering (in English) at our troops, "Japanese want blood for the Emperor--Americans want souvenirs." More truth than poetry, I guess.

It seemed that the Americans, in some cases, were over doing it, such as prying out gold teeth with their bayonets!

February 1st. Seems as though the place becomes less safe each day. At noon, without warning, several enemy planes burst out of the clouds and strafed a moving column on the road beside the fighter strip, killing eight or nine men. This occurred about 1000 yards from us. The Chief and Tom Hunter had just driven past the exact spot about five minutes before. Our planes took off right away in pursuit--no report as yet of what happened.

Tonight at 5:00 p.m. we had our first "condition black." I had never heard of this condition before, but soon was advised that it meant to prepare for land invasion. A Jap Naval force had engaged our Navy a few hours away and is believed to be headed for troop landing here. It's a really stupid move on their part, as we are now far more powerful than the Japs in this area. However, our guard was trialed and we got our instructions to pick-up a rifle and head for the beach command.

Nothing of note happened and at 10:00 p.m. the condition "black" was changed to "red." We were all anxious to get the details on what had happened. We heard heavy shelling for hours and our planes were racing in and out all night long. HQ reports that we sank three transports and "some" destroyers. Also we heard a Jap sub sunk one of our destroyers off Savo Island.

We had our usual two plane air-raid for most of

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the night. Several "duds" fell nearby. We could hear the bombs whistling on the way down and then just a "thud."

February 4th. Ed LeBlanc will be evacuated soon, as he has a perforated ear drum from the recent bombings. Also, "Red" Roberts left for home (via the New Hebrides) about the 2nd.

Early tonight several of us piled into a Jeep to visit Ed at I Co. I would pick a bad Jeep and everything went wrong. First we were advised (but not ordered) not to leave the area because of an expected air-raid. As these usually occurred just after dark. I figured we were early enough to be in the clear. The Jeep ran out of gas near I Co. After getting some aviation gas we made the Band area. I had no sooner turned the key off when we got a "condition red" and darkness wasn't far off.

Traveling in the dark is out of the question because of bad roads and no lights, so we decided to "make a run for it," that is--back to our H.Q. Albie Riley nearly ruined our night because he knew a "short cut" that would save time. Well, we took his advice and in less than 100 yards we were completely stuck in the mud and the engine began to "skip." To make matters worse we were stuck between two high rows of drums containing aviation gas--some predicament!

By this time we were so deep in the mud that it was oozing in on the floorboards. After much arguing and frustration, we were able to back the Jeep out of the ruts and we made it back onto the regular road. The Jeep finally came to life and we "flew." The coconut trees looked like a picket fence as we sped away.

We made it back but the hierarchy wasn't the least bit happy that we drove in during a "condition red," and I was, naturally, chewed out" for doing it.

A short time later the bombers came dropping their wares around us, but that bomb shelter seemed like the Hotel Statler to us.

On Feb 5th we went over to see Ed LeBlanc off but the plane was full so he will leave tomorrow.

Conditions are unfair to organized labor here. We work hard all day, in the heat and do our guard duty at night and many nights we're kept awake all night, thanks to "Charlie."

Our present project is to finish up work we started a couple of weeks ago--the Colonel's private air raid shelter. May the saints deliver him if a bomb hits within a mile! It has to be the weakest one on the island. After all, bandsmen aren't construction men.

On Feb 6th we had the longest air-raid to date, 8:15 p.m. to 5:15 a.m.--nine long boring continuous hours. They dropped small bombs all night; however, we had a few casualties. We were told that another Naval battle is expected shortly, a large Jap force is headed this way.

Ed LeBlanc was evacuated this morning--will go to New Hebrides first.

A gas truck blew up at the airport this afternoon, killing five. We heard that nine C.B.'s were killed in last night's raid

The Japanese Surrender.

Feb 9. The day we have been waiting for--the

surrender of Japanese forces. After a terrific pounding yesterday the remaining Japanese forces surrendered at the end of the island. The high command had escaped by submarine yesterday. Thousands of tons of supplies were left behind--1942 Chevy cars and trucks, motorcycles, 1500 cases of much needed Quinine, acres of crated supplies and two complete field hospitals. In one of the hospitals, over one-hundred patients, plus a few nurses were found dead. Final surrender terms to be finalized shortly.

REUNION - FAR WEST CHAPTER - REUNION

September 29. 2002 Thru October 2, 2002

Atlantis Casino Resort - Reno, Nevada

Check Far West Chapter under Chapter News for complete programs. For reservation forms and further information contact:

Larry Levy

Reno, NV 95809
Tel: [REDACTED]

REUNION - EASTERN REGIONAL CHAPTER - REUNION

September 24, 2002 to September 27, 2002

Scranton, Pennsylvania

Steamtown National Historic Site - Coal Mine Tour

Electric City Trolley Station and Museum

More Information:

Joe Tunis
Ariel, PA 18436
Tel: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

REUNION - GREAT LAKES CHAPTER - REUNION

July 5-6-7, 2002 - All Veterans Reunion at Southgate, Michigan at the VFW Post 9283. Lodging at Holiday Inn, [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] Southgate, MI 48195 - Call [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] \$89.00 a night. Hospitality Room, Bus trip to Northern Wall in Canada where the Canadian's Vietnam veterans will be having a celebration. The Southgate VFW will hold a Steak dinner on Saturday afternoon followed by music Saturday night. Free van service from Hotel to VFW. For more information call: Bill Allen - [REDACTED] or Paul Stiff - [REDACTED]

September 19-22, 2002 - Kokomo, IN - 20th Annual Veterans Reunion. Locator/Sign-In at the big tent on Friday and Saturday. We had 130 Americal veterans sign in last year and we will have many hospitality camp sites planned throughout the Reunion. Group picture at 3 P.M. on Saturday by the big Flag. 30,000 veterans were in attendance last year. For more info:

Terry Babler
[REDACTED]
New Glarus, WI 53574
Tel: [REDACTED]

LETTERS FROM THE OLD GUARD

F COMPANY - 182nd INFANTRY

On Wednesday, April 17, 2002, WWII veterans of F Company, held their annual Reunion at the American Legion Post 156 in Waltham, Massachusetts.

Company F men attending were Buddy Lorenz, Frank Rourke, Paul Miele, Joe Papa, Ducky Rollo, Sal Vincuillo and Bill Vinci.

Also in attendance were Frank LaValle, 2nd Battalion Headquarters, Joseph Mullen, A Company and Jim Buckle, Editor of the American Newsletter and members of the Massachusetts National Guard Veterans Unit #14.

The wives and daughters were presented with a tea rose corsage, lending a party atmosphere to the luncheon.

Since our last Reunion of April 2001, three of our members have passed away: Tony Markowski 3/01, Si Iannetti 5/29/01 and Joe Chin 3/20/02, M Company.

Si Iannetti was a presence at Co. F Reunions since its start in 1946. Joe Chin had attended the Co. F Reunions for several years with his wife Barbara. Si Iannetti had a 'Jerry Vale' like voice and was always good for a couple of great songs. Joe and Barbara would dance waltz for us. These great talents are now lost.

The welcome address was given by Company F Chairman, Frank Rourke at which time the Company F Committee members of Paul Miele, Joe Rando and Joe Papa were introduced.

Following the luncheon a group picture of Company F men was taken.



Seated: Buddy Lorenz, Standing left to right: Ducky Rollo, Frank LaValle, Frank Rourke, Joe Papa, Billy Vinci. Sal Vincuillo, Joe Rando and Paul Miele.

Goodbyes were said and the good Lord willing we will be back together again next year!

Joe Papa
Committee

ARE YOUR DUES PAID?

HEADQUARTERS
57th ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT)
A.P.O. #716

GHL/a1
13 March 1943

SUBJECT: Commendation

TO : Personnel, Motor Section, Hq Co., 57 Eng (C)

1. I officially commend the following named personnel of the Motor Section, Eq. Co 57th Engr. Bn. (C) for conspicuous service during the operations against the enemy at Guadalcanal, S. L. December 10, 1942 to February 9, 1943:

2d Lt. Victor G. Landers	0-1697852
M/Sgt. Charles F. Kelleher	31018236
Tech. Sgt. William E. Jones	34113719
S/Sgt. Andrew J. Mitchell	20115503
Tech. 4 Garnett B. Vaught	33126896

2. The 57th Engineer Battalion (C) was faced with an enormous task of constructing supply routes through the jungle with very limited and practically worn out equipment. Realizing the importance of the supply and evacuation requirements of the above named personnel with ingenuity and resourcefulness proceeded to comb the island in search of equipment or parts. Here and there one used part and then another were procured and in a very limited time they had assembled three Bull-dozers. Without this valuable equipment our operations would have been seriously delayed. This equipment not only served this organization but was loaned to the 65th Engr. Bn. and greatly expedited the accomplishment of their mission.

3. The ability and devotion to duty as exemplified by these men was all the more conspicuous in that they worked long hours in efficiently maintaining and repairing equipment which was normally the function of a higher echelon.

George H. Lenox
Lt. Col., 57th Engr. Bn. (C)
Commanding

Victor Lander writes: Enclosed is a copy of the Commendation my Motor Section of Hq Co. of the 57th Engr. Bn. received from our Bn. Commander, Lt. Col. George H. Lenox.

In my prior civilian life I had worked for the International Harvester in Chicago, IL, and had done a lot of work in assembling the crawler tractors they were making (BULLDOZERS).

When our bulldozers finally wore out on Guadalcanal, I found some worn-out Marine bulldozers and cannibalized parts from them and got ours going again with a lot of "rigging".

I had a good group of mechanics in my Motor Section and we were able to keep a lot of trucks and other equipment running by a lot of cannibalizing, although we were not permitted to do so.

Equipment that was "REDLINED" was not considered to be in serviceable condition and unsafe or unfit to drive. However, it was a ready source of spare parts. Our biggest problem was our brakes on the vehicles. The brake shoes just did not stand up to all the mud and water they were driven through on Guadalcanal. "You remember"?

Victor Lander

LETTERS FROM THE OLD GUARD

regain the people's right to protect the American flag.

Why then are we still fighting for this right? Why has the House twice overwhelmingly passed the amendment only to have it defeated by a few votes in the Senate? Why do some Senators continue to propose a statue when they know it won't work?

The simple answer seems simple to me: We the People are not holding our elected officials accountable for their actions. We believe we elect our lawmakers to represent the majority of their constituents, but they don't. That's the real tragedy.

On Flag Day let's honor "Old Glory" as never before. Then call our senators and urge them to do the right thing and vote for a constitutional amendment to return to us the right to protect our Flag. I don't believe that is too much to ask of every citizen.

Ed Note: This article was written in 1999 by then National Commander of the American Legion, Butch Miller. The American Legion has been in the forefront of the fight for a constitutional amendment.

Enough States have voted in favor so once the Senate passes on this measure there will be no trouble in making this constitutional amendment.

The last two years this measure has failed to pass the Senate by TWO (2) votes! The two Senators from North Dakota, one Senator from Illinois, and of course Kennedy and Kerry from Massachusetts voted against the amendment. Americal voters let your voice be heard. The American Legion is planning on bringing this article up for a vote again this year.

Flag Day is June 14, 2002

SHOW YOUR COLORS

182 INFANTRY



Allen D. Cappella of Plymouth, MA
'Shows his Colors'

Eligibility for Membership

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

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

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

Dedication

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

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION Bernard C. Chase, National Adjutant

[REDACTED]
South Yarmouth, MA 02664

Name _____ Telephone _____

Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Americal Unit Rgt/Bde _____ Bn _____ Co _____ Other _____ Associate _____

Dates of Service _____ to _____ Serial/SSN No. _____

Occupation _____ Name of Spouse _____

Date _____ Signature _____ Enclosed DD-214 Y N

Sponsored by _____ Please enclose dues: One year: \$12, Three years: \$30
Send to Attn: National Adjutant Life dues: 75 years of age or over \$75, Under 75 year of age: \$165



Editor-In-Chief

James C. Buckle

[REDACTED]
Harwich, MA 02645

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