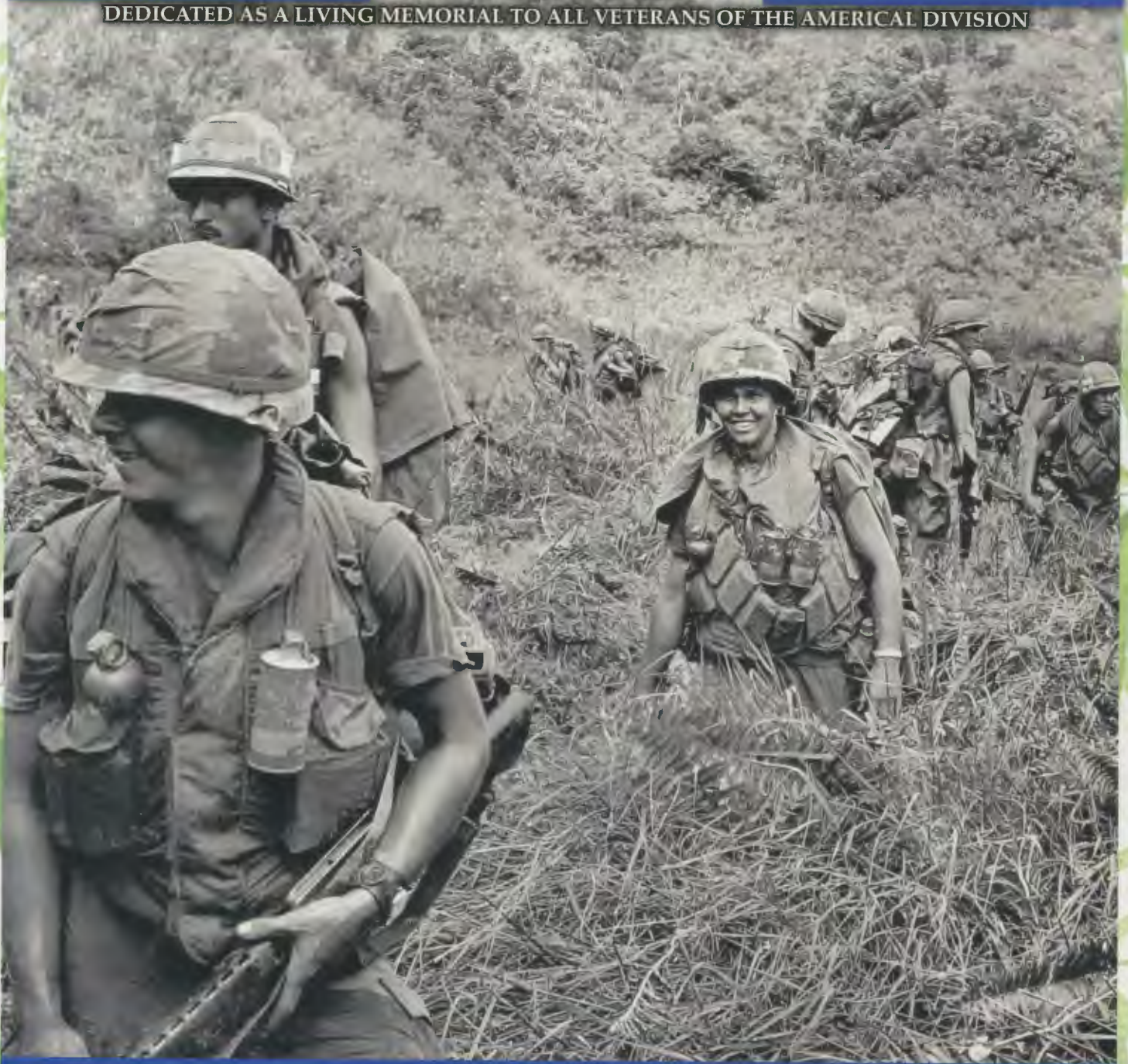




January • February • March **2019**

# AMERICAL JOURNAL

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



UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS



## Americal Division Veterans Association Nationally Elected Officers 2018 — 2020 Term

### National Commander

J. Reginald (Reggie) Horton  
[REDACTED]

### Sr. Vice-Commander

David Eichhorn  
[REDACTED]

### Jr. Vice-Commander

Bob Cowles  
[REDACTED]

### Executive Council National Election

(1) first term (2) second term

### Chairman

PNC John (Dutch) DeGroot (1)  
[REDACTED]

### Jack Head, Recorder

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### Recorder (2)

John J. (Jack) Head  
[REDACTED]

### Robert M. Anderson (2)

[REDACTED]

### Cary B. Bacall (1)

[REDACTED]

### PNC Robert Cudworth (1)

[REDACTED]

### Grank Finkbeiner (2)

[REDACTED]

### Claude Frazier (1)

[REDACTED]

### Rick Ropele (2)

[REDACTED]

### Robert G. Short (2)

[REDACTED]

### Tim Vail (2)

[REDACTED]

## Executive Committee Chapter Representatives Not Nationally Elected

### East Chapter

Thomas Canaap  
[REDACTED]

### Southeast Chapter

Lee Kaywork  
[REDACTED]

### Great Midwest Chapter

David Williams  
[REDACTED]

### South Midwest Chapter

Cameron Baird  
[REDACTED]

### 23rd MP Chapter

Ralph Stiles  
[REDACTED]

### 2/1st Infantry Chapter

Carl Fryman  
[REDACTED]

### Far West Chapter

Gerald Thacker  
[REDACTED]

## Appointed Officers

### National Adjutant

Roger Gilmore  
[REDACTED]

### Assistant Adjutant

Richard Heroux  
[REDACTED]

### National Finance Officer

Spencer M. Baba  
[REDACTED]

### Assistant Finance Officer

Ronald Ellis  
[REDACTED]

### Editor In Chief

Gary L. Noller  
[REDACTED]

### Contributing Editor

David W. Taylor  
[REDACTED]

### National Chaplain

Robert Harris  
[REDACTED]

### Vietnam Historian

Leslie Hines  
[REDACTED]

### Judge Advocate

Mike Twomey  
[REDACTED]

### WWII Historian/Curator

David W. Taylor  
[REDACTED]

## Reunion Committee Chair -2019

### Larry Swank Chairman

[REDACTED]

## Army Seeks Recruits

By Gary L. Noller

The U.S. Department of Labor issued a report stating that the unemployment rate for veterans in the month of December 2018 was 3.2 percent. This is significantly lower than the December 2017 rate of 3.8 percent. For the entire year 2018 veterans unemployment stood at 3.7 percent. This is the lowest unemployment for veterans since 2000.

The unemployment rate for veterans is now lower than the unemployment rate for non-veterans. This is a great improvement over the past ten years and reflects the efforts of the military and workforce agencies to better prepare military members for employment after military service. Military members are now required to attend career transition seminars at the time of their separation from the military.

The low unemployment rate for veterans and non-veterans does have a consequence for the military. The Army is having a difficult time finding qualified individuals to fill its ranks. In September the Army reported that it fell short of its target for recruitments for fiscal year 2018. It wanted 6,500 more enlistments than it obtained. This is in spite of some recruiting rule changes that qualified more enlistees found to have minor medical, behavior, or legal issues.

President Nixon ended the military draft in July 1973 and the Army became an all voluntary force. Those who volunteer can usually be categorized into three groups.

One group are those that are following a legacy. They come from families that have for generations served in the military and it is a family expectation that this tradition continue.

The second group enlist to fulfill a desire to serve a patriotic duty. For example, many enlisted after the 9-11 attack on the United States because they wanted to help bring justice and protection for their fellow citizens.

The third group consists of enlistees who are looking for a better life. In many cases they have a difficult time finding employment or education opportunities or come from unsuitable living conditions at home. They wish to get out of the house and have current income as well as

gain work experience and veterans education benefits.

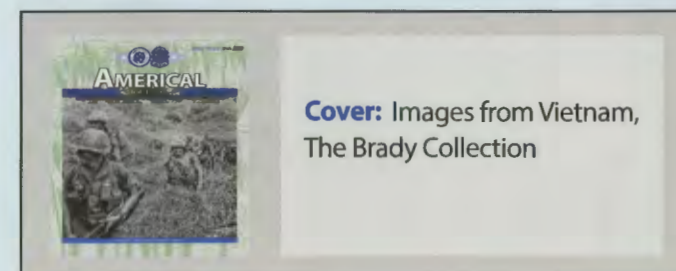
The Army has education requirements which usually consists at minimum of a high school diploma or GED. The high school graduation rate is about 85 percent. This leaves a large pool of potential recruits in need of additional educational development if they are to qualify for Army enlistment.


Capt. Heath A. Bergman, writing in a recent issue of ArmyTimes, proposes a possible solution to the recruiting shortfall. He believes that the Army should partner with high schools to identify highly talented but at-risk students. Some of the at-risk students may succeed in the more structured environment of the Army. He says, "Given the stability and resources of the Army, the brightest of these young Americans could find purpose, organize their personal affairs, and admirably contribute to the defense of our nation."

Bergman also believes that the Army should conditionally accept recruits that do not have a high school diploma or GED. They would immediately enter a special academy within the Army and work on obtaining a GED. Once this is completed they would immediately proceed to military basic training.

Bergman's proposals have merit and will be met with valid concerns. But the Army and the recruits may both benefit if his ideas are accepted. Some young people will respond to a more structured environment than they have at home or at school. I have seen this in my own family.

Or..... perhaps bring back the military draft. That is why I entered the Army. Especially the part at the bottom of the Order to Report for Induction that says, "Willful failure to report at the place and hour of the day named in this Order subjects the violator to fine and imprisonment."





The Americal Journal is the official publication of the Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA). It is published each calendar quarter.

- Editor-In-Chief: Gary L. Noller
- Contributing Editor: David W. Taylor
- Creative Director: Lisa Anderson

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Adjutant's Notes  
By Roger Gilmore

Greetings from the National Adjutant office to begin this new year 2019. I sincerely hope all ADVA members had a good holiday season and are off to a good start in 2019.

Since we had an abbreviated 4th Quarter 2018 Americal Journal issue, there was no report for new member additions and changes in that publication. This reporting period is basically reporting six months of membership activity. The listing of new members, new paid life members and reinstatements beginning below is quite extensive. The Association did very well picking up new members and reinstatements from the September 2018 national reunion in Oklahoma City. All non-members who registered for the reunion and paid \$15.00 additional become one year members. Thirty eight new members listed with PNC Ronald R.Ellis as sponsor were signed up from the Oklahoma City reunion. We reinstated seventeen former members from the OKC reunion. Overall, we added seventy-five new members for this reporting period. Of that seventy-five, seven joined as life members. Thirteen annual pay members paid the required life member dues to upgrade their membership, which is about the normal number we see for this statistic. Hats off to ADVA members Jesse Mendoza, Mark Deam, Allen Walraven, Dale Melton, Paul Baker, NC Reggie Horton, JVC Bob Cowles, Steve Sendobry, Randy Rosengren and Wade Rodland for their new member recruiting efforts this quarter.

As most of you know, I usually write a paragraph in this article about the importance of new member recruiting for our association. This is vitally important to keep our membership base from serious decline. I also know from conversations with members that many veterans' gathering points (a VA Hospital, VFW or American Legion post) are great sources for finding Americal Division veterans to recruit. I experienced this first hand recently. I was at the Dallas, Texas VA Hospital in early January for an early morning appointment. On my way to my appointment, I encountered two Army veterans wearing Americal Division hats. I did not have time to speak long with these men and talk about ADVA, as they were also on their way to appointments in the facility. The point of my story is there are many Americal Division veterans out in the public who may not be ADVA members and know the benefits of belonging to the Association. When you see fellow Americal Division veterans out in public, I encourage you to reach out and ask if they are ADVA members (they may be). If not, gauge their interest and if they do show interest in joining, at least get their name and mailing address. If you get the name and mailing address for a potential ADVA member, please send me the information and I will mail the prospective member an application form and instructions on filling out the form.

The Americal Division Veterans Association is truly diverse in its geographical dispersion of members. Members reside in all fifty states plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and nine countries overseas. I am proud to say Texas leads the way with number of ADVA members with 214 Texans on the roster. The next closest is Florida, with 193 members. This may be a sign that many members who lived many years in the northern states are opting for the warmer climes of Florida.

Your dues renewal status is listed in the address box on the back cover of this issue. If your annual pay renewal date is listed as MAY18, SEP18 or JAN19 please mail your dues renewal check ASAP. If you have a question about your membership status or dues renewal date, contact me and I will check the ADVA roster.

The Taps list is long for this issue. Note the name of LTC (Ret) Charles Kettles. LTC Kettles was an honorary life member of the association by virtue of receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor. The medal was presented to him in 2016 by President Obama as a result of his DSC being upgraded for his actions as a helicopter pilot for the 176th AHC in May 1967 (TF Oregon). Please inform me when you know of the passing of an Americal Division veteran or ADVA member so his name and unit information can be listed in Taps.

When you make an address change, whether permanent or seasonal, please inform me as soon as possible so I can update the ADVA roster. The easiest way to notify me is via email. Email costs nothing for the sender and receiver, and is the most efficient method of notifying me about a move. My email address is listed on the back cover of this publication. If you prefer to call, my cell phone number is [REDACTED]. Written notification should go to the following address: [REDACTED], Richardson, Texas 75080

New Members

**James J. Balkey**  
198th LIB  
Medanales, NM  
★ Self

**Edward Bennis**  
2/1st Inf  
Columbia, MD  
★ Mark Deam

**Donnie Black**  
B/4/21st Inf  
Pittsburg, PA  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Christopher Blanchard**  
B/5/46th Inf  
Prescott, WI  
★ Self

**Marvin D. Bubach**  
A/1/20th Inf  
Lohman, MO  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Eddie E. Cahill**  
1/46th Inf  
Choctaw, OK  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Jerry Cantu**  
No Unit Listed  
San Antonio, TX  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Asa A. Clark**  
E/4/21st Inf  
New York, NY  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**James W. Crawford**  
1/20th Inf  
Newark, NY  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Estel Crouse**  
E/4/21st Inf  
Grundy, VA  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Edward R. Crown**  
B/1/52nd Inf  
Arlington, TX  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Lowell B. Davis**  
198th LIB Avn Sec  
Medway, ME  
★ Self

**Hans Deutschmann**  
1/52nd Inf  
Wyoming, MI  
★ Self

**James W. Foreman**  
123rd Avn Bn Co E  
Lake Winola, PA  
★ PNC Ronald L. Ward

**William Formanack**  
B/4/31st Inf  
Talmage, NE  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Charles A. Fox**  
11th LIB HHC  
Hollywood, SC  
★ Self

**Rick Franks**  
B/3/1st Inf  
Barnegat, NJ  
★ Mark Deam

**Asa A. Clark**  
E/4/21st Inf  
New York, NY  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Craig C. Fring**  
5/46th Inf  
Morrisville, PA  
★ Dale Melton

**Jack Godfrey**  
198th LIB  
Milwaukie, OR  
★ Dale Melton

**Timothy L. Grayson**  
3/18th Arty B Btry  
Reno, OH  
★ Paul Baker

**Richard R. Hacker**  
B/4/3rd Inf  
Laclede, MO  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Douglas Harris-Lane**  
1/20th Inf  
Temple, TX  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Calvin E. Houk**  
3/82nd Arty  
Moore, OK  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Frank E. Jancewicz**  
A/1/20th Inf  
Schaumburg, IL  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Cyril T. Kirkland**  
E/4/3rd Inf (Recon)  
Pleasanton, CA  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Pete Kuhaneck**  
A/1/20th Inf  
Gowanda, NY  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Marcel J. Lettre**  
B/C/E/4/3rd Inf  
Fredericksburg, VA  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**James L. Magan**  
C/4/3rd Inf  
Fredericksburg, VA  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**James C. Martinson**  
4/21st Inf  
Puyallup, WA  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Donald R. McCabe, Sr.**  
A/1/6th Inf  
Chester, VA  
★ NC Reggie Horton

**Garland W. McGinnes**  
B/1/46th Inf  
El Dorado, TX  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Richard Melhorn**  
C/4/21st Inf  
Louisville, KY  
★ Self

**Bob Merriman**  
HHC/1/6th Inf  
Canyon Country, CA  
★ Self

**Gregory Mockenhaupt**  
E/4/21st Inf (Recon)  
Porter Ranch, Ca  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Martin H. Moore**  
2/11th Arty (TFO)  
Amherst, OH  
★ Roger Gilmore

**Jonathon A. Neil**  
4/21st Inf  
Sun City Center, FL  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Billy J. Nolting**  
4/21st Inf  
New Albany, IN  
★ Self

**Jerry O'Connor**  
A/1/6th Inf  
St. Petersburg, FL  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Gary D. Owens**  
No Unit Listed  
Omaha, NE  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Pedro Perez**  
11th LIB  
Lajas, PR  
★ Self

**William Phelan**  
4/21st Inf  
Muscatine, IA  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Frank Schurich**  
A/1/20th Inf  
Lafayette, NJ  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Robert W. Sheen**  
A/1/20th Inf  
Gaylord, MI  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Tom Sherwood**  
6/11th Arty  
Lincoln, NE  
★ JVC Bob Cowles

**William F. Sigman, Jr.**  
6/11th Arty C Btry  
Buford, GA  
★ Self

**Robert M. Skallerup, Jr.**  
C/2/1st Inf  
Warwick, NY  
★ Self

**Gary Smith**  
E/4/21st Inf  
Richmond, MO  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Daniel Stephenson**  
236th Med – Dustoff  
Bellingham, WA  
★ Roger Gilmore

**William Stull**  
A/3/21st Inf  
Lexington, KY  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Steven W. Swenson**  
23rd Med Bn  
Jasper, GA  
★ Self

**Vincent D. Thomas, Sr.**  
Aero Scouts  
Dallas, GA  
★ Self

**Thomas W. Turner**  
C/1/20th Inf  
Fairbury, NE  
★ Self

**Danny VanGrongingen**  
A/1/6th Inf  
Manteca, CA  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Danny Vaughan**  
C/4/3rd Inf  
Valley View, TX  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Thomas Wagner**  
C/1/52nd Inf  
Trinity, TX  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Allan L. Walraven**  
1/14th Arty B Btry  
Kalamazoo, MI  
★ Self

**Terry Washam**  
196th LIB  
Key West, FL  
★ Self

**Stephen J. White**  
6/11th Arty  
State College, PA  
★ Self

**Ronnie Wiles**  
4/31st Inf  
Tuttle, OK  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Kenneth L. Wilhite**  
C/4/21st Inf  
Richmond, MO  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Thomas Will**  
C/5/46th Inf  
Huntington, IN  
★ Dale Melton

**Franklin Wootan**  
A/1/20th Inf  
Fairfax, OK  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Jerry Yarbrough**  
B/1/46th Inf  
San Angelo, TX  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**James E. Young**  
Weatherford, TX  
B/2/1st  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

**Howard J. Zorn**  
C/3/1st Inf  
Houston, TX  
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

New Paid Life  
Members

**George D. Barry**  
A/1/6th Inf  
Altoona, PA  
★ Wade Rodland

**Tom O. Cameron**  
HHC/1/6th Inf  
Williamsburg, VA  
★ Self

**Jack Hvezda**  
D/5/46th Inf  
Alexandria, MN  
★ Randy Rosengren

**Angel G. Rodriguez**  
HHC/4/21st Inf  
Lincroft, NJ  
★ Self

**Eugene F. Shurtz, Jr.**  
A/3/21st Inf  
Oregon, OH  
★ Steve Sendobry

**Cornelius Wiersma, Jr.**  
723rd Maint Bn  
Uxbridge, MA  
★ Self

**Richard Young**  
B/3/1st Inf  
Bakersfield, CA  
★ Self

**Edward G. Bennis**  
2/1st Inf  
Columbia, MD  
★ Jesse Mendoza

**Mike Burnard**  
3/82nd Arty  
Midlothian, TX  
★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

**Alexander Demydenko**  
None  
East Brunswick, NJ  
★ PNC David W. Taylor

[Due to the absence of membership and TAPS notes from the fourth quarter 2018 issue and the amount of space in this issue it is not possible to display the large number of current entries for membership and TAPS. Adequate space will be allowed in the next issue to catch up with the listings. Please accept my apologies for this delay. — Editor]

ADVA MEMBERSHIP  
31 January 2019

World War II	276
Vietnam	2,520
Cold War	6
Associate Members	187
Total Members	2,989



## Americal Legacy Foundation Report

By Roger Gilmore, Chairman, Board of Directors

### Foundation Web Site

A few of our ADVA members are using the Foundation web site's donation link to make an on line donation as part of the Legacy Calendar fundraising program or simply a general donation. In December 2018, five donations were processed on the web site using the PayPal payment option. For those of you who regularly use PayPal for payments or are comfortable with making on line transactions for donations, this is an easy and convenient way to donate. And you save the postage stamp. The web site store currently has the old 2018 Legacy calendar available for a \$22.00 donation; we will get that updated to reflect the new 2019 calendar available for ordering and the donation amount.

The Americal History link for the Vietnam era now contains all editions of the Americal News sheets. These issues have been meticulously scanned by ADVA VN Historian Les Hines and his team of volunteers. Started in May 1968 under the name Southern Cross, the news sheet is an 8-9 page report of division activity for the reporting period. By mid-1969, the issue was coming out weekly. If you are looking for more information about the division's activities, this is a good way to go back and possibly recall events that shaped your tour of duty in country.

### Americal Legacy Calendar – 2019 Edition

The 2019 edition of the Americal Legacy calendar was mailed in early November 2018 to ADVA members of record. If your ADVA membership was current as of the beginning of November 2018 and you did not receive a 2019 Americal Legacy Calendar, please contact me (see directory on inside front cover for contact information) and I will mail you one.

Donor response to date has been fantastic. Through mid January 2019, we received mail in donations totaling \$20,350.00. We've received another \$825.00 by way of PayPal donations on the web site and a grant from another charitable foundation supported by one of our ADVA members. **Our heartfelt thanks go out to all donors who have so faithfully supported our Legacy programs this year and in past years.** Without continued and loyal support from all donors for the past ten years, these permanent monument programs honoring the legacy of the Americal Division in its three eras of activation would not be possible.

I want to thank former Foundation director and current advisor PNC David Taylor for his contribution to the 2019 Americal Legacy calendar layout. On page 2 in the calendar, David wrote a very inspirational and moving narrative about the legacy of the Americal Division and the meaning of monuments such as ours. The page is titled "Monuments and a Reflection" and gives a lot of meaning to our monuments program. If you have not read this page, I encourage you take the calendar down from the wall and read it.

Funds from this issue of the calendar are considered "unrestricted". This means funds can be directed to any

of our many monument programs, or used for grants towards other non Foundation directed legacy projects deemed in keeping with perpetuating the Americal Division legacy.

### Americal Monument Programs

After having a number of successes in early to mid 2018, our monuments placement progress has slowed up a bit. We are finding the approval process beginning to slow up at sites we are working with. Initial contact at other VA cemetery sites indicates the site director has other monument design plans. Following is a recap of VA cemetery sites selected and where we stand with our placement proposals.

#### Arkansas State Veterans Cemetery (North Little Rock, AR)

In early September 2018, we received word from the cemetery director our placement proposal is approved. We expected to be able to travel to North Little Rock in late fall 2018 and select a site for the Americal Monument placement and line up a contractor to pour a concrete base for placement.

In mid-October, we received word from the cemetery Beautification Committee that they are in the initial stages of a major beautification and renovation project, and we would not be able to enter the areas under construction at that time. This renovation project also involves the possible relocation of existing monuments. I was advised the project is expected to go into late 2019 or early 2020. Our plan is to travel to this site in January 2020 (if we are permitted access) to select our site and contract for the concrete base pour. More on this project progress in future issues of the Americal Journal.

#### Long Island National Cemetery (Farmingdale, NY)

After off and on communications during the past eight months with the administrative staff at this cemetery site, we finally received acknowledgement (mid-January 2019) that the director is reviewing our placement proposal. We are now waiting for results on the proposal review and a decision on placement and a site.

#### Camp Butler National Cemetery (Springfield, IL)

Foundation Director Bob Cowles continues to work with the cemetery director staff at this Illinois location for a decision on our placement proposal. The cemetery staff has additional requirements for the proposal documentation, and those were submitted to the cemetery staff last year.

On Bob's recommendation, we submitted an additional design to accompany the standard Americal Division pedestal. The addition is a small base (the slant monument will sit atop this base) containing inscriptions that commemorate the Americal Division service of two Illinois National Guard units that were assigned to the division. The first line of text reads "Illinois National Guard – Americal Division Service". Under the first line the text lists

the 132nd Infantry Regiment which served in WWII and the 126th Supply and Service Company assigned to the division in Vietnam. This additional design element will of course have to be approved by the Cemetery Director.

### Future Plans

#### Monument Placements and Funding Grants

We have other projects on the "drawing board" in 2019 for potential monument placement and grant opportunities to perpetuate the Americal Division legacy.

In August 2018, we made a down payment to the contractor, Keith Monument Company on five additional monuments. We locked in the original price with this order. We have two remaining monuments from our first order in inventory at the quarry. One of those in inventory is earmarked for the Arkansas State Veterans Cemetery. Future plans for the second five Keith monuments are placement at VA cemetery sites and non cemetery sites that commemorate the history of the U.S. Army.

The 196th LIB Association is in the process of planning for placement of a memorial honoring the brigade's Army service history at the National Infantry Museum Walk of Honor in Columbus, Georgia. In January, the Foundation Board of Directors approved a \$10,000.00 grant to be earmarked towards construction and placement of this monument. Further details on this planned monument can be found on page 14 of this issue.

Foundation directors also approved a planned expenditure of \$5,000.00 towards a new program launched at the National Museum of the United States Army. The museum is currently under construction near Fort Belvoir, Virginia. The program is a unit tribute that commemorates a unit's legacy. The 12" by 18" black granite plaques will be placed along the Path of Remembrance leading up to the museum. I can think of no better way to honor the Americal Division's legacy at this new museum. Director Gary Noller will be contacting the Museum for more details regarding plaque language and unit insignias. For more details on this program go to the museum web site at [www.armyhistory.org/unit-tributes](http://www.armyhistory.org/unit-tributes). My thanks go out to ADVA member Cameron Baird for making us aware of this new program.

Another Foundation expenditure to be made early this year is for replacement of the Americal monument base at the Dallas Fort Worth VA Cemetery. The cemetery replaced the concrete base last year, but the workmanship is poor quality. The replacement base is cut from the same granite as the monument. Plans are to ship the completed base in March and have it installed soon after it reaches the cemetery. Total cost for the base plus freight is \$2,200.00.

Other projects in the planning stage for 2019 are monument placements at Fort Polk, Louisiana and the National Museum of the Vietnam War in Mineral Wells, Texas. A placement proposal with documentation has been presented to the administrative staff at Fort Polk (January 2019) and we are awaiting word from them on the next step in the review process there.

#### Your Military Service Legacy – You Can Help

To expand our regional exposure in areas that memorialize our Nation's military history (national VA cemeteries, state

veteran cemeteries or military themed parks) we need help from ADVA members and Americal Division veterans. This may be nothing more than letting us know of a potential location for placement of a monument honoring the Americal Division. It could be memorial paver stones. If you have a site in mind and can meet with site managers or directors to explain our legacy program and present some documentation for the staff's review that is a huge step in getting a potential site to consider our placement proposal.

If there is a national VA Cemetery in your area, and you would like to work with the Foundation on a memorial placement, please contact one of our directors (see directory) for specifics on documentation that needs to be submitted for placement proposal.

### Other Foundation Projects

#### The Vietnam Center and Archive

In October 2018, we completed the endowment agreement with Texas Tech Vietnam Archive Center to process and digitize selected Americal Division records from the Vietnam War. The agreement covers one academic year in the amount of \$9,000.00 for the services of student assistant to process the ADVA files and data, create database records and provide on line access to ADVA material. To date, much of the materials furnished by ADVA Vietnam Historian Les Hines are entered into the Americal Division repository on the archive website. Materials such as Americal Division newsletters and Americal Journals are on the index listing. At this time, much of the information in the archive is not viewable by the public.

### Scholarship Donations and News

Foundation Scholarship Chairman Bill Bruinsma and two other Foundation directors (Bob Short and Ed Den Braven) are working on Americal scholarship bylaw amendments and possible revisions to content and language of the bylaws. Consideration is being given to a change to eligibility requirements when an applicant is unable to prove a sponsor or deceased relative is or was a member of the Americal Division Veterans Association. More on this Foundation initiative and updated by laws once the directors complete their review.

Information on the application process for an Americal Scholarship is on the website at [americalfoundation.org](http://americalfoundation.org). The deadline for applications is May 1, 2019. Applicants must write a 200-300 word essay on the topic "Should the military draft return?" Award checks are made to the order of the school and the student and mailed to the school after July 1 of the award year. Applicants may be awarded scholarships for more than one calendar year but each year requires a completed application form and essay.

The major source of funding for the scholarship program is the annual raffle. Raffle tickets are mailed in early spring with a request for a donation in return. The raffle winner will be announced at the annual reunion in Providence, Rhode Island in early October. The scholarship program began as a activity of the ADVA in 1994 and was subsequently transferred to the Americal Legacy Foundation. Questions may be directed to Bill Bruinsma, Scholarship Chairman.



AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION REUNION – OCTOBER 2-6, 2019  
CROWNE PLAZA PROVIDENCE/WARWICK – PROVIDENCE, RI  
HOTEL RESERVATIONS: [REDACTED] - REUNION CODE: ADV - REUNION RATE \$109

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2	
1:00pm – 7:00pm	Reunion Registration Open Hospitality Room – Hours to be posted throughout the reunion.
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3	
8:00am – 9:30am	Reunion Registration Open
10:00am – 3:30pm	NEWPORT TOUR (description follows)
2:00pm – 6:00pm	Reunion Registration Open Hospitality Room – Hours to be posted throughout the reunion.
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4	
8:00am – 12:00pm	Reunion Registration Open Additional hours will be posted at the reunion, if necessary.
9:00am – 4:30pm	BOSTON CITY TOUR (description follows)
5:00pm - 5:30pm	Memorial Service
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5	
8:00am – 9:00am	Executive Council Meeting
10:00am – 11:30pm	Association Business Meeting
12:00pm – 4:30pm	NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM (description follows)
5:30pm – 6:00pm	First Time Attendee Reception
6:00pm – 7:00pm	Reception and Seating
7:00pm	Banquet Dinner
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6	
	Farewells and Departures

TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

**NEWPORT TOUR**  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3  
Spend the day exploring historic Newport. Experience the Breakers, the grandest of Newport's summer "cottages" and a symbol of the Vanderbilt family's social and financial preeminence in late 19th and early 20th century America. A complete audio tour of this historic mansion is included. On your own, enjoy lunch and discovering great shops nestled in the heart of Newport, Rhode Island. Enjoy a driving tour of Newport, which includes sights such as Bellevue Avenue lined with fabulous mansions and the spectacular coastline of Ocean Drive.  
9:00am board bus, 3:00pm back at hotel  
\$67/Person includes bus, guide, and admission. Lunch on your own.

**BOSTON CITY TOUR & FREEDOM TRAIL**  
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4  
Explore the history of America's oldest ship, the USS Constitution, through participatory exhibits, computer simulations, art and preservation galleries. Visit the Museum store for mementos. As time permits, tour Old Ironsides herself. Enjoy free time and lunch on your own at Quincy Market, also called Faneuil Hall Marketplace. There are over 100 stores, pushcarts, restaurants, and plenty of entertainment. Continue with a guided driving tour of Boston. See some of the most famous sites along the Freedom Trail including Boston Common, the 48-acre park where the British mustered for Lexington and Concord, the site of the Boston Massacre, the Old North Church where the two lanterns were hung, "One if by Land, Two if by Sea", and other points of interest.  
\$60/person includes bus & guides. Lunch on your own.  
9:00am board bus, 4:30pm return to hotel

**NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM**  
SATURDAY, OCT 5  
The New Bedford Whaling Museum tells the global story of human interaction with whales through time. In 23 galleries and public spaces, visitors explore whale ecology and marine mammal conservation, discover the dramatic story of whaling and its impact, and the maritime history of SouthCoast Massachusetts. The Museum's exhibits draw on the world's most comprehensive collection of art, artifacts and original documents pertaining to whaling history. Visitors can marvel at massive whale skeletons, learn how Yankee whalers sailed the seven seas, and enjoy works by internationally famous maritime artists. On January 3, 1841, a cold, blustery day, Herman Melville sailed from New Bedford onboard the ship Acushnet of Fairhaven, bound on a whaling voyage to the Pacific Ocean. Years later he transformed the events of this journey into a series of books that culminated in Moby-Dick (1851), often called America's greatest novel. In the Whaling Museum Theater, you will receive an exceptional presentation on Melville and the heyday of America's world leadership in whaling. Selected by Yankee Magazine as the "Best Specialty Museum in Massachusetts" in 2018, the Museum is the TripAdvisor "Number one of 45 things to do in New Bedford" and a must-see stop while in southern New England.  
\$58/Person includes bus, guide, and guest speaker.  
12:00pm board bus, 4:30pm back at hotel.

Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time.  
Driver and Staff gratuities are not included in the tour prices.

**CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.**  
For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less the non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$7 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable AFR registration fee. **Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays.** Please call [REDACTED] to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities

AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM 2019

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. You may register online and pay by credit card at on the reunion web site at [www.afr-reg.com/americal2019](http://www.afr-reg.com/americal2019) (3.5% will be added to total). You may also register by completing the form below. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before September 3, 2019. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.  
[REDACTED]  
Norfolk, VA 23510  
ATTN: AMERICAL

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Check # _____	Date Received _____
Inputted _____	Nametag Completed _____

CUT-OFF DATE IS 09/03/19 – reservations by space available after that date	Price Per	# of People	Total
TOURS			
THURSDAY 10/3: Newport Tour Member/Spouse/Guest	\$67		\$
THURSDAY 10/3: Newport Tour WWII Americal Vet/Spouse/Escort	\$ 0		\$ 0
FRIDAY 10/4: Boston City Tour & USS Constellation Museum Member/Spouse/Guest	\$60		\$
FRIDAY 10/4: Boston City Tour & USS Constellation Museum WWII Vet, Spouse, Escort	\$ 0		\$ 0
SATURDAY 10/5: New Bedford Whaling Museum Member/Spouse/Guest	\$58		\$
SATURDAY 10/5: New Bedford Whaling Museum WWII Americal Vet, Spouse, Escort	\$ 0		\$ 0
MEALS			
SATURDAY 10/5: BANQUET - Please select your entrée(s)			
• Grilled New York Sirloin Steak	\$ 45		\$
• Boneless Breast of Chicken with Sage and Apple Stuffing	\$ 45		\$
• Baked New England Scrod	\$ 45		\$
• Vegetarian Pasta Primavera	\$ 45		\$
WWII Vet, Spouse and/or Escort Banquet Dinner at no charge – Please select an entrée: <input type="checkbox"/> NY Sirloin <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken <input type="checkbox"/> New England Scrod <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian	\$ 0		\$ 0
REQUIRED PER PERSON REGISTRATION FEE.			
WWII Americal Veteran plus Spouse or escort free	\$ 0		\$ 0
ADVA Member	\$18		\$
Non-member, Fee includes one-year ADVA membership dues & benefits	\$33		\$
Spouse and/or Guests (each)	\$18		\$
Total Amount Payable to <b>Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.</b>			\$

PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WANT YOUR NAMETAG TO READ

MAIN ATTENDEE: FIRST \_\_\_\_\_ LAST \_\_\_\_\_

UNIT \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS WITH UNIT (YYYY) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ 1st TIME ATTENDEE? YES ☐ NO ☐

Please indicate your era - WWII ☐ Panama ☐ Vietnam ☐

SPOUSE/ESCORT NAMES (IF ATTENDING) \_\_\_\_\_

GUEST NAMES \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN ATTENDEE STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PH. NUMBER (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS \_\_\_\_\_  
(Sleeping room requirements must be conveyed by attendee directly with hotel)

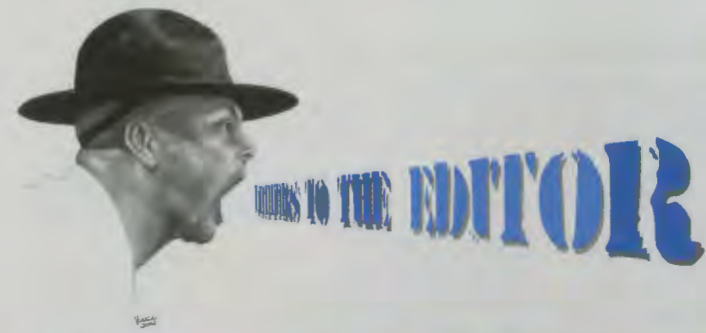
MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS? (Every effort will be made to provide this service). ☐ YES ☐ NO

ARRIVAL DATE \_\_\_\_\_ DEPARTURE DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU STAYING AT THE HOTEL? YES ☐ NO ☐ ARE YOU FLYING? ☐ DRIVING? ☐ RV? ☐

For refunds and cancellations please refer to our policies outlined at the bottom of the reunion program. **CANCELLATIONS WILL ONLY BE TAKEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00am-4:00pm EASTERN TIME (excluding holidays).** Call [REDACTED] to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion.



**To the editor,**

I recently received an email from a woman who resides in Massachusetts. She wrote about her and her husband's efforts to recognize deceased veterans through the Wreaths Across America program. Beginning in 2015, Christine Quern and her husband Peter travel to Washington, D.C. annually in November for the wreath laying events at Arlington National Cemetery. Christine's father, Andy Bombara, was a WWII Americal Division veteran so her respect for military veterans stems from her father's Army service. After beginning this remembrance effort, Christine did some research to locate an Americal Division monument at Arlington National Cemetery. She did find the Americal Division monument that was placed there in the 1990's (located in Section 34). She lays a wreath at the Americal Division monument each year and feels it is a great honor to do so in memory of the soldiers who served "Under The Southern Cross". As Americal Division veterans and ADVA members, we truly appreciate the efforts of Christine and Peter Quern honoring the legacy of the Americal Division.

**Roger Gilmore; ADVA National Adjutant**

**To the editor,**

On February 5, 1970, ten of us left Hill 411 to set up a night ambush in an area where a lot of enemy activity had been noticed. On point was "Big Perry" (Kenneth), then came "Pee Wee" (Dennis Hughes), followed by "Mac" (Jack McWhorter).

There were no moon and stars. It was very dark. Pee Wee got us to the woodline and all of a sudden there was an explosion. This was followed by gunfire from the woods. Pee Wee was shot in the arm and Mac received shrapnel in the face. The rest of us fell back to a wallowed out place in the ground and returned fire.

Mac and Pee Wee were down and hollered at us to come and get them because they were wounded. The RTO and I crawled into the woods and came across Big Perry who was bloody and his clothes were smoking. He wasn't moving. We had a flashlight with a red lens to help guide us. We pulled them back into the open so a Medevac helicopter could get in. Our M60 had jammed but we kept up steady fire until the chopper came in under fire. Our RTO receive word from the hill that a larger friendly force was headed towards us. The hill started firing flares in the air so we could get our directions.

Although none of us received recognition that night we were like every other Vietnam Vet. We did our job. Jackie Ray McWhorter died on December 6, 2016. May he rest in Peace.

[Editor's note: The Americal Division DTOC report indicates that this incident occurred at 1955H at grid coordinates BS556715. A unit of C/3/1/11 reportedly triggered a booby trap of a large explosive, possibly an artillery round.]

**Skip Brownfield; Elizabethtown, IL**

**To the editor,**

I am a former 11 Bravo, M-60 gunner, with A Co., 5/46 Bn., 198 LIB, Americal Division from May 1969 to November 1969. In late November 1969 I was assigned to HHC and became RTO at 5/46 BN TOC, eventually NCOIC. I am looking for two brothers that I worked with at BN TOC from late November 1969 to April 1970. Bob DeRosa was from Connecticut and Jimmy Wayne Moore was from Kenly, NC and moved to Atlanta, GA area in the early 70's.

My oldest son Sam went online in the fall of 2008 and looked up Alpha Company, and bumped into Buddy Wolf, the rest is history. I have over 20 second platoon members on my email and smart phone list. We get together in some form or fashion at least three times a year. I would love to reconnect with some of my TOC Brothers.

**Benjamin C. Boisseau;**

**To the editor,**

I'm wish to contact veterans who participated in Task Force Miracle and the Battle for Lo Giang. I want to talk to them a little about it for two reasons. One, I was there, and secondly, I am writing a book as a Marine who fought with them there. This book is historic and to honor them and those that have fallen during this battle in the first week of February 1968, TET Offensive, more notably, Feb. 6 thru 10.

My connection to them will be confidential. They may call me at [redacted] or email me. To these veterans I would like to say as a Marine, I was there and thank you, that, for your action, it saved us and our compound, which was a CAP

(Combined Action Platoon) unit called Echo 4. If it were not for your action there, that day, we would have not survived the experience and most surely we would have been overrun. There was the three Army companies involved, which was companies, A, B and C from 1/6 of the 198 Light Infantry Brigade, Americal Division that created the diversion that was necessary for us to survive this engagement.

As a Marine stuck on that compound, my AAR (after action report) for that day, has been buried by the DOD in Washington or can not be found, would not have brought to light the fact that the Army was instrumental in the diversion we so desperately needed. You could say, we were in the woods and could not see the forest, which would have told the facts of how everything had happened. If it weren't for the internet in the mid nineteen-nineties I would not have known all the details surrounding that action that had occurred.

Although, it would immensely important to me that I speak to the commanders that were there, it would also be immensely important that I speak to the veterans that participated in the event of that battle. The purpose would not be to bring up some old wounds, but just to have a little bunker talk among ourselves about the battle that had occurred. In my book I will not talk about the unspeakable things, for that will remain unspeakable, this historical and the reader will be left with their own imagination about the details.

Thank you for listening and I hope to hear from someone soon. If not, remember this is for history of you and me and it will be told.

**Bob Le Beau;**

**To the editor,**

While attending the ADVA reunion in Oklahoma City this summer someone asked me about former 4/3 Inf. Bn. commander Robert Nolasco Fernandez. He was commander of 4/3 Inf from July to December 1969 (approximately). I found an obituary notice that indicated that Fernandez passed away on June 9, 2018. He was almost 88 years old. The obituary began with the following, "War came to Bob Fernandez when he was 11 years old. Born and raised on Oahu, and living near Hickam Air Force Base, he witnessed

the Japanese air attack his own neighborhood on December 7th, 1941. The war would change Hawaii and young Bob forever." He was a member of the West Point Class of 1953 and served two tours in Vietnam. Among his awards and decorations are the Combat Infantryman Badge, Silver Star, and Distinguished Flying Cross.

**Tom Bedient;**

**To the editor,**

Fifty years after they were first united on the battlefields in Vietnam, 18 veterans and eleven wives met again for their 8th annual reunion. The venue for the gathering was the picturesque Oak Haven Resort in Sevierville, Tennessee. These veterans served with the Americal Division, Alpha Company, 5th/46th, 198th Light Infantry Brigade. Most were members of the first platoon, but one served with the second platoon while four others were assigned to the fourth platoon.

John Dyer and his wife Belva from Ohio were attending their first reunion. Most of the others have attended all eight reunions. For Richard Bergman and his wife Dale of Illinois, this reunion was especially meaningful. Richard has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and was probably attending his last reunion with his war buddies. These veterans were extremely emotional as Richard left the gathering to fly back home.

Attendees from L-R on the back row: Bob Latham, Tennessee; Bob Cummings, North Carolina; Aaron Rochester, South Carolina; Kenneth Quinn, South Carolina; John Dyer, Ohio; Dwight Saddler, Tennessee; Wendell Roberts, Tennessee. Middle row L-R are Bob Scott, California; Kenneth Butcher, Tennessee; Oliver Gause, North Carolina; Jerry Laack, Wisconsin; Sid Liming, Ohio; Rodney Outten, Virginia; Paul Sprouse, South Carolina. Front row L-R are George Lakins, Tennessee; Jack Vater, Wisconsin; Jack Crisp, Missouri; and Richard Bergman, Illinois. The empty chairs are in memory of Don Sheffield, Texas; Ray Utley, North Carolina; Vaughn Delong, Indiana; and Alan Casazza, New York.

**Ellen Gause;**

**To the editor,**

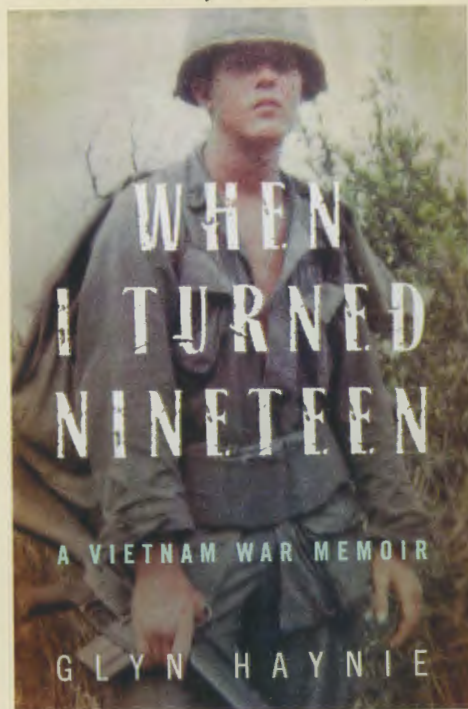
The Pleiku Air Base Association has expanded its search for new members to include members from any branch of service of the United States, civilian contractors, and any foreign allied military that was stationed at or near Pleiku Air Base in Vietnam. The association meets annually. In 2018 the meeting was in Branson, Missouri from September 5-9. The 2019 meeting will be approximately the same dates. Further information will be in our newsletter. Go to the website at [www.pleikuab.com](http://www.pleikuab.com) for a membership application and additional information on the association.

**Ron Chromulak, Director, Pleiku Air Base Assn.**



## When I Turned Nineteen: A Vietnam War Memoir

Written by Glyn Haynie  
Reviewed by David W. Taylor



Glyn Haynie received his in-country order for Alpha Company, 3rd/1st Battalion, 11th Brigade just two weeks after his 19th birthday. The 3rd/1st was located at Fire Support Base (FSB) Bronco at Duc Pho. But Haynie's company operated off of FSB Charlie Brown. Haynie was assigned to Alpha's first platoon.

Haynie's tour of duty began as a "Fucking New Guy" (FNC) but he quickly morphed into a combat-savvy grunt, a process all Americal vets who served in the bush can relate to. From combat air-assaults, ambushes, convoys and fire-fights, some that required close-in artillery support, Haynie takes us on his tour in Vietnam at the gut level with no pretenses, just the naked truth of life and death in the bush and in combat:

"On July 15, Charlie Company reported finding an NVA hospital and a basic training center 15 clicks from the firebase. They called in an airstrike and destroyed both. The hospital complex had one hooch destroyed, eight hooch's damaged, and one bunker destroyed. They

found wooden chi-coms and a tank obstacle course at the suspected Basic Training Center. A dust-off landed at 1845 hours, to pick up Doc Windows because of smoke inhalation and respiratory impairment; he was flown to the Chu Lai hospital. He would not return to the platoon. Now the platoon had no medic"

Still more: "As I watched the soldier stumble into the tree line, all hell broke loose. Automatic weapons were firing, and there were explosions at the squad position to my right rear 30 meters away. I could tell by the sound that M-16 and AK-47 weapons were firing too. I waited; I couldn't see through the thick hedgerow that separated me from the squad. Within minutes, two NVA soldiers burst through the tree line 20 meters to my right front. They were moving away from where the weapons were firing. I at once leveled my M-16 at the NVA on the left and I made eye contact and fired off three to four rounds, hitting him in the chest and head. He took several steps backward and fell to the ground"

Throughout the book Haynie introduces us to his friends and immediate leaders at the grass level. We get to know them, like them and identify with them. Then lose them. We walk with Haynie on his missions, some which were sound in their objectives and some ill-advised.

Through the many experiences of death and destruction of this soldier's tour of duty, watching his friends killed or wounded, and the influx of more FNC's, Haynie grapples with the question all of us faced who served in combat, "Will I make it out alive with all my limbs?"

Haynie's book, published in 2017, contains 243 pages of combat narrative; in-country photos of bases, pictures of friends killed and wounded; various appendices relating to the fallen and a glossary of terms used in the Vietnam genre.

It's a book worth buying and reading, not only for Americal Vets but for those who never made the trip to the Nam...back then and even today.

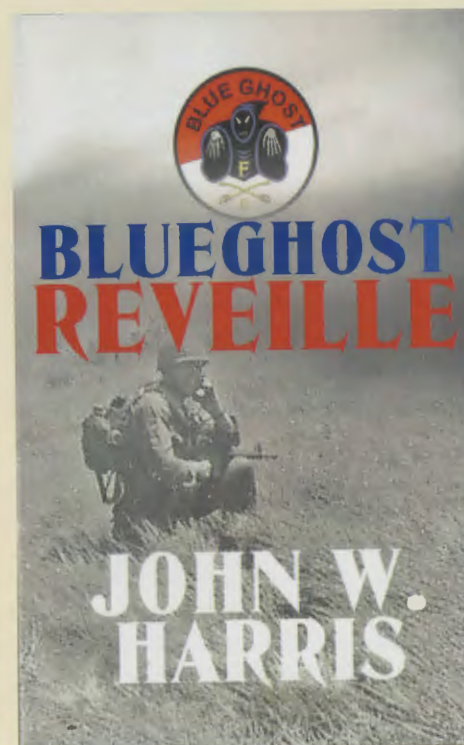
## Blue Ghost Reveille

Written by John W. Harris  
Reviewed by Vern Schleyer

For those draftees with the Infantry MOS, 11 B (Bravo), getting assigned to a unit for Viet Nam was pretty much a crap shoot in 1968. Infantry grunts were assigned to just about every Army division across the Republic of Viet Nam. As far as I know, an assignment was dependent on what division needed men when the replacement arrived in-country.

I was lucky enough to be assigned to the Americal Division, in the northern section of South Viet Nam, in what the Army called I Corps in August of 1968. Lucky because we were told that that area was more mountainous, and the weather was cooler. Not as many jungles up there, dryer, and the country was much narrower there than south, in the Mekong Delta. There were not as many Viet Cong after Tet, but more NVA troops.

I flew north to the Americal Division replacement company in



Chu Lai. After a week or so in the Americal replacement center I then became even luckier still. I was assigned to F Troop, 8th Air Cavalry, Blues infantry platoon. F Troop was a cavalry unit. Its primary purpose was to find and engage the enemy using their scout helicopters and gunships, both Cobras and Huey C-models.

We had our share of troubles. We flew out in the mornings to our forward fire support base. Most nights we flew back to the safety of Chu Lai, with its combined Army, Air Force and Marine base. We had hot showers and mess hall food there, which was much better than C rations. Our troop area was located on the coast of the South China Sea, so at night we were secure. We had rocket attacks to contend with, but they were infrequent and random. For a grunt, this was a pretty good assignment.

*Blue Ghost Reveille* is a book written by John W. Harris. He arrived at Blue Ghost about two weeks after I rotated home. He did the same job that I had. His book is about the daily life of a squad leader, as an E-5 Sergeant, and eventually as the E-6 platoon sergeant for the same platoon. John was in the unit for a year, starting in September 1969. I know John Harris, having met him at Blue Ghost reunions held over the last few years.

*Blue Ghost Reveille* is an amazing book. The fact that it was based on memories from 50 years ago makes it even more compelling. The vignettes and issues of each chapter are the high points of John's memory, and seem as alive to me now as what I also remember of my time in Viet Nam. His recollection of events when he was twenty-two seem spot-on, and have created an indelible impression of what it was like for him in the Army, in the Viet Nam war, and in the events of a unique Americal unit.

Each chapter is short, most only two or three pages. And most are not connected to the preceding or following chapters. The seventy chapters detail the events that stick out for John, significant to him for whatever reason. But together they weave a tapestry of the accounting of the life of a young man thrust into an unknown world, who did his best to do his duty, to keep those in his charge safe, and to come home alive.

I am grateful to John for this book. Most of us who served in Viet Nam do not get our stories told in this much detail. I bought a copy of this book for each of my children, so they can better know what it was like for me, as a 20-year old in a different world.

I would have liked to have John share more of what his feelings were during this time. I can remember the terror I felt the first time I knew that the bad guys were shooting directly at me; I was also overcome with the beauty of our area of operations, and the South China Sea coast. I remember the loneliness sitting in the guard bunkers facing the sea, on moonlight nights that seemed to be endless. And I remember the loneliness we felt being so far from home, and of wondering what our lives would be like once (and if) we returned to "the World".

In all, this is a good book. If you want to know what

it was like to be in an air cavalry unit, this is a good read. The boredom and the amazement are shared equally, and his story brought back strong memories of that time for me 50 years ago.

## Vietnam: The War We Won

Written by Dale Michael Lais  
Reviewed by Donald J. Berg

Dale Michael Lais has written an interesting and provocative book focusing on the following thesis: "Brothers and sisters: we were the best trained, best equipped, and were the best of our generation. Our Air Force had control of the skies, our Navy had command of the waterways, and the Marines and Army dominated (and I mean dominated) on the battlefield." Lais's bonafides include being an enlisted member of the last U.S. Army combat unit in Vietnam (the Gimlets), which was the 3rd Bn, 21st Inf., of the 196th Lt. Inf. Bde. His unit conducted operations near Da Nang, as Task Force Gimlet, from June to August 1972. The author was in the field and uses his experiences to form his narrative. The Gimlets left on 23 August. (The 196th had been in South Vietnam since its deployment in August 1966.)

Lais especially emphasized the patriotism of the American forces in his text. He compares statistical data from WWII, the Korean War, and Vietnam in developing his case. He presents his facts, such as: 80% of the military personnel in Vietnam were enlisted; the number of desertions during the peak year of the war: 52 per 1000 (63 per 1000 for WWII); the number of combat days per year attributed to WWII soldiers (10), Korean War (180), and Vietnam (240). The author makes other claims about the conduct of the U.S. Military which he supports with various published and other sources. An important point of the book is to elaborate the idea that the American military forces "never lost a significant battle."

The book is a fast read, in large part because of its slimness, 120 pages, with an average of less than 160 words per page, contained in seven chapters and a conclusion. Lais's thesis is buttressed by a number of useful tables and a bibliography. A "My Photos" section allows the reader to relate to the author, who was a volunteer, on a more personal basis. Also, Lais indicated that he began his research and writhing 34 years after his Vietnam tour concluded and worked on his manuscript, apparently discontinuously, for the next ten years.

Although the author praised his editor, the book contains numerous grammatical and factual errors, over a dozen, along with syntax issues, which marred the final result. In sum, the book presented challenges for this reviewer to objectively analyze because of my association with the 196th. Dale Michael Lais had a significant viewpoint and philosophy to present and accomplished a creditable task, but his sincerely held message was muddled because of the manner in which it was displayed. The author certainly deserves accolades for his efforts, but a better publishing job would have certainly helped his cause.



## 196th Light Infantry Brigade Memorial Monument Announced

By Gary L. Noller (B/1/46/196 70-71)

Over 50 years have passed since the 196th Light Infantry Brigade arrived in Vietnam and began its service in the most dangerous and highly contested locations in Vietnam. Soldiers of the brigade served with honor, valor, and sacrifice. Many gave their final breath at the age of 19. They will always be remembered- especially by those who stood side-by-side with them during the darkest of hours.

During the business meeting of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade Association held in Louisville, Kentucky in 2017 members voted to support the erection of a memorial monument at the Walk of Honor, National Infantry Museum, Ft. Benning, Georgia. The monument is a memorial to those who died during the war as well as to all former soldiers of the brigade. After a brief discussion association members approved the expenditure of \$30,000 in association funds towards the cost of the memorial monument.

A planning committee formed and set to work on a design that would be a fitting tribute to the valor and sacrifices made by the soldiers of the 196th during the Vietnam War. The proposed design consists of a bronze statue of two soldiers on the battlefield. One soldier is aiding a fellow soldier after a fierce encounter with the enemy. The fight is over and a soldier assists his wounded buddy- perhaps taking him to a waiting dustoff helicopter for evacuation to a hospital.



The theme of the statue is that of a soldier helping a fellow soldier. We all had this in common. None of would have made it very long in Vietnam without the care and assistance from our brothers. This brotherhood has followed us ever since and is part of who we are and who we will always be. We will never lose the closeness that we felt to one another during a very difficult time in our lives. This memorial monument statue captures that feeling and displays it for all to see and contemplate.

The artist, Ms. Sarah Hahn, has proposed a turn-key installation of a statue that is seven feet tall. It will depict soldiers in correct Vietnam War uniforms, equipment, and gear. She has previous experience with the creation of U.S. Army soldier sculpture that is now on display at the National Infantry Museum at Ft. Benning. She is an accomplished artist and a master of detail. Her final rendering will be closely examined by the memorial monument committee to ensure that it is representative of soldiers of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade during the Vietnam War.

The memorial monument includes a bronze plaque or stone tablet with a brief text related to the 196th Light Infantry Brigade. The exact design plaque or tablet is under consideration at this time. The 196th shoulder patch, distinctive insignia, coat of arms, along with dates and places and units of assignment, may be on the plaque or tablet. But the impact of the memorial will come from the statue itself. There are many monuments at the Walk of Honor but few are statues. Statues tell a vivid story in a way that words on a plaque or stone wall cannot. The addition of this statue will stand out among many very fine memorial monuments that honor the service of infantry units in the time of war.

The estimated cost of a turn-key project is at \$90,000. This includes the artist fee, cost of bronzing the sculpture, transportation from the foundry to the National Infantry Museum, construction of a concrete slab, installation on the Walk of Honor, fees and permits, and all other costs. The Americal Legacy Foundation has pledged a donation of up to \$10,000 towards the funding of the two-soldier statue. The only request that is made is that the Americal Division be named in the text on the plaque or tablet. A life-member of the 196th LIB Association has recently pledged \$5,000 to fund the sculpture. With the \$30,000 committed from association funds a total of \$45,000 is currently pledged towards obtaining the sculpture. The remaining funds are needed.

The association requests your financial support of this effort. Other Vietnam War units have been successful in raising considerable funds for their memorial monuments at the Walk of Honor and other locations in the United States. It is now time for veterans of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade to once again answer the call to do what needs to be done. Almost all of us have already reached the age of 70 or will be there very soon. Many of us have been fortunate and find ourselves in our retirement years on sound financial footing but with a need to leave a legacy. This is an opportunity that may not come again.

The association is a war veterans organization with an IRS letter of determination as a 501c19 non-profit organization. As such, donations to the association can be deducted on the donors' federal tax returns. Funds will be maintained in an escrow account in the name of the association and only used for the stated purpose.

Similar funding campaigns show that a large part of the donations will be received within six weeks of receipt of the request. The committee hopes that funding derived from this request letter will be sufficient to cover the estimated costs. If not the committee may decide to continue raising funds or may decide to determine an alternate design. You are encouraged to not give until it hurts but give until it feels good. Time is slipping by very fast and action must begin soon to ensure a proper and fitting memorial to 196th LIB soldiers and veterans is completed.

Donations may be sent to David Eichorn, Treasurer. Dave is also the chairman of the memorial planning committee. Donations may be sent by postal mail to Dave at [redacted], Fleming, OH, 45729. Dave will be happy to answer questions by email. Send requests to [redacted].

The memorial planning committee wishes to thank you in advance for your support of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade memorial monument.

## Vietnam Locator Requests

**Looking for:** Any info on my dad who was in the 182nd Inf. Regt. of the Americal Division on Guadalcanal. His name was Sgt. Chester M Seremet and I'm trying to find out which company he was in. Contact: Martin Seremet; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Information on Doeke DeBoer Jr. He enlisted in November 1942 and was designated Task Force 6814 and sent to Melbourne, Australia first then to New Caledonia. He was then assigned to Company K of the 132nd and merged with the 164th. We do not know which Battalion he was part of yet but would love to find out. We believe he was promoted to Sergeant in August 1944 and became a Platoon Leader (also the BAR gunner). He was discharged October 31st 1945. Contact: Nick Rice; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Information about the death of Sgt. Edmund Jagodzinski for Woodward High School Hall of Fame Veterans project. The project is an attempt to identify and describe the sacrifice of Schools veterans so today's and future students might understand the sacrifice that was made for them. This is the information we have on Sgt. Jagodzinski: Jagodzinski, Edmund - Sgt. US Army KIA Silver Star Feb. 20th, 1944 Leyte, Birth 4 Feb 1922 Philippines Service Purple Heart Unit 182nd Infantry Regiment, Americal Division Death 20 Feb 1945 (aged 23) Philippines Burial Manila American Cemetery and Memorial Manila, Metro Manila, National Capital Region, Philippines Plot D Row 9 Grave 137. Son of Andrew & Lorraine "Valeria" Ann Kruczynski Jagodzinski. Brother of Stanley Andrew Jagodzinski & Raymond "Ray" J. Jagodzinski. We would like to find out the manner of his death and the circumstances of him being awarded the Silver Star. Contact: Tom Toth; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Information about my father-in-law Charles Floyd Fielder. He fought on Guadalcanal I believe with 164th Infantry. He was a private. Contact: Terry Close; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Any info on my father who served in Americal Div. Fiji, Bouganville, Philippines etc. Drove for General Arnold. Served 1943-1945

changed his name and could be Gene Carol Hacker? Contact: Mark Hacker; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Information on a WWII Vet named James J Soucek, I know he was in the 182nd Infantry Regiment. Contact: Seth Cooper; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Anyone who served in A Co. 5/46th Inf near LZ Gator, late 1968 to early 1969. My uncle, PFC Marvin Erickson, served in A Co and was killed 22 Jan 69 at OP5 just north of LZ Gator. Contact: Mike Setzke; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Anyone who served with A co 1/46th, 196 LIB in 71/72. Contact: LT Kenneth Fendley (Skip); [redacted]

**Looking for:** Anyone who knows my father, Michael Barnhart, who served in Vietnam from April 1970 thru March 1971. He was assigned to division headquarters, called Group S2, intelligence, but was in the field at San Juan Hill, home base. He attended OCS at Fort Sill 1, and would have been class of 7-70. Contact: Sarah Covert; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Anyone who remembers Jan 2 to Jan 8 1968 and the battles in and around LZ West. I was new in country only 2 weeks and never thought I would make it home. I was with bravo 4/31st led by capt. Speer. Contact: William Curtit; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Anyone who remembers David L. Downing, 198th LIB, service in Chu Lai. He was awarded the army commendation medal. I've known David since childhood. Contact: W Schraut; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Anyone who might have their transfer of duty station orders for the time period of around April or May of 1972 to see if the name Gary Smith is on there. He was with Bravo Co., 2/1st Inf., 81mm mortar platoon, and left Nam around that time. Contact: Jim Gales; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Anyone 1/52, 198th LIB, august 69-Oct 70. I think B Co. Contact: Timothy Busby; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Information about an attack on Tien Phouc that happened when I was there in 1971. I was with the 16 CAG. Contact: Larry Barker; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Anyone who may have served with A Co, 4th BN 3rd Inf. 11th Bde from March to May 1971. Dean Elliston (Deano) and I were transferred into the unit from the 11th Armored Cav. My memory bank is empty but I do remember using air bags to cross a river to escape a wildfire that got out of hand and also flying into Khe Sanh for a 3 day stand down. Contact: Gary Thain; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Two veterans from my platoon in Vietnam. We were in B/2/1 Infantry in 1970-71. I have their SS# from old promotion orders we were on. I remain in contact with over 20 vets from our Company. We have a reunion every two years in DC around Veterans Day. Contact: David Thomas; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Members of Chu Lai Defense Command, Chu Lai Sept 68 through February 69. Contact: Mel Carney; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Information regarding an incident that occurred on 12 November, 1969 during a road sweep south of LZ Debbie. Dennis E. Timmons was KIA. This was a combined operation with 4/21 Infantry and 1/1 Cavalry. Contact: Slater Davis; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Sgt. Ray Roberts, E troop 1st cavalry regiment, 11th LIB, 1969. Not so sure of his first name as everybody used their last name. Richard J Balsamo; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Two veterans I served with in Vietnam - we were in Delta Battery in the 1/14th Artillery from September 1968 to July 1969. Specialist Keith Roqueplot and Captain George Alexander. Contact: Michael Baskin; [redacted]

**Looking for:** Information about my father, a member of the 11th LIB in vietnam DEC 67-NOV 68. Contact: Robert Stricker; [redacted]



## Images From My Lens

The Americal Photos of  
Herbert Brady



(Contributing Editor's Note) Herbert Brady joined the Army in the fall of 1968. After Basic training at Fort Dix he was assigned to Signal School at Fort Monmouth, NJ. He was then assigned to the 523rd Signal Battalion, Americal, as a photo darkroom technician. After a month the opportunity to become a Combat Photographer opened up and, as he says, "I jumped at it"

He recalls, "I worked with many units in the field. I enjoyed being able to do my job though I scared myself often. I tried to create a balanced image in my work that would tell a story"

Brady's work is stunning in its simplicity. His photos will bring back many memories to ADVA members. We plan to feature more of his photos in future issues.

Brady departed Vietnam in August 1970 but returned as an Army artist to Thailand. With some time in the Army Reserve, his total Army service was six years. He lives in California and is still heavily engaged in his art and photography.

## RED LEGS



105mm Battery (Gun #2), 3rd/82nd Artillery on Hawk Hill.

## BIRDS



Americal 5th/46th Infantry, 198th Infantry Brigade; this, the second wave of a combat air assault is nearing the landing zone. Soldiers from the first wave are now set up in a perimeter security. You can just see their helmets in the foliage, on the lower left (1970).

## GRUNTS



Americal 5th/46th infantryman carrying everything on his back, except the kitchen sink; he has that on his head (1970).



Infantryman, 5th/46th Battalion; while the front of the column hacks a trail through the jungle, those in the rear get to wait. For a moment, this soldier gets lost in his own thoughts (1970).



Infantryman, 5th/46th Battalion; I have always thought of this picture as "A portrait of an infantryman". This image was taken while his unit was working in the mountains west of Chu Lai.



# THE TERRAIN ARMORED CALVARY



These infantrymen are emerging from a dense grove of elephant grass. It is very hot within, and the blades of the grass are razor sharp.

Americal Division, 5th/46th Infantry; I remember the Credence Clearwater Revival song, called "Run through the Jungle"; all I can say is there ain't no way you are going to run through this jungle! (In the mountains, west of Chu Lai...1970)



Moving ahead through the rough and tumble bush country...making your presence known.



This platoon is set up as a blocking force; the rest of the Cav troop is trying to drive the enemy onto this line.



## Operation Russell Beach

And The Phantom 48th VC Battalion  
David Taylor

Well before the Americal Division became operational in Vietnam, the 48th Local Force Vietcong (VC) Battalion was considered by some to be one of the most effective guerilla units in the war. This irregular guerilla battalion held a strong base of operations northeast of Quang Ngai City, on the large coastal plain east of Highway 1, up to Chu Lai. The base of the VC battalion's operations appeared to be on the Binh Duc Cape, known by Americans as the Batangan Peninsula.

The 48th Battalion's strength was decimated in early 1968 from the TET Offensive when it attacked Quang Ngai City, along with main force North Vietnamese Army (NVA) units; but rejuvenation is a hallmark of guerilla movements and no unit did it better than the 48th VC Battalion. Its replenishment of men came from NVA regulars and VC reinforcements, infiltrating from the Annamite Mountains, moving east along the trace of the Tra Bong River, crossing Highway 1 near the district town of Binh Son, then moving the eleven miles to the South China Sea.

A secondary infiltration route saw VC and NVA slip out of the mountains in much smaller groups, southwest of Chu Lai and north of Landing Zone (LZ) Gator and, with the assistance of local guerillas, cross Highway 1 onto the coastal lowlands. LZ Gator was the headquarters for the 5th/46th Infantry Battalion. Its assigned area of operations was immense, covering east to west from the South China Sea to the Annamite Mountains and North from Chu Lai to South to the provincial capital of Quang Ngai.

Operation Golden Fleece and its efforts to secure the rice harvest of the coastal lowlands was a lesson for the 5th/46th Battalion, the Marine Combined Action Platoons (CAP) in the area and Army advisors in Quang Ngai Province, of just how tenacious the 48th VC Battalion truly was. True pacification could only come if the VC



A Hunter-Killer Team from First Squad, First Platoon, Alpha Company, 5th/46th Infantry (Photo: Francis Hale)

Battalion's resistance was totally defeated. And the heart and soul of that enemy resistance appeared to emanate from the Batangan Peninsula. The Americal, with the 5th/46th as the controlling battalion, set out to change this condition once and for all.

The plan to destroy the 48th VC Battalion and pacify the large coastal area depended on two operational forces: "Operation Russell Beach" would involve the 5th/46th Infantry Battalion, supported by the 4th/3rd Infantry from the 11th Brigade in Duc Pho and reinforced by one battalion from the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) 2nd Division, headquartered in Quang Ngai.

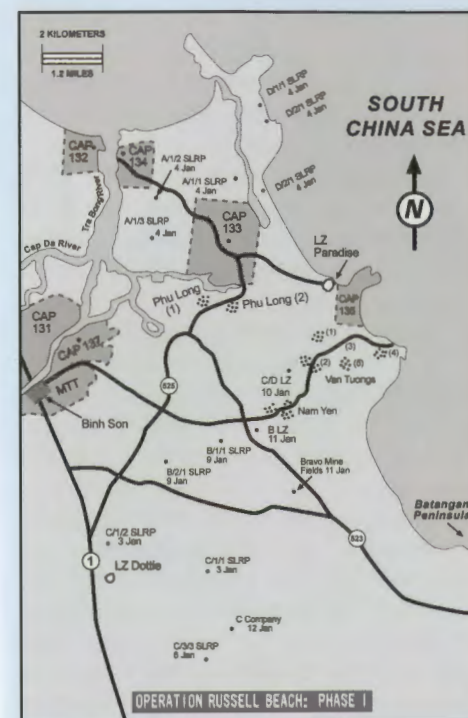
The second operational force would be "Operation Bold Mariner" which would bring in two Marine Battalion Landing Teams (BLT) from the sea. Further back-up to both operational forces would be three Army artillery batteries, one Army cavalry troop and one ARVN cavalry troop.

The combined task force objective was to "Find, fix and destroy local VC forces, capture and destroy the Vietcong infrastructure (VCI) and prepare for accelerated pacification on the coastal peninsula." The operation was divided into five phases: Phase I would last approximately 6 days and was designed to "herd" the VC, as best as possible, throughout the coastal area (from Chu Lai to Quang Ngai) to try to pressure as many of the enemy as possible into the area of the Binh Duc Cape (Batangan Peninsula). The Batangan was the most likely refuge for the guerillas as the 48th VC Battalions' defenses on the Batangan were considered to be strong.

The plan was plausible for two reasons: First, the 5th/46th Infantry, commanded by LTC Ronald Richardson, had developed "Hunter-Killer Teams", squad size teams who were heavily armed and could defend themselves against larger enemy elements. The employment of these teams throughout the coastal plains was a force multiplier, giving an infantry platoon much larger control of an assigned area. Second, there were numerous Marine Combined Action Platoons (CAP's) in the battalion's area of operation who knew their assigned areas quite well and could apply additional pressure on the Vietcong. Phase I began on January 3, 1969.

Phase II of Russell Beach called for a cordon to be established on the land-side of the targeted area to provide instructions for refugees to move to protected areas. Phase III, to last approximately 15 days, was to conduct a "detailed cordon operation" assisted by ARVN and armored cavalry units, sweeping through known hamlets which harbored guerillas, to place further pressure on the enemy to move to the Batangan. The cordon by US and ARVN cordon was to be "air tight", the beginning cordon to be approximately seven miles of soldiers, each in sight of one another, slowly moving east to the South China Sea, searching for tunnels, refugees and the enemy, gradually constricting the cordon as it approached the Binh Duc Cape.

After the Batangan was cleared of the enemy, and "civilians" were brought to refugee camps, Phase IV was to conduct extensive pacification programs and assist the government of South Vietnam in reestablishing control over the area. Finally, Phase V called for turning over the



Location of Hunter-Killer Teams (SLRPs) and CAP Teams, Phase I  
(Source: David Taylor)

entire coastal area to the ARVN as part as the gradual withdrawal of US forces.

Under Phase I, eleven hunter-killer teams, in conjunction with four marine CAP's began "shaking the bushes" in an aggressive way. The teams, although only numbering 10-12 soldiers, were trained to call in artillery and mortar fire, which enhanced their lethality. Alpha Company's teams at the northern end of the coastal peninsula (just below Chu Lai) were receiving enemy fire and witnessed enemy scattering out of their small-arms range. Delta Company's teams, also on the northern end of the peninsula by the South China Sea, had numerous skirmishes requiring helicopter gunship and artillery support. H Troop of the 17th Armored Cavalry was added to the mix to steam-roll over guerillas who wanted to hang in the area. While these hunter-killer teams covered the northern portion of the coastal peninsula, Charlie Company of the 5th/46th launched its hunter-killer teams just east of Highway 1 to move east towards the South China Sea and the Batangan Peninsula, to apply pressure from that direction. VC

suspects were found, including a nurse from the 48th VC battalion, enemy supplies including 1,000 pounds of corn; fleeing enemy were killed in small groups. For example, on January 10, Charlie Company's 3rd platoon, 3rd squad hunter-killer team spotted and killed three Vietcong dressed in camouflaged uniforms that wandered into their kill zone. LTC Richardson spent most of his days flying over the coastal peninsula in support of his hunter-killer teams. He brought with him Captain Wayne Secrest, his battalion surgeon. Richardson daily dusted off his men who were wounded by mines or enemy fire, his surgeon immediately working on the wounded on the bird while being whisked back to Chu Lai. Richardson ignored the admonishments he received from his brigade commander that "Battalion commanders are not dust off pilots" and he was highly respected by his men.

The battalion was hampered in these efforts for two reasons: First, the 5th/46th had to defend its base camp, LZ Gator, which required more troops because its headquarters personnel could not handle it alone; the battalion also had to help defend LZ Dottie, an artillery firebase. Second, additional tasking's came from the 198th brigade which had to be carried out. For

example, On January 6 a reinforced platoon from Alpha Company and one from Delta was sent far south into the 1st/52nd Battalions area to support their operations, seven miles west of Quang Ngai City. Despite depleted strength, Colonel Richardson of the 5th/46th soldiered on, doing the best he could to make Operation Russell Beach a success.

### D-Day Arrives

Just prior to "D-Day" (January 13) which would establish a strong corridor just outside the Batangan Peninsula, the battalion's soldiers were quickly lifted back to LZ Gator to get resupplied and reorganized for the sweep and maneuver mission. At first light on January 13, 1969, over nine hundred Marines of the 3rd/26th Battalion Landing Team (BLT), launched on helicopters from ships off shore to establish their part of the seven mile corridor, covering the northern sector of the "noose". The day was not ideal for the aviators, with a five hundred foot overcast ceiling and only one mile visibility, which held up the leathernecks from a rapid insertion.

Richardson and the 5th/46th faced the same difficulty. The Army's younger Warrant Officers (WO),



Armored personnel carrier on Operation Russell Beach hit by Vietcong rifle propelled grenade (RPG). (See the hole on the side of the track). (Photo: L.D. Loftis)





**Vietcong of the 48th VC Battalion who paid the ultimate price.**  
(Photo: L.D. Loftis)

were only "visual flight regulated" (VFR) trained while commissioned officers and senior WO's were rated for instruments. The WO's that were only VFR-rated could not fly in the soupy weather.

Richardson wanted his troops in on time. The commissioned officer pilots volunteered to be the lead birds for the assault which would allow the WO's to follow, as ducks in a row, keeping "visual" distance of the bird in front of them while flying under low and dense clouds. The WO's were up for it and the 5th/46th went in on time, the only battalion in the operation to do so.

The rainy monsoon season would make the operation miserable for all – on the ground and in the air – but the operation did see one key benefit. The heavy rains prevented the enemy's use of its tunnel systems as many were flooded.

The enemy was now caught in a noose and lashed out violently. Not only was the 48th VC battalion in the area, but the 38th Local Force VC Battalion, at much less strength than the 48th, was in the noose as well. VC Mortar fire, rifle-propelled grenade (RPG) fire and small arms fire throughout the first day plagued Charlie and Delta companies, especially Delta's soldiers, many of whom were pinned down by close-in enemy fire. The thick scrub brush interrupted with rain-swollen rice paddies made excellent defensive terrain for the Vietcong. The second platoon of H Troop, 17th Cav entered the fray supporting Charlie Company. One of its tracks hit a mine, wounding four from Charlie, four from H Troop and killing one cavalry soldier.

Two fire support bases (FSB) were established to provide dedicated fire support for the operation. One, FSB North, sat on the coast of the South China Sea, to support the Marines in the operation and the other, FSB South, supporting the Army and ARVN, was located center of sector behind the north/south line of the cordon.

ARVN Intelligence reports on January 15 revealed 150 VC of the 48th VC Battalion were on the Batangan as well as a smaller force of the 38th VC Local Force battalion, and a small element of the 21st NVA Regiment, which had infiltrated to help the VC, was stuck there as well. Each day the cordon tightened ever so slowly...LTC Richardson admonishing his company commanders, "We're in no hurry, take your time and do it right".

Some Vietcong caught in the vice, with no tunnels to escape to, were surrendering. One VC had a picture of a fellow Vietcong, a youth of nineteen. Bravo's troops recognized him as the barber who cut their hair on LZ Gator.

Bravo found VC who had been hiding in a tunnel for two days. They were coaxed out, with one soldier noting their skin looked like "shriveled prunes"

Delta and Alpha of the 4th/3rd battalion, on the southern sector of the corridor, found 3,500 pounds of rice hidden in caves and retrieved medical supplies and two VC hiding in a flooded tunnel. Some VC put up a fight and they were neutralized by artillery fire.

As the 5th/46th squeezed the cordon tighter towards My Lai (1) also known as "Pinkville", fighting intensified and about two hundred Vietnamese moved north out of the area only to be blocked by the Marines. The Marines suffered heavily in the operation by mines. They did not have the portable mine detectors the Army used and were forced to use bayonets at the ends of rifles to probe for mines, like their forefathers in WWII. The two Marine battalion commanders had no command and control helicopters to see what was in front of them. LTC Richardson lent his own bird on occasion so the Marines could see what they were facing.

As the Americans continued to close the noose, the flow of refugees grew- many of them women and children, undoubtedly relatives of the VC and some, were VC trying to escape.



**Phases II & III, Operation Russell Beach (Source: David Taylor)**

The Navy's offshore support from the USS New Jersey was problematic. They wanted to "play" in the operation as well. But their one ton-plus shells did not impact like artillery rounds, rather they careened to the ground, sliding across the soft soil before belching their explosive power across a wide area, obliterating everything in its path. To the extent possible, the 5th/46th tried to direct the New Jersey's fire to the unpopulated areas, even if they held no tactical value. No one wanted another war crime of 'civilians.'

By January 21, 1,834 Vietnamese had been detained from the cordon, some were VC surrendering and others, once questioned by the ARVN were found to be VC as well. One young Vietcong took Delta Company to a tunnel and retrieved ammo, rifles and training documents.

On January 27 Bravo, Charlie and Delta of the 5th/46th air assaulted onto the Batangan Peninsula for the final push. The soldiers discovered a mother lode of tunnels and underground bunkers, some cached with weapons and food supplies, some defended briefly by retreating Vietcong. But the real hardship for the battalion's soldiers was the scourge of mines, thousands of them, which blanketed the Batangan. This scourge would make the small cape by the South China Sea the most heavily mined area in the Vietnam War.

Early on the morning of January 29, Charlie of the 4th/3rd was hit by a mortar barrage and then a ground attack by sappers. Six sappers were killed. The next morning at 10:00AM the soldiers found a cache disguised as a grave which yielded two 30-caliber machineguns and a 60mm mortar with 200 rounds. At the same time the remaining marine battalion on the northern sector of the cordon tripped a booby-trapped 105mm howitzer round which killed four and wounded two.

The 5th/46th also found numerous small graves which were always "guarded" by mines. The graves revealed valuable stocks of arms and ammunition. One Vietcong, who surrendered, volunteered to lead troops

to a cache of weapons in a tunnel. He was fully aware a 105-mm Howitzer round had been planted near the tunnels entrance. The VC crawled into the tunnel and one US soldier detonated the mine...the impact so great that it opened up the roof of the tunnel to daylight. One soldier was killed and many wounded, including three soldiers who lost both legs. The VC who set up the trap was summarily executed.

More tunnels were found, including an underground dispensary with cots and medicine. Captured VC revealed that thirty Vietcong were waiting with command-detonated mines to exact as many casualties as possible. The soldiers lived in paralyzing fear. Each step they took was a roll of the dice...to see who won and who lost. Deltas company commander stepped on a Bouncing Betty mine, which failed to detonate. There was no interest in pacification...not on the Batangan.

On February 4, 1969 the soldiers reached the coast and the cordon was terminated. LZ Minuteman was established as a base of operations and one Rifle Company from the 5th/46th Battalion would have to rotate in and out of Minuteman to keep the 48th VC Battalion from reconstituting itself on the Batangan. The battalion's soldiers considered a tour on Minuteman to be a death sentence.

In the end, Operation Russell Beach accounted for 158 VC killed by body count with 104 captured as well as 257 members of the VC infrastructure detained and identified. There were 38 "Chieu Hoi's" - VC and NVA who surrendered. The operation uncovered 13 tons of rice, 15-1/2 tons of salt, 153 mines, grenades and mortar rounds. Over 12,000 "civilians" were moved from the cordoned area to refugee camps to deny any remaining guerillas support from the peasants. The friendly cost was high with 31 American soldiers killed and 177 wounded. The marines suffered 25 killed and 77 wounded.

Some of the 48th Vietcong were able to slip through the cordon on small rafts at night through several rivers in the area or down the coast in small circular rafts, despite patrolling by swift boats. The 48th VC Battalion would continue to live, with replacements infiltrated from the mountains...but by late 1970, much of the large coastal plain from Chu Lai to the My Lai hamlets was bulldozed into submission, with many hills and tunnel areas that gave respite to the guerillas, completely eliminated. But when the North Vietnamese invaded the south once and for all in 1975, there were members of the 48th Vietcong Battalion waiting to greet them.



**Americal soldier examining captured Vietcong, Operation Russell Beach (Photo: L.D. Loftis)**



## Through My Eyes: A Story Of Hope

By Bob G. Witworth (c) 2012 - Third Of A Series

### Chapter 4 First Day In The Field

Fear is a strange thing and often comes with the unknown. It can come out of nowhere and set in on you like hot, sticky tar. No matter what you do, it won't leave.

That happened to me as soon as we stepped outside the perimeter fence of LZ Bronco on our first in-country patrol looking for any sign of the enemy. I couldn't shake the fear and decided I would just have to wait it out—there was no other choice. I wondered if I was the only one who felt it so strongly.

We had been at Bronco for about a week when our company was ordered to head out. We packed full rucksacks and formed a line to head through the perimeter fence eastward toward the sea. We had all been issued our basic gear. Our rucksacks held everything considered necessary to survive.

We each had a poncho that we could wear in the rain. If we found a couple of long sticks, we could snap two ponchos together and make a small shelter. We had a poncho liner, which was a lightweight blanket that dried quickly, and a rugged one-man air mattress. When it rained at night, it could keep us out of the water and mud and help make the ground more even.

Personal stuff, like a toothbrush, shaver, comb, towel, and soap, was also included. Our meals consisted mainly of C-rations (awful canned food), and we sometimes needed to carry three days' worth. The Army made an effort to send us a hot meal whenever they could get a chopper to us, but those meals were sporadic.

We packed a trip flare and a Claymore anti-personnel mine with a detonator, which were staples to use on ambushes or to help protect our perimeter. We carried a



In-country memorial service for fallen soldiers

small folding shovel called a trenching tool. This either went into the rucksack or hooked to our pistol belt along with two single-quart canteens of water and a pouch containing a bandage.

A soldier in each platoon was designated as the radiotelephone operator (RTO) and would carry our communications radio, which weighed 25 pounds, besides his own gear. Two soldiers each carried a 23-pound M60 machine gun and 200 rounds of 7.62mm ammo. An M16 was standard issue with 180 rounds of 5.56mm ammo. Because I was in the machine-gun squad, when it was my turn to carry the M60, I added a .45 caliber pistol in a holster to my belt for backup. Most of us carried extra ammo as well as two to four hand grenades. I really liked grenades; they weren't precision weapons—you only had to get 'em close.

We carried gas masks and wore a heavy flack-vest that would stop small shrapnel, but not a bullet. Because of the heat and extra weight, it didn't take long for most of us to get rid of our vests. Last, we each wore a metal helmet. In total, we carried 70 to 80 pounds or more. When we went on short patrols or ambushes, we didn't take our rucksacks, but most of the time we carried them. We lived out of those packs.

I had grown up in farm country and worked in the fields some, but had never seen a rice paddy until I arrived in Vietnam. At this time of year they were just fields covered with water. Here I was on our first patrol, walking on a narrow dirt dike that separated the paddies. It had been drilled into us that the enemy would booby-trap these dikes.

*Why were we walking on them?*

It didn't make a whole lot of sense. Besides that, we were in the open and I kept thinking we were great targets if bullets started flying our way, since we didn't have any cover. All we would be able to do was splat down in the muddy water. But maybe someone leading us across these wide-open fields knew something I didn't.

We stayed strung out in one long line until we broke into our individual platoons to patrol villages as well as the paddies. Everything went fine. We encountered no snipers or booby traps. It took us until evening to reach the beach.

The endless stretch of white sand and beautiful blue water came as a surprise. It reminded me of the Southern California coastline. The air smelled salty and gulls squalled and dipped in a bit of a breeze coming off the water. It looked like a tropical vacation destination—all it needed were thatched huts and bathing beauties.

We were given our nighttime positions where we dug foxholes in the sand. We sat with our backs to the water. Out in front of us about 300 yards was a tree line and brush. We were to watch the tree line for the enemy that night. Since we were all new to this and pretty nervous, we didn't know what to expect. We kept seeing little lights blinking in the dark and weren't sure what they were.

*What if they were the enemy smoking cigarettes?*

Wanting to be safe rather than sorry, we fired at the



Image from book cover

little lights until dawn. It rained on us off and on throughout the night and filled our foxholes with water. In the morning, I was soaking wet and had sand in every crevice of my body. Man, oh man, was I miserable!

It turned out that the little lights we had seen were just fireflies. We had fired so much ammo that word came down we couldn't shoot the next night without permission. In one of our platoons just down the beach however, things had gone very poorly that first night.

Their platoon had set up a forward position in front of their perimeter. A soldier was sent out to man that position and tied a string to his hand to keep him in touch with the guard position behind him. Sometime during the night he fell asleep and the string came off his hand. Contact was lost. Later he stood up without identifying himself and nervous soldiers at the guard position took him for the enemy and fired, killing him. Surely this was a bad start.

### Chapter 5 All-Night Ambush

Being on an ambush in the middle of the night can be very frightening. When you're new at it, there is a lot to worry about.

*Did the VC see you go into your position? Will everyone be quiet? Will they stay awake? What about snakes? What if too many VC come down the trail?*

Orders had come down from battalion headquarters that ambushes had to be set up nightly while we were in the field. At dusk, every platoon sent out a squad to set up an all-night ambush. Six to eight soldiers heavily armed with machine guns, grenades, rockets, and Claymore mines went to a predetermined location after dark to hide along a path and wait. If the enemy came along, we set off the ambush.

We were looking for the Viet Cong who worked the more populated areas and villages where we were operating. They ran in small groups and seemed to act sporadically. They would often wait until dark, come out of hiding, and go into the small villages. We didn't know exactly why; perhaps they were visiting their wives. We knew that they would also use the cover of darkness as a time to force the villagers to replenish their supplies.

The first time I was chosen to go on an ambush, I went with six other

soldiers from Second Platoon. We picked a site 25 feet away from a trail that led out of one of the villages. For our cover, we had short piles of cut sugarcane in front of us, and seven-foot high cane stalks growing behind us, which made it difficult for us to be seen. Frank, the lumberjack from Seattle, was on my left. Four or five other guys were strung out to my right.

I couldn't see very far because it was dark. There were always plenty of mosquitoes buzzing around, looking for their chance to feed on us and leave itchy bumps all over if we weren't smeared with insect repellent. We had been lying and watching most of the night and my eyes burned from making myself stay awake. Ambushes often were long, scary hours of waiting with nothing to do but watch, listen, and think about how we had ended up here. It was easy to be restless, but dangerous if we were noisy.

Around 0400 hours we heard noises.

"There they are," someone to my right whispered.

Even though I couldn't see much, I pulled the pins and threw my hand grenades. After the blast of my last grenade I raised up to fire my M16.

**KABOOM!**

A horrendous explosion went off right in front of me, forcing my head back. Shrapnel ripped into the small cane pile I was behind and pieces of metal screamed past my head, cutting both sides of my face as it crashed into the tall cane behind me.

*Dang!*

I wasn't sure where that had come from. The sides of my face were burning from the cuts and I could feel blood on my cheeks.

*Wow! That was too close!*

I lay back down behind the pile of cane. My body must have kicked in so much adrenalin that I felt no fear.

"Hey, Frank!" I called out. "Throw those grenades a little farther!"

I doubted Frank had thrown his grenade short, but it was worth mentioning.

"Oh, sure Bob," Frank replied. "Sorry about that."



In my mind's eye I could see that little grin on his face. To this day, he and I still chuckle about my initiation to the effects of a juggernaut.

At the time though, I groggily sat up and fired my M16 blindly into the darkness out in front of our position along with everyone else. Then it was quiet. This whole thing happened in mere seconds. I jammed a full clip into my M16, listened, and waited. It was very important to be still and quiet. Our position had been briefly exposed and we needed to stay there until dawn.

At first light we carefully looked over the surrounding area. We couldn't find any bodies. We moved out and headed back to our platoon. When we got there, a medic looked at my cuts and cleaned them up. Word got around that I had some small wounds.

Gramps, my other good buddy, had to get in his two cents' worth of Nevada cowboy complaints.

"What are yuh trying to do, Whitworth, get yer head blowed off? You fruitcake! Don't yuh know you're supposed to duck after you throw those gol-durn things?"

"Wipe that big smile off your face, Gramps," I replied.

"You just wanna be the first guy in the company to get a Purple Heart," he muttered as he walked off.

At the time I hardly knew what a Purple Heart was; I was just very thankful that the shrapnel hadn't done worse damage.

All the platoons joined together again and we headed back to LZ Bronco.

## Chapter 6

### This Ain't No Movie

As soon as we got to LZ Bronco, I developed a high fever and was admitted to the hospital. Outside the entrance was a large asphalt pad where Huey helicopters landed and took off. I passed a sandbagged bunker just before I walked through the door. The ward was long and narrow, with beds lined on each side beginning at the door, and a walkway down the middle. Behind the beds on the left was an identical

ward, separated by a wooden wall three or four feet tall. From the top of this short wall to the ceiling was a bug screen made of metal. In that ward were sick or hurt Vietnamese.

My bed was the fourth from the door. In the bed next to mine was a guy I knew as Romeo. He had been our captain's driver when we trained in Hawaii. Romeo had an IV in his left arm that was running into his vein too quickly. This had caused his arm to swell twice the size it should have been and it looked painful. We both felt lousy so there wasn't much conversation.

By the second or third day my fever wasn't going away and the medics still had no idea what was causing it. After resting all day, Romeo and I fell asleep. I have no idea what time it was, but sometime in the middle of the night we were awakened by loud explosions getting closer and louder. The lights had gone out and it was pitch black. Jarred awake by the blasts, we rolled out of our beds and onto the floor.

One of the first things a combat soldier learns is that when you realize hostile fire is coming your way, the safest place to be is as close to the ground as possible. Once there, you can decide what to do next. This becomes second nature and it can take 20 or 30 years to get over it, if ever. We quickly realized that mortars were being "walked" into the hospital, each one getting closer by the second.

Romeo was having trouble moving his IV pole. As I jumped up off the floor, he grabbed the pole and began to run with me down the walkway with the IV jar swinging on its hook. As we ran, the mortars were coming through the tin roof behind us, exploding and blowing the roof and bug screens apart. Shrapnel was flying everywhere with pieces whizzing past us and hitting almost everything. It was unbelievable! It was like what I had seen in the movies. But this wasn't a movie, or even a bad dream. It was real!

Here we were, trying to outrun the incoming mortars, moving as fast as we could in our hospital pajamas, having no idea what else to do but run, IV and all. I heard gunfire outside on the perimeter.

*What if Charlie makes it through the barbed wire? What if they make it past the bunker line inside our defenses?*

This was no time to be without a weapon. It was truly one of those times when I wondered if I was in over my head. I didn't know what to do. It was easy to visualize myself splattered across the ward in pieces of bloody pale blue hospital pajamas. I never dreamed I might die like that. We just needed a hole we could drop into so we wouldn't be blown to kingdom come.

As we ran through the hospital in the dark, we came to an intersection between the wards and plowed full speed into a big three-foot diameter fan. It had been set up on a pole in the center of the intersection to blow down the walkway. The fan crashed onto the floor and we tumbled over it. The mortars, which had continued falling past us, suddenly stopped.

Somehow Romeo got back up without losing his IV. I got up too. The explosions started again and were heading back in our direction! We couldn't quit now! We hardly knew what to do, so we turned around and ran for our lives. We dashed back through the ward and outside into the sand-bagged bunker. The last mortars fell too close for comfort as we dove through the door. Now we waited with a few others in the safety of our shelter. We could hear gunfire, slowly dying down, coming from the outside bunker line near the perimeter. Soon it was all over. Romeo and I had made it through without a scratch.

I wondered what damage had been done and who had been hurt, so I left the bunker and turned down a passageway between two buildings. Even though it was dark I could see a soldier about my age sprawled out on the dirt walkway. He had been hit during the attack and although there were no gaping wounds or blood, he was dead. Another soldier showed up and went for a stretcher.

While he was gone I realized that this could have been me. I just stood there

staring. When the soldier returned with the stretcher, we lifted the body onto it and carried it inside, leaving the dead soldier in the ward. This was the first time I had ever picked up a dead person. It surprised me. There was no feeling of life in him. No matter how we handled him, he never moved, not even a breath. It was so final.

I headed back to my bed. When I got there, dim lights were on and I could see the bug screen across from my bed had been blown full of holes and was shredded. Parts of the metal roof had been blown off and blood was spattered all around. I could hear crying and moaning coming from up and down the Vietnamese ward.

The reality of war was sinking in. I felt numb.

In the morning I wanted to leave. I still wasn't doing that well, but they said they'd let me go anyway. The hospital, with Hueys parked so close, seemed like too big a target to me. I wanted to be back with my buddies. Heck, what had happened on my first ambush seemed like nothing compared to last night, and I didn't want to be in this type of place without a weapon. I had grown up around guns.

I went on my first hunt when I was about three. My grandma lived outside of town and often watched my two older brothers and me. When our uncles came around they liked to go rabbit hunting, so to give Grandma a break, they would take us with them. We would leave the house and walk out into the desert. I remember reaching up to hold my Uncle Bill's finger as we walked along. When the rabbits jumped out of the bushes, my uncles would shoot at the running targets. That was big stuff for a little guy like me. As I'd grown older, I hunted rabbits a lot, mainly because there wasn't much else to do in our little town.

This was no rabbit hunt. I was learning fast, and knew I had no guarantee I would make it through the next 11 months. I left the hospital and soon found my platoon along the bunker line next to the base perimeter.

"How'd it go last night?" I asked Jerry, my Chicago-raised machine-gun crew leader.

"There was shooting along the bunker line during the mortar attack, but no real problems," he replied.

I didn't say anything about what I had been through because I didn't know how to explain what I'd seen or how it felt.

It was the first of several mortar attacks I experienced. There was no fighting back. No tough-guy stuff. It was a very helpless feeling to realize the only thing you could do is not be there. Running or hiding helped, and the quicker you got moving the better. If you were caught too close to the falling mortars, you wouldn't have time to realize that you were no more.

The night before was another eye-opener. Death literally dropped out of the sky with no warning, turning what I had thought would be a safe night's sleep into a waking nightmare. I had a churning feeling in my belly that the days ahead may turn into something I never expected.

Wearing hospital pajamas still gives me the urge to run and hide.

## Chapter 7

### Lost

When you walked through elephant grass, you were constantly surrounded by the loud, high-pitched noise of thousands of cicada bugs. The sound was everywhere, and unsettling as it went on all day. When we were on patrol, everybody in the platoon had to take his turn walking "point."

The assignment was made in the morning before we started.

The point man walked at the head of the patrol with the next man following about 20 to 40 yards behind him. From there, each man kept a distance of three to five yards between them. Sometimes there would be a flank man on the point man's right or left, if conditions allowed. The point man periodically made

eye contact with the man behind him, so if he spotted trouble he could signal back to let the platoon know. If he tripped a booby trap, the others would be far enough behind to miss the blast. If he walked into the enemy while in brush or high grass, they might think he was the only one, and the shooting would start with just him, warning the others behind to take cover.

No matter where we were, the point man had to keep his eyes peeled for everything. It was a dangerous and nerve-racking job that was nearly impossible when we were in elephant grass that was nine to ten feet high. The man on point had to decide whether to chop his way through with a machete or walk on a path made by someone else. It was slow going and exhausting to chop through the grass in the heat, but using someone else's path often proved very dangerous.

When we were sent out into the field like this, our day typically started by getting up at dawn to a C-ration breakfast.

*Yummy!*

There was a sure-fire way to have myself a hot breakfast. I always carried an extra Claymore mine. I would break it apart, take out the pound of C-4 plastique and dump the case. A marble-sized little ball of the explosive burned hot and could easily be lit—even in



Base camp perimeter bunker



the rain. This worked great for heating up C-ration cans. The remaining plastique went into one of the outside pockets on my rucksack for later use.

Most mornings I had instant coffee, canned eggs with chopped ham, and some B-3 cookies with a chocolate or vanilla center. Those cookies lasted forever. They didn't deteriorate or melt in the sun. It wasn't long before my sweet tooth and I were ready to trade or argue to get those awful cookies.

After breakfast was over, we were ordered to get ready to move out. Jerry informed me that it was my turn to walk point. Frank, with a wad of chewing tobacco in his lower lip, was sitting next to a bush nearby, looking at me with that silly little grin on his face.

"Hmm, are you sure? I think it's Frank's turn," I said, stalling a little and hoping to make Frank whine.

At 0700 hours I started through the elephant grass at the head of the platoon. The area was flat with a lot of trails running through it. To my left there were hills slowly rising up. The tall grass became thinner in that direction. Lt. John, who was assigned to Second Platoon when we arrived in Vietnam, had sent Joe, someone I barely knew, to walk on my left flank maybe 25 yards away. Walking down a trail through the tall, dense grass, I was able to keep Joe in and out of my sight. The bozo from the latrine was back about 30 yards behind me. He was my connection to the platoon so I frequently looked back at him.

The lieutenant usually called for a break about two hours into our patrol, and even though we'd been hard at it for at least that long, Bozo hadn't signaled any word from the platoon. It was getting hotter by the hour. He was the only person I could see behind me, which was what I expected. Every now and then I caught a glimpse of Joe. I knew he was depending on me to stay in touch with the rest of the platoon—and with good reason.

Two days earlier one of the guys in our battalion had become separated from his platoon while on patrol and got lost. His body was found on a bridge the next morning—covered with cigarette burns and a note stuck to him saying "G.I. GO HOME."

I kept following the trail farther into the tall grass, being as careful as I could. I just hoped Bozo was paying attention behind me because I had to stay alert to the trail. I listened for sounds and looked for anything out of place: trip wires, freshly moved earth, movement, or some sign that would give me a hint of danger—anything that appeared out of the ordinary.

After another hour I stopped and motioned for Joe to come over. When Bozo caught up with us, and no one else was following him, I couldn't believe it.

"Where is the rest of the platoon?" I asked.

He just looked at me.

"Oh, man, they stop a long time ago. I tol' 'em I wanna go wi' chew."

His words slammed into me like a charging water buffalo.

I looked over at Joe and could see the anger in his eyes. He knew just what that meant. We were lost. We didn't have a map or a radio, and I have always had a bad sense of direction. We could only guess how long ago the platoon had stopped. Being in the elephant grass was like being in a massive maze. The trails broke off in all directions.

I knew what Joe was thinking because I was thinking it too. This guy was an idiot. Why not shoot this bozo right here and now or just beat the living daylights out of him? But, if we did that, we could give away our location to "unfriendlylies." Bozo didn't even know we were lost, and dealing with him would just create more problems. Forget him.

With Joe right behind me, I took off back down the trail, only guessing which way to turn. The grass was so tall I couldn't see up and over it. Frequently we would come to a fork in the trail, and I would have to make a wild guess which way to go. We would hurry a ways down that path and come to another fork. By 1100 hours, I was sure we were lost.

Being lost pretty much terrified me. I had decided I would never be

captured, no matter what. I was of the opinion that a low-level grunt like me becoming a prisoner would only result in a slow, torturous death at the enemy's hand. I wasn't ready now, and maybe never would be, to have my commitment tested, which drove me to quickly find our platoon. This only increased the danger because I gave no caution to booby traps or other hazards in my intensified pace. I knew that if we were still lost come dark, things would get much worse. Joe stayed right on my heels and Bozo dragged along behind us.

Finally, five panic-filled hours later, we broke into a clearing and spotted our men. We hadn't stopped at all the entire time. Our shirts were soaked with sweat, and we were exhausted from the pace we had kept in the blistering heat.

The lieutenant was relieved to see us but was instantly furious. He headed straight at me yelling about my heritage, saying I didn't have a legitimate father and my mother had been a bad woman. He also told me I was the part of the body where poop came out, as well as many other things. I held back from telling him that I liked him too. I suspected he wouldn't have understood. I was just elated to be back with the platoon, even if it meant I had to listen to him chewing on me.

I actually thought Bozo should have gotten the reaming and I should have received a medal for finding our way back, but for some reason he didn't give a hoot about Bozo. Lt. John wasn't the only one who was upset. All the rest of the guys were mad too because they had been searching for us the whole scorching day. I walked over to the gun crew and Frank looked at me with that little grin on his face. It was a great thing to see, but he was the only one smiling.

Years later, when my son was learning to talk and I'd be leaving the house, he would look up at me and say, "Daddy, I wanna go with you!" That innocent voice would trigger the memory of Bozo's words, and they would echo through my mind.

[To be continued]

## A Saint Christopher Medal

By Barry Schermerhorn

I have a St. Christopher medal that was given to me by a Catholic priest after I went into the jungle in Vietnam. It was September 1970 and he'd come out to say Mass for the company. I suppose it's made of pot metal as the corners have worn down with age, but I wouldn't consider selling it even if it was valuable.

The medal is formed in the shape of a cross. On one side is a raised relief of St. Christopher carrying a small boy on his back across a stream and it bears the inscription, "Saint Christopher Protect Us." On the other side is Jesus as a boy with Mary and Joseph. It says, Jesus, Mary and Joseph pray for us."

Saint Christopher is the patron saint of travelers. I realize in this day and age that religion and religious symbols are taking a back seat in a secular world, but many of us still like to be reminded of our roots as youngsters and the world we were brought up in the 1950s and 60s. This St. Christopher's medal does that for me. Plus it has a deeper meaning about where I was when I received it and what was in store for me in the year to come.

I wore that St. Christopher's medal each and every day while I was in Vietnam, including the day my outfit was caught in an ambush and I was wounded. On that day I had some ammo clips strapped around my waist and I was spared a more serious wound as a result.

After my time in the service, I hung the St. Christopher's medal over the rearview mirror in my cars that I owned over the years. I always remembered to take it down when I traded autos—except that one time.

I was working at Glacier National Park as a seasonal maintenance worker. One day I decided to get a new pickup truck and made the deal. I was excited as I drove off the lot. It was not until the next day while at work that I realized I'd left the St. Christopher's medal hanging on the rearview mirror of the vehicle that I'd traded in. I remember thinking I could easily reclaim it, but the more I thought about that medal not being in my possession, the more I became panicky. I started telling a coworker about leaving it and I broke down and started crying. I was so grief stricken that I had to go home as I could not concentrate on the work at hand, which was using power tools and building picnic tables.

When I arrived home I called the dealership and anxiously asked about the medal. To my relief he said he had it and it was safe in his desk. I'm sure I must have sounded as if I was a bit unhinged as I explained to him where I'd gotten the medal and then broke

down again. After hanging up the phone, I lay down on my bed and had a good cry. I was overwhelmed. My beloved medal was safe!

I regained my composure and went and picked up my medal from the salesman. In the course of our dealings, he noted that I had veterans' plates on my car and I told him I was a Vietnam Veteran. He said his son was— or had been— in Iraq and fully understood about such things.

Sometime later, I looked over the St. Christopher's medal and noticed the eyelet where the chain attached was almost worn through. I took it to a local jewelry store and explained the significance of the medal. He said he could fix it and I soon left with my venerable talisman hanging around my neck. I told myself I would never be without it again. I would wear it to the end. But after a few weeks of wearing it, I decided that was not a good idea either. The new repaired eyelet could fail and I could lose the medal. So I took it off and put it with my other medals from Vietnam.

I think that the crying jag I had was a form of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I have read that there are two types of PTSD, one that is severe and never goes away and a milder type in which a person suffers bouts and then recovers. Both just need triggers to set it off. I suppose the perceived loss of my St. Christopher's medal was a trigger for me and I likely suffer from the milder form. I have read of Vietnam Veterans who continue to suffer greatly from PTSD after all these years. Many times the bouts come at night when a lot of attacks and firefight took place. I have read of veterans who have treated their family members very badly and cannot explain their behavior. As I age and have time to think about it, I suppose I will have more bouts with what has become a common experience among those who lived through such challenging times. I hope I am wrong.

## † St. Christopher – Christ Bearer †

One day, a child approached St. Christopher by the river and asked to be helped across. St. Christopher obliged. However, as he entered midstream, the river rose and the child's weight grew and became extremely heavy. It was only by great exertion that St. Christopher safely delivered the child to the other side.

When St. Christopher asked the child why he was so heavy, the child explained that He was the Christ and when St. Christopher carried Him, he also carried the weight of the whole world on his shoulders. The child then vanished.



# 164th Inf. Regt. Recalls WWII Service

By Richard Weist

Charlie Morton graduated from high school in Indiana in the spring of 1943. He expected to be drafted with most of his high school friends but the notice didn't come. He put in a query to the draft board but got no answer. He finally went to the board in person and was told he was at the bottom of the list for induction, as his draft classification was II-C, "deferred in agriculture".

He eventually found out that a cousin who had some influence with the draft board was trying to hold him back so as to have help with the combining! The agricultural excuse was of course perfectly plausible in a farming community, but Charlie the patriot wasn't having any of this and got this classification changed to I-A. He was duly inducted and ended up in Texas for basic training.

It was noticed that he had done well in typing class in high school so he got classified as a Clerk/Typist slated for the European theater. In the mysterious ways of the army, this got changed to the Pacific and Charlie headed for Fort Ord. He thought he might see Hawaii in the next leg but the plane turned south and he ended up in a convoy to Cebu and in E Company of the 2nd Battalion of the 164th Infantry Regiment.

When the new arrivals were getting rifles from one truck and ammo from another, Charlie mentioned his Clerk/Typist MOS and was greeted with gales of ironical



laughter and blue language. Charlie was told in no uncertain terms "Pick up a rifle, bud. We'll type it up when it's over."

Charlie got right into the thick of things. On his second day on Cebu he was on patrol in what he was told was the usual format of a tommy gun leading, BAR second, patrol leader third in line and then Charlie the rifleman. The BAR man was hit, and the platoon leader grabbed Charlie's rifle and ordered him to get the BAR. Charlie did, but told the platoon leader that he had never fired a BAR before. However, he became "a five-minute expert" in the weapon and came to love it because "it never failed".

In the way of so many army decisions that don't seem logical right off the bat, Charlie remained a BAR man and couldn't help but notice that as about the littlest guy in the platoon he ended up with the heaviest weapon. A lot of men were lost on these patrols but Charlie remained lucky. Casualties got worse when the unit went from Cebu to Negros. In any case, Charlie figured that the company, and presumably the whole battalion if not the regiment, was pretty thin on the ground, probably not more than half strength.

Philippine guerilla leaders had come to Cebu to talk to the guys heading to Negros. These guerillas estimated 500 or so Japanese in the immediate area of the landing but guided the landing parties to beaches which were unopposed. Charlie and five or six other troops were sent to follow a guerilla leader around and behind the town of Dumaguete via obscure and winding mountain trails in order to scout out Japanese strength. It was a long and difficult trek and the squad got seen by the enemy and came under fire. They withdrew a bit and bided their time and eventually were able to ambush some Japanese and get virtually all of them.

As the actions later developed, it was not so easy. The Japanese would attack or attempt to infiltrate at night, and the Americans would hunt the Japanese during the day. But generally, as Terry Shoptaugh in his book "They Were Ready" tells powerfully in the last pages, the infantry fight on Negros in May-June of 1945 was a brutal and thankless slog in bad terrain with heavy losses.

Thinking back, Charlie said most of the guys he knew got killed. There were three older guys from North Dakota, whose names Charlie can't recall, who had been with the regiment since New Caledonia. One had been wounded multiple times. The 164th was relieved by airborne units and went back to Cebu. Charlie, like many fellow soldiers, had contracted malaria quite badly. It began to appear more when the war was over, with decreasing severity, but nonetheless continued to bother him for some years, even upsetting his college studies in the late 1940's.

Back on Cebu, the first sergeant and the company clerk remembered Charlie's original MOS and for more than a month set him to composing letters of condolence to families of those killed in action. He made it a matter of honor never to write two letters exactly alike, though no one would know but he himself, thinking this somehow

restored a little bit of individuality to the faceless dead. This work with its constant reminders of sadness bothered him less than he first thought it might.

The full emotional impact of the war came later when he was home. His unit was prepping for the invasion of Japan, combat-ready aboard ship, when word of the atom bomb came. He had had to trade in his favored BAR for typewriter and then an M1.

Charlie got to Japan in the summer of 1945 and happened to be on a ship right behind the USS Missouri when the Japanese surrender was signed. He saw the ruins of Japan from US bombing, with smoke and even some small fires still visible in Tokyo and Yokohama. Not having enough points for the rotation to stateside system to help him much immediately (not married, not in a war zone all that long), he had to wait his turn. He didn't really have much to do except occasional KP, so he got to reading an economics book which made a strong case for a bright young man's going into business or to college, as post-war agricultural prosperity wouldn't last. This stuck in his mind.

When Charlie finally was discharged in Japan as a buck sergeant in late 1946 and got home to Indiana, he nonetheless still had love of farming in his blood. Finding farms easy to rent, he found a good one and farmed for two years on some of the best farmland in the U.S. in an era of high commodity prices (corn \$2.23 a bushel, sold right out of the field). He wanted to keep farming; but he had made a vow to himself, also overheard by his friends and half the county, that he would farm for only two years and then go to college. Peals of raucous laughter from the old farmers greeted this declaration, who scoffed at the notion that good farmer Charlie would give it up for college. So he felt trapped by his own public undertaking, even though he would rather have kept farming.

Off Charlie went to Indiana's pride, Purdue University, to study Agricultural Economics. He graduated in 1952 on a Sunday, got married to his dear Isabel the following Tuesday and watched her graduate the next Sunday. After a brief spell as a county agent, he went on to a very successful career in farm management for an agribusiness firm, at one time running over 40 farms. He retired in 1995 at age 70, after what he calls a good life: happy marriage, three successful children, no great problems in the longer perspective.

All this said, our conversation nonetheless did cause Charlie to think back and speak frankly on the impact of war and remembrance on his life. His nerves were shot after the war. He had lost a lot of weight, falling to 100 lbs., and his general health wasn't the greatest. If he started to think much about combat, it ruined his night's sleep. Suppressing these thoughts could be hard. He wasn't made to shoot at people.

He wanted to put it behind him if he could find a way. The army offered him some modest disability rating, but he said no, as he wasn't owed anything by his country. They pressured him, stating that if he didn't take at least 10%, he could never later claim more if something got worse. But after a year of this, Charlie refused to take

the annual physical and he was dropped. In those days, because of the absence of counselors and perhaps the prevalence of simpler notions of the lingering effect of post-combat stress, hard work was often seen, and surely so by Charlie, as the best antidote. He threw himself into this solution, which naturally also contributed to his success in college and career. As was the case with many vets, Charlie's wife and kids knew he didn't like to talk about the war. They respected his obvious reluctance.

However, a couple of years into his 70s, when Charlie was contentedly retired and more relaxed, one of his sons did raise some questions about the war. Charlie, a bit to his own surprise, found it easier to respond. More comfortable open discussion followed, and this led eventually to a videotape for the family where Charlie talked about the war. While searching the web one day several years ago on a military-related subject which actually had nothing to do with WWII, Charlie stumbled upon the existence of the Americal Division Association, joined, and eventually got their magazine.

Charlie, 93+, and his wife Isabel currently reside in a retirement community. He was named Veteran of the Month in Kosciusko County, Indiana in July 2015.

About the author: Richard (Dick) Wiest from Washington State is an ADVA member, as was his late father, Col. Albert F. Wiest, INF, a Heavy Weapons Company commander on Guadalcanal from the day of initial landing to reinforce the Marines on 13 October 1942. Col. Wiest died at age 98 in 2012.





**Vietnam Photo Album of  
COL Edwin Kennedy**

The photos on these two pages were taken by Colonel Edwin L. Kennedy. Kennedy was commander of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade in 1969-70. He served briefly in the U.S. Navy at the end of World War II and left the Navy to enter the West Point Military Academy Class of 1950. He subsequently served in the Korean War and the Vietnam War and retired with 30 years service as a brigadier general. He passed away in 2017.

Photos were provided by his son Ed Kennedy, also a retired Army officer. Any additional description of the scenes in the photos, particularly the exact locations, will be appreciated. — Editor



**COL Kennedy with CWO Jim Walters and C and C UH-1 helicopter**



**Bob Hope show, Chu Lai, December 1969**



**Leaving Kham Duc August 1970**



**196 LIB command post, Hawk Hill**



**Chu Lai October 1969**



**Hawk Hill August 1970**



**Kham Duc July 1970**



**Kham Duc July 1970**



**Kham Duc July 1970**



**Sneaky Pete Skyraider shot down at Kham Duc on 12 May 1968**

**New Book Describes 1968 Battle  
at Kham Duc**

Bait: The Battle of Kham Duc Special Forces Camp, by James D. McLeroy and Gregory W. Sanders, went on sale in November 2018. It describes the bitter battle that occurred on May 10-12, 1968 involving U.S. Special Forces and units of the Americal Division against the Peoples Army of Vietnam (PAVN) 2nd Division. The Special Forces camp at Kham Duc was just inside the border of South Vietnam and approximately due west of Tam Ky. When the enemy's plans to attack Kham Duc were realized the camp was reinforced by elements of 1/46 Infantry and 2/1 Infantry. Due to the intensity and duration of the ensuing attack General Westmoreland ordered the camp evacuated. — Editor



Delta Company 1/20 Holds 2018 Reunion  
By Cliff Tholen

Veterans, family, and friends of Delta Co., 1/20th Infantry Battalion began gathering at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Bowling Green, Kentucky on Wednesday, October 3rd. A hospitality room and registration table was available. Commemorative shirts prepared by Sherry Barger were given to veterans and their wives at registration.

Thursday October 4th was a warm and clear day, perfect for the planned events. The day started with a guided tour of the National Corvette Museum which has been recently renovated after the disastrous collapse of the floor into an underlying limestone cavern several years ago. The restoration is complete and a graphic view of the original chasm has been added to the many displays. Tour guides shared their insights into the many displays of classic Corvettes and other significant automobiles.

Following the tour, the veterans and their guests met for a catered lunch at the museum. After the lunch there were two presentations. One of the talks discussed the National Corvette Museum Motorsports Park. MS Taylor Howard presented a description of the facility and the layout of the track. Following the NCM Motorsports talk, a presentation was given by Andy Pilgrim of the Traffic Education Safety Foundation.

After the lunch and presentations, the recently expanded NCM Motorsports Park was opened to attendees and their guests. The Eastern Ohio Region of the National Council of Corvette Clubs was having an event there and graciously offered to give attendees a ride in their Corvettes as they drove around the 2 mile, 13 turn circuit.

On Friday, the Delta Company vets were favored by another warm and sunny day. This was great weather for a trip to the outdoor Aviation Heritage Park in Bowling Green. This airpark has multiple military aircraft from several eras including Korea, Vietnam, and the 1986 Libyan raid. There was also a T-38 that was used as a NASA training aircraft. All of the aircraft in the park have some relationship to Kentucky. At three of the aircraft there were pilots who had flown them in combat. A UH1B "Huey" pilot, Charles Browning, related his experiences as a pilot in Vietnam. Another Vietnam veteran/pilot, Retired Brigadier General Dan Cherry, not only flew the F4 Phantom on display, but the same plane was flown by his wingman when he shot down a MIG 21. This dogfight was featured on the Military History Channel program "Dogfights" in an episode titled "Hell over Hanoi". An interesting note is that BGN Cherry later met the MIG pilot he shot down and they have maintained a close friendship. A F111 fighter that participated in the 1986 raid on Libya was represented by one of the pilots in the raid, COL Arnie Franklin. He related details not only of the raid, but of the harrowing flight to and from the target which required 18 mid-air refuelings.

Following an afternoon to explore the Bowling Green, Kentucky area, the group met at the Holiday Inn for a plated dinner. After dinner we had a speech by Mr. Trung Trinh and his son. Mr. Trinh was a South Vietnamese soldier who was held as a POW for three years after the fall of Saigon. He escaped with his family on a wooden boat and was at sea for several weeks. He eventually made

his way to Bowling Green and had a successful career as the owner of an automotive repair shop. His son, a local pharmacist, also spoke to the group. They both expressed their gratitude for the service of American soldiers.

Saturday, October 6th was the day of our business meeting and auction. As is our custom, an auction was held to help raise funds for our next reunion. John Ewing again used his talents as an auctioneer to sell the many items brought by the attendees. After the auction, a discussion was held about the leadership cadre for the Delta Company veterans reunions. It was decided to retain the current group which includes Wendell Strode as President, Connie Leslie as Treasurer, Sherry Barger as Secretary, and Cliff Tholen as Adjutant.

Following the dinner that evening there was a program that featured the raffle of a custom made knife by Marshall Hall, the son of Elmer Hall, one of the Delta Company veterans. This knife is a work of art and is presented in a special case that commemorates our company's Americal Division heritage. The drawing was done by the widow of Erskine "Top" Wade. The lucky winner was Rodney Doss. Several people were recognized including Sherry Barger for her many contributions to Delta Company, and Marshall Hall for his support by making the beautiful knives. A Delta Company Challenge Coin was given to Marshall Hall as well as one of our members, George Pepper. A memorial service for our Vietnam losses and those who have passed on subsequent to Vietnam was held by Cliff Barger and Cliff Tholen. As each name was read, a bell was chimed in remembrance. Following the dinner a video was presented by Jesse Lewis that showed a reunion of Medivac helicopter pilots and the wounded men they extracted and flew to safety. The video was narrated by Morton Dean who actually flew on the rescue mission in Vietnam.

On Sunday morning a buffet breakfast was held for Delta Company members and their guests. A brief devotional service was celebrated by Cliff Barger. Goodbyes were said and we all departed our separate ways. We are looking forward to 2020 in Washington DC.



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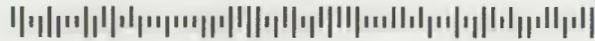
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### DEDICATION



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

### Eligibility for Membership

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

<b>World WarII</b>	<b>1942-1945</b>
<b>Panama</b>	<b>1954-1956</b>
<b>Vietnam War</b>	<b>1967-1973</b>

Eligibility includes those who served with Task Force 6814 (WWII) and Task Force Oregon (Vietnam). Branch of service is immaterial.



## Application For Membership /Change of Address Americal Division Veterans Association

Send applications and dues to:  
**PNC Ron Ellis, Asst. Fin. Officer**  
Henderson, Texas 75652

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name of Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsored By: \_\_\_\_\_ DD214 (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Change of address notification should be sent to Mr. Roger Gilmore  
Richardson, TX, 75080  
If changes are seasonal please provide dates.

Please enclose dues: 1 year \$15  
(WWII Vets pay \$12/year)  
Life Dues: 75 years & over = \$50  
Under 75 years of age = \$125