

Americal Division
Veterans Association
Nationally Elected Officers
2018 — 2020 Term

National Commander
J. Reginald (Reggie) Horton

Sr. Vice-Commander
David Eichhorn

Jr. Vice-Commander
Bob Cowles

**Executive Council
National Election**
(1) first term (2) second term

Chairman
PNC John (Dutch) DeGroot (1)

Jack Head, Recorder

Recorder (2)
John J. (Jack) Head

Robert M. Anderson (2)

Cary B. Bacall (1)

PNC Robert Cudworth (1)

Grank Finkbeiner (2)

Claude Frazier (1)

Rick Ropele (2)

Robert G. Short (2)

Tim Vail (2)

**Executive Committee
Chapter Representatives
Not Nationally Elected**

East Chapter
Thomas Canaap

Southeast Chapter
Lee Kaywork

Great Midwest Chapter
David Williams

South Midwest Chapter
Jim Turner

23rd MP Chapter
Ralph Stiles

2/1st Infantry Chapter
Carl Fryman

Far West Chapter
Gerald Thacker

Appointed Officers

National Adjutant
Roger Gilmore

Assistant Adjutant
Richard Heroux

National Finance Officer
Spencer M. Baba

Assistant Finance Officer
Ronald Ellis

Editor In Chief
Gary L. Noller

Contributing Editor
David W. Taylor

National Chaplain
Robert Harris

Vietnam Historian
Leslie Hines

Judge Advocate
Mike Twomey

WWII Historian/Curator
David W. Taylor

**Reunion Committee
Chair -2019**

**Larry Swank
Chairman**

SMW Chapter Announces New Officers

Cameron Baird, who has commanded the SMW Chapter since 2000, has passed the gavel to a new chapter commander. "I was scared shitless," Baird said, about the 2000 national reunion which was in progress in San Antonio. The previous chapter commander, Ernie Carlson, had fallen ill and couldn't attend. "Bill Bacon saved my ass that weekend, and we had a good reunion despite the fact that I had never been to one before and didn't know anything about the association. I'm a bit better at running a chapter after 19 years of practice, but I heartily welcome the help of a few folks who stepped forward to relieve some of the burden. We can still use all the help we can get, so please let us know if you can contribute to revitalizing the chapter. We're especially interested in ideas for a chapter reunion in the DFW region in the near future."

The new officers are: Commander: Jim Turner. Jim served in A Company, 1/6 Infantry, 198 LIB in '67-68. He was an FO in operations in the Tam Ky area and later at ARVN camps and OPs in the Central Highlands. He recently retired after 34 years in the financial services industry. He and his wife Judy have attended nearly all the national reunions since 2000.

Vice Commander: Cameron Baird. Cameron served in HHB of the 1/82 FA battalion headquartered in Chu Lai. This followed after six months of training at Ft. Lewis. During his tenure as commander, the chapter held several successful reunions in Ft. Worth, San Antonio and Fredericksburg. He recently retired after 30 years in the restaurant business.

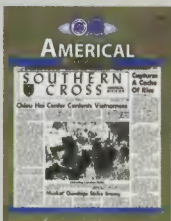
Secretary/Treasurer: Larry Brown. Larry joined the Army in 1966 and served in HHB & Svc Battery of the 3/16 FA after spending over a year in an armor battalion in Germany. After farming in Iowa for 12 years, he relocated to Texas and spent the next 31 years as a technician and service manager for a national pest control company. He is the president of the VVA chapter in the Tyler area.

Chaplain: Ed Griffin. Ed has served as chapter chaplain for several years and has provided pastoral service at many Americal events. He served in C and D companies of the 4/31 Infantry. He and his wife Ellen are full time RVers and often manage their itinerary to accommodate Americal events.

For the time being, all ADVA members in the five state chapter region are considered chapter members, and no dues will be requested. Please support your chapter by expressing your thoughts via text or email.

New On-line Portal for Americal Vietnam Records

Texas Tech University at Lubbock, Texas is the location of the Vietnam Center and Archive. Stever Maxner, Director, recently sent a progress report to Les Hines, ADVA Vietnam Historian, and Roger Gilmore, President, Americal Legacy Foundation. Maxner said, "I want to



Cover: First page of a Southern Cross newspaper from the Vietnam War.

provide an update on our progress with regard to the Americal Digital Collection Project."

Records of the Americal Division in the Vietnam War can be accessed online through a new Americal Collections portal page. Its internet address is <https://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/portals/americal.php>. Maxner says, "When members access that portal, they will only be searching collections associated with the Americal Division. This includes the Daily Staff Journals, newspapers, newsletters, etc. For clarification, we have added the newspapers produced by units in-country during the war as just that – newspapers. We did so because their structure and content is far more like a newspaper (providing news and information on a wide range of topics to include stories from other news outlets and even crossword puzzles) as opposed to the typical organizational newsletter."

The TTU Vietnam Archive now has a total of 4,008 Americal Association documents, newspapers, newsletters, photos/slides, films, museum objects, etc. available online and we continue to add more materials daily. Maxner describes how to conduct a search, "If you want to browse the entire collection, you can leave the search page blank and click search and it will return all Americal Association materials currently in the database (the 4,008). If you want to search for the Daily Staff Journals, using the keyword – journal – currently returns 587 records, 391 of which are online. You can limit the search results by using the "Filter Results" feature on the left side of the search results page where you can enter additional keywords and limit by media type, just materials online, etc. If you want to search for newspapers, using the keyword – newspaper – currently returns 1,637 records, 1,608 of which are online. You can limit these results in the same way as above.

Maxner concludes, "In addition to continuing to add Americal Collection materials, we are also working on a short (three minute) video tutorial on using the portal page to help assist members. I will forward a link to that once we have the video available online. Please share this link and information with association members. We welcome everyone's feedback and will assist ASAP if anyone encounters any problems."



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

The First Quarter 2019 Americal Journal issue did not contain all the membership reporting detail usually provided due to the carryover from the end of 2018 and lack of page space. This reporting period will list some new members and all Taps listing names omitted from the first quarter 2019 issue. New members listed with PNC Ronald R.Ellis as sponsor were signed up from the Oklahoma City reunion. Actual new members added for this reporting period (February – April) totaled eleven. Three former members were reinstated to active membership during this reporting period. Seven annual pay members paid the required life member dues to upgrade their membership, which is about half the number we typically see for this membership statistic. The numbers we see for this reporting period are a significant drop in new member additions compared to previous reporting periods. Hats off to ADVA members James Tarver, Paul R. Smith, Jerry Karr, Les Hines, Douglas Giffin and Ted Andrews for their new member recruiting efforts this quarter. We send out a special welcome to new Associate Member Billy Collins. Billy's father was KIA in Vietnam while serving with B Battery, 1/14th Artillery Battalion. Thanks to member Allen Walraven, also a B Battery, 1/14th Artillery, for sponsoring Billy's membership.

The new member statistics reported in the first paragraph are a sobering fact that the Association membership is shrinking at an alarming rate. This is most accelerated by the fact that many annual pay members do not renew their membership when up for renewal. Naturally, we lose a lot of members to death. If you know an annual pay member who did not renew his membership recently, contact him and encourage him to renew. The Americal Journal is a first class veteran publication and each issue contains articles, stories and pictures of Americal Division action not found elsewhere. We (as a group) need to continue to reach out to Americal Division veterans we know and encourage them to join the association. If you have a 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.

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 SEP18, JAN19 or MAY19 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 listing includes the carryover from the 1Q 2019 issue. We had only eight names reported as deceased for the 2Q period, so the majority of names are from the 1Q time frame. Sadly, we report the name of LTC (Ret) Charles Kettles. LTC Kettles was an honorary life member of the association and a recent recipient of the Medal Of Honor during President Obama's term. 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. Email is the most efficient method of notifying me when you move and you incur no costs. My email address is listed on the back cover of this publication. If you prefer to call, my cell phone number is [REDACTED]. The membership application form on the back cover of any Americal Journal can be used to send written notification of a change to the following address: [REDACTED] Richardson, Texas 75080.

ADVA MEMBERSHIP
30 April 2019

World War II	272
Vietnam	2,502
Cold War	6
Associate Members	182
Total Members	2,962

New Members

Daniel E. Jackling
1/20th Inf
Bullhead City, AZ
★ Self

Bernardo Jordan
3/16th Arty
Douglas, AZ
★ PNC Ronald Ward

Ronald Kerkoff
E/1/6th Inf
Franklin, MN
★ Paul R. Smith

Reginald L. Pruett
E/1/20th Inf
DeRidder, LA
★ James Tarver

David A. Simmons
E/3/21st Inf
Bluefield, WV
★ Self

Wayne Streiff
A/5/46th Inf
Pine Island, MN
★ Jerry Karr

New Paid Life
Members

David A. Allis
E/3/1st Inf
Athens, PA
★ Self

Douglas Benjamin
HHC/4/21st Inf
Minot, SD
★ Self

John T. Gray, Jr.
1/20th Inf
Memphis, TN
★ Self

Sterling K. Hanselman
B/1/6th Inf
E. Liverpool, OH
★ Ted Andrews

Bill Lucas
123rd Avn Bn
Lafayette, IN
★ Les Hines

Donald R. Penrod
B/1/6th Inf
Branson, MO
★ Douglas Giffin

Charles Christy
14th Avn Bn
Lodi, CA
★ PNC Larry Swank

Clifford M. Dunnagan
A/5/46th Inf
Killeen, TX
★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

Claude Frazier
23rd S&T 163rd Trns Co
McKinney, TX
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

John T. Frost, Jr.
11th LIB
Manchester, TN
★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

David Honychurch
1/82nd Arty HHB
Trumbull, CT
★ PNC Larry Swank

Philip L. Krause
C/1/52nd Inf
Waupaca, WI
★ PNC Jay Flanagan

Frank Lavallee
C/1/52nd Inf
Valrico, FL
★ Self

Richard LeBar
D/4/21st Inf
Dansville, NY
★ Don Ballou

Anthony Lupporelli
198th LIB
Beacon, NY
★ Self

Richard A. Malozi
A/5/46th Inf
Allentown, PA
★ Don Ballou

Robert Paquette
1/6th Inf
Candia, NH
★ Self

Tony Pleten
A/5/46th Inf
Brockport, NY
★ Ron Green

Paul M. Senick
A/1/6th Inf
Bethlehem, PA
★ Dave Hammond

William A. Stull
A/3/21st (Div Arty)
Lexington, KY
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

Plummer L. Talley, Jr.
A/3/1st Inf
Gwynn Oak, MD
★ Mike Dachille

William J. Whitney
3/21st Inf
Northfield, VT
★ Self

Reinstated
Members

Jim Adams
B/1/20th Inf
Strongsville, OH
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

Frederick A. Camacho
3/16th Arty A Btry
Wisconsin Rapids, WI
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Michael G. Chandler
A/1/20th Inf
McCormick, SC
★ Louie Rios

Bill Chupp
C/1/6th Inf
Red Lodge, MT
★ Keith Crouch

Tom Ellis
B/2/1st Inf
Columbus, OH
★ PNC Rollie
Castronova

Eugene Ethier, Jr.
C/5/46th Inf
New Tazewell, Tn
★ PNC David W. Taylor

Mario Fonseca
4/21st Inf
Portugal
★ William G. Urban

Joaquin Garcia
B/1/20th Inf
Brownsville, TX
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

Ron Griffin
1/82nd Arty A Btry
Oshkosh, WI
★ PNC David W. Taylor

Albert R. Hahm
C/3/1st Inf
Sacramento, CA
★ Don Ballou

William A. Halunen
C/1/6th Inf
S. Carver, MA
★ Dave Bliss

Alan H. Johnson
1/46th Inf
Missoula, MT
★ Self

Dick Kiene
A/1/20th Inf
Sacramento, CA
★ Ron Green

David G. Locke
A/1/20th Inf
Newnan, GA
★ Ron Green

Paul Longan
No Unit Listed
Evans, CO
★ PNC Ronald R.Ellis

Marko J. Milobar
A/4/3rd Inf
W Palm Beach, FL
★ PNC Rollie
Castronova

Bruce R. Mulraney
E/4/21st Inf
Marina Del Ray, CA
★ Don Ballou

Roy L. Pearson
E/4/21st Inf
Warrenton, MO
★ John W. Anderson

Frank Prickett
B/1/52nd Inf
Swansboro, NC
★ Self

Bruce D. Puckett
1st/1st Cav E Trp
Mexia, TX
★ Ron Green

Curt L. Rothacker
23rd MP Co
Tulsa, OK
★ Rich Merlin

James Russell
Div HDQ
Ormand Beach, FL
★ Self

Thomas Schubert
C/4/3rd Inf
Indianapolis, IN
★ PNC David W. Taylor

John Young
23rd MP Co
Ford City, PA
★ PNC Dutch DeGroot

New Associate
Members

Billy Collins
Polson, MT
★ Allen Walraven

TAPS LISTING;
MAY THEY REST IN
PEACE

World War II
Veterans

George Cik *
132nd Inf Rgmt
Missoula, MT
2008

John A. Crowhurst *
182nd Inf Rgmt
Santa Rosa, CA
December 1, 2018

Jack Henley *
132nd Inf Rgmt Co A
Hamilton, MT
Date Unknown

Frank R. Markovich *
721st Ord Det
Napa, CA
Date Unknown

Otis Scott *
182nd Inf Rgmt Co I
Amarillo, TX
November 8, 2018

Pat Tognoli *
182nd Inf Rgmt HHC
Isleton, CA
January 9, 2019

Salvatore A. Vinciullo *
182nd Inf Rgmt Co F
Waltham, MA
Date Unknown

R. Morley Wilcox
182nd Inf Rgmt
Greece, NY
August 16, 2018

Vietnam Veterans

Richard L. Auman *
Americal Division Band
Latrobe, PA
September 26, 2018

Norman Bair *
3/82nd Arty
Crowley, TX
April 2018

James N. Baird *
1/82nd Arty
Rock City Falls, NY
October 8, 2018

Richard L. Bergman
A/5/46th Inf
Palos Hills, CA
October 30, 2018

Raymond E. Bir *
HHC/3/21st Inf
Leesburg, FL
Date Unknown

David Blanton
B/2/1st Inf
High Rolls, NM
July 1, 2017

James E. Carey *
1st/1st Cav
Sahuarita, AZ
June 21, 2018

Tony Ceelen *
C/5/46th Inf
Oshkosh, WI
May 17, 2018

Jackie J. Chapman *
HHC Div HDQ
Boise, ID
Date Unknown

Richard J. Decker *
E/5/46th Inf
Palm Coast, FL
Date Unknown

John C. Denehan *
11th LIB
Clearwater, FL
July 5, 2018

Julius Dersicavage *
B/2/1st Inf
Mahanoy City, PA
March 16, 2019

Robert N. Fernandez
4/3rd Inf
Las Vegas, NV
June 9, 2018

James D. Garner *
11th LIB
Claysburg, PA
August 8, 2018

Calvin E. Houk *
3/82nd Arty
Moore, OK
November 18, 2018

Marvin E. Johnson*
Div HDQ Arty
Cerritos, CA
Date Unknown

Charles S. Kettles **
176th AHC (TF Oregon)
Ypsilanti, MI
January 21, 2019

Roeland Kloos *
5/46th Inf
La Quinta, CA
April 2018

Terry Lykken
3/16th Arty Btry B
Rapid City, SD
November 18, 2018

Carl E. Midkiff *
101st ABN (TF Oregon)
Radcliff, KY
April 2018

Brain L. Mitchell
A/4/3rd Inf
Mesquite, TX
December 23, 2018

Thomas Plunkett
4/3rd Inf
Beloit, WI
October 15, 2018

Robert R. Russell, III *
23rd MP Co
Winston-Salem, NC
February 7, 2019

Richard P. Rush *
3/16th Arty
Edmond, OK
January 3, 2019

Charles Swartz
1st/1st Cav H Trp
Middletown, OH
October 14, 2018

Roy Syring *
523rd Sig Bn C Co
Mosinee, WI
April 14, 2018

James J. Treacy, Jr.*
A/1/6th Inf
Kittery Point, ME
2017

Ronald Walquist
17th Cav F Trp
Idaho Falls, ID
June 21, 2018

Ronald S. Waner *
3/16th Arty Btry C
Warrenville, IL
Date Unknown

Mark Winslow *
No Unit Listed
Waukesha, WI
Date Unknown

**Associate
Members**

Doris Allen *
Tallahassee, FL
Date Unknown

Betty J. Runkel *
Zephyrhills, FL
July 2017

Mary Wonson *
Arlington, MA
July 14, 2018

Ronald Walquist
17th Cav F Trp
Idaho Falls, ID
June 21, 2018

*** ADVA Member
CMOH Recipient

VA MISSION Act Update

By Gary L. Noller, Editor-in-Chief

The clock is ticking down on the implementation date of new rules governing the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) compliance with the MISSION Act of 2018. This law requires the VA to improve veteran access to VA healthcare. One of the primary goals of the MISSION Act is to consolidate several existing community care programs. It will also make necessary changes to improve VA healthcare delivery to veterans and other eligible parties.

Some veterans and veteran organizations believe this is an attempt to privatize all VA healthcare. The VA says this is not so and proposals made so far do not indicate that VA in-house care will soon disappear. But in the future the VA will have to compete favorably with veterans' healthcare alternatives and become the preferred provider of services.

No matter what the changes are the VA will still be in control of major decisions affecting healthcare delivery. Veterans will not receive a VA insurance card that they can use at will. The VA will continue to authorize veterans to receive care in non-VA facilities with non-VA providers. The term being used for this is community care, sometimes also called care in the community.

To receive community care veterans first have to be eligible for VA care. Not all veterans can receive care from the VA due to a variety of circumstances. To receive VA care an eligible veteran must enroll in the system or otherwise be eligible for care without enrollment. An example of the latter case is a veteran who has a service connected disability rating of fifty percent or more.

There are six proposed conditions under which covered veterans could elect to have the VA authorize care in non-VA facilities.

1. VA does not offer the required care or services.
2. VA does not operate a full-service medical facility in the state in which the veteran resides.
3. The veteran was eligible to receive care under the Veterans Choice Program and is eligible to receive care under certain grandfathering provisions.
4. VA is not able to furnish care or services to a veteran in a manner that complies with VA's designated access standards.
5. The veteran and the referring clinician determine it is in the best medical interest of the veteran to receive care or services from an eligible entity or provider based on consideration of certain criteria VA proposes to establish.
6. The veteran is seeking care or services from a VA medical service line that VA has determined is not providing care that complies with VA's standards for quality.

The first four do not break much new ground. But the last two may provide opportunities that do not exist today.

Suppose a veteran uses a community ophthalmologist for eye care and then becomes eligible for eye care through the VA. Can the veteran specify that continued use of the existing ophthalmologist to be in the best medical interest and thus have the VA pay for these services in the future?

Suppose the VA is scores lower than community caregivers in cardiac care results. Will the VA shut its program down and send veterans to community care?

We do not know the answers to these questions. But before long we will find out. I do not expect changes to be very dramatic very soon. A large percentage of veterans receiving VA healthcare are satisfied with it as-is and if at all possible will choose VA healthcare in preference to care in the community.

46th Infantry Regiment Memorial Dedicated at Ft. Benning

By Gary L. Noller



A memorial monument to all who served in the 46th Infantry Regiment was dedicated at Ft. Benning, Georgia on the evening of March 27, 2019. Current Army cadre led the brief dedication ceremony. The monument is located near the headquarters building of 1-46 Infantry.

Funds for construction of the memorial came from excess funds collected in 2017 for the FSB Mary Ann memorial monument. Veterans dedicated the FSB Mary Ann monument at the National Infantry Museum Walk of Honor at Ft. Benning on March 27, 2018. The Americal Legacy Foundation add a small supplement to complete the financing of the regimental monument.

The 1-46 Infantry conducts basic training of new Army recruits. The battalion is part of the 194th Armored Brigade and is located in the Sand Hill area of Ft. Benning. It is led by LTC Sheldon A. Morris, Battalion Commander, and CSM Jared R. Geleney, Battalion Command Sergeant Major. 1LT Keegan A. Giles, battalion assistant S-3 officer, provided on-site coordination for the monument placement.

The 46th Infantry Regiment celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2017. It was constituted on 15 May 1917 in the Regular Army as Company A, 46th Infantry. On July 1918 it was assigned to the 9th Division. The regiment did not deploy overseas during World War I.

The regiment served in World War II in the 5th Armored Division. It served in Europe after the D-Day landings. It was activated and deactivated several times to include service in the Cold War as part of the 1st Armored Division. On May 12, 1967 the regiment was relieved of assignment to the 1st Armored Division and assigned to the 198th Light Infantry Brigade. Its first battalion and fifth battalion soon deployed to Vietnam with other units of the 198th LIB.

After Vietnam units of the 46th Infantry were again active in Germany with the 1st Armored Division. This ended in 1984. In 1987 the regiment was activated at Ft. Knox, Kentucky and began duties thereafter as a training unit. A few years ago it moved to Ft. Benning, Georgia along with all armor training activities.

Although the first and fifth battalions went to Vietnam with the 198th LIB they did not both remain with the brigade. Records indicate that on 15 February 1969 both battalions were relieved from the 198th and assigned to the Americal Division. The fifth battalion remained under the

operational control of the 198th LIB but the first battalion was placed under the operational control of the 196th LIB. The first battalion buffered the 196th area of operations from its base at LZ Professional while the fifth battalion operated closer to the division base at Chu Lai.

The monument displays the distinctive insignia and coat of arms of the regiment. The text on the tablet is as follows, line-by-line, "In Memoriam; 46th Infantry Regiment; The Professionals; Dedicated to Soldiers of All Eras; World War I; World War II; Cold War; Vietnam War; Global War on Terrorism; Lead to Victory.

The dedication of the regimental monument took place shortly before the annual Torchlight Ceremony conducted by the Army. The ceremony includes the lighting of a torch for each one of the campaigns conducted by the 46th Infantry Regiment. The Torchlight Ceremony is held in the early evening hours of each March 27. Veterans of the 46th Infantry are always invited and encouraged to attend this unique memorial ceremony.

The 198th Infantry Brigade is also active at Ft. Benning and is located just a few blocks down the street from the 1-46 Infantry area. The 198th Brigade trains infantrymen (11B MOS) under the One Site Unit Training (OSUT) doctrine. The 1-46 infantry provides basic combat training to soldiers who will receive a variety of military occupational specialties.

Reunion Planned for D/1/6

By Lynn Baker

Well I'm excited, all the contracts are signed and the players are in place and on the same sheet of music. NOW for the most important part of the reunion - YOU. Time to start looking at airplane or maps for your trip to Reno, NV.

Reunion package price jumps to \$385 and room rates drop to \$39 + tax & fees. Remember if you can't attend a tour or if you are going to arrive late or have to leave early please contact me for an adjusted price.

If you haven't attended a reunion before I have 50 of your brothers that will be happy to tell you how they he-hawed before they attended their first reunion and now wouldn't miss it for the world. Try it you will like it.

Since our business meeting isn't till the fourth day of the reunion I will share this experience with you now. Many years ago as a Captain, the Army sent me to Reno for two weeks, two years in a row. The first day of the class the instructor told us all to go to the windows facing downtown Reno. He told us to look at all those beautiful building and note the largest buildings are casinos. His point he explained was all those big beautiful casinos didn't get built by you winning money. Like good Army officers we totally ignored the instructor and spent every available minute down at the casinos until we were broke.

So with that said lets all meet with our wives, girl friends, kids at the Sands Regency on September 16 (My 72 Birthday) and travel to Virginia City and Lake Tahoe and have a fantastic time. Call or write for more details.

On behalf of your Board of Directors, D Company, 1st BN 6th INF., Inc.

Lynn D. Baker; [REDACTED]; Hot Springs Village, AR 71909; [REDACTED]

2019 ADVA National Reunion
October 2 – 6
Warwick, Rhode Island

Hotel Reservation Procedure: Crown Plaza Providence/ Warwick (Airport) at [redacted] Warwick, RI 02886 (Exit 12 on Interstate 95). The reunion guestroom rate is \$109, plus tax, per night, with free daily breakfast. Overflow guestrooms, with breakfast, will be available at a sister property, Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites, which is one mile away. Complimentary Shuttle Service will be provided between both hotels. The Group room rate, with breakfast, is offered 3 days before and 3 days after reunion dates, based on hotel’s availability. Americal WWII veterans will have their individual room rate reduced to “no-charge” when they check-in. The Crown Plaza is RV friendly. Guests must identify their affiliation with Americal Division Veterans Association (group code ADV) when making reservations. Guests may make their room reservation by emailing the reservations department directly at [redacted], or just call [redacted] and ask for in-house reservations. Guests requesting a toll-free number may call [redacted]; however, they will be serviced by a satellite office and you must ask for the ADV block of rooms. Guests may also reserve their room online at www.CrowneHotelWarwick.com with group code of ADV. Guests may cancel their room reservation up to 24 hours in advance. If you need a room for a unit meeting, or have any reunion questions, call our Reunion Chairman, Larry Swank, at [redacted] or [redacted].

Reunion Reservation and Tour Booking: You may register for the 2019 ADVA Reunion online with the Armed Forces Reunions Inc. (AFRI) and pay by credit card at www.afr-reg.com/americal2019 , Please call AFRI at (757) 625-6401 for registration questions, event additions, or event cancellations. You may also register by completing and mailing the reunion Registration Form on the next page. Tour(s) and reunion banquet are free for Americal WWII veterans and their spouse and/or escort. See the REUNIONS tab on the Americal web site <https://americal.org/cmsaml/> for expanded reunion information.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3 – 10:00am – 3:30pm
NEWPORT TOUR - \$67 per person includes bus, escort, mansion admission, and tour guides. 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. On your own, enjoy lunch and discovering great shops in the heart of Newport, Rhode Island. Enjoy a tour of Newport, plus sights such as Bellevue Avenue lined with fabulous mansions and the spectacular coastline on Ocean Drive.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4 – 9:00am – 4:30pm
BOSTON CITY TOUR & FREEDOM TRAIL- \$60 per person includes bus & tour guides. Explore the history of America’s oldest ship, the USS Constitution, through participatory exhibits, computer simulations, art and preservation galleries. 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.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5 – 12:00pm – 4:30pm
NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM \$58 per person includes bus, escort, admission, & guest speaker. In the Whaling Museum Theater, you will receive an exceptional presentation on Herman Melville (Moby-Dick) and the heyday of America’s world leadership in whaling. New Bedford is still the leading commercial fishing port in the nation. 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. Visitors can explore whale ecology and marine mammal conservation, discover the dramatic story of whaling and its impact, and the maritime history of “SouthCoast” Massachusetts.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5 – 6:00pm – 10:00pm
BANQUET DINNER – \$45 per person. Enjoy delicious New England food with exceptional service in a grand facility.

Transportation & Shuttle Information: The Crown Plaza [redacted] provides frequent free shuttle service to the T.F. Green Airport and the local/Amtrak regional train station. The T.F. Green Airport is served by Allegiant, American, Delta, Frontier, JetBlue, Southwest, Sun Country, and United Airlines. Also check out Boston Logan International Airport, only a 1.5-hour drive from the reunion hotel. You will get more flights and much better rental car rates at Logan if you plan to fly/drive for the reunion or vacation in the New England area.

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 (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 Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.			\$

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.



Dear editor,

We are searching for my uncle, Eddie Matthew Martin, Sr. He did three tours in Vietnam. He served as a sniper and as a LRRP with 3/21 Inf., 196 LIB and also served under the 23rd Infantry Division. He was active Army from 1967-1979. He shipped out from Fort Ord, CA. His birthday is 10/6/1946. Please contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Angela Coplin Robinson

Dear editor,

CSM (Ret.) Fred E. Darling was the command sergeant major of the 196th LIB. He then moved to become the Americal Division CSM. He was our command sergeant major when I was a cadet at West Point my first year in 1972-73. I submitted CSM Darling for the National Infantry Association Order of St Maurice award in 2013. He was presented the medal at the Old Guard headquarters where he had served as the CSM on active duty. He unfortunately died in 2014 at the age of 90. He began his distinguished career as a young infantryman in the Pacific during WWII. An amazing man and great soldier. The photo is of CSM Darling and his wife, Norma.

Ed Kennedy



Dear editor,

The first quarter 2019 Americal Journal is a great issue. On the photos that Ed Kennedy sent- three photos on page 33 that are tagged Kham Duc July 1970- I think that the top right photo is of the artillery group that set up at one end of the runway. I was embedded with Company A, 2nd/1st Infantry on the opposite end of the runway. Our second night at Kham Duc, the artillery group was attacked by sappers. The arty group had to lower their howitzers and fire anti-personal rounds to beat them off. The shot on the bottom of page 33 is from the artillery group set up on the mountain overlooking Kham Duc. You can see a little of the runway on the left side of the photo. My guess is that the photo in the middle of the page is the mountain top being prepared for the artillery. The photo on page 32 in the middle of the page is the Brigade Tactical Operations Center (BTOC). There was a fence behind where the Colonel shot this photo. The fence served as an R.P.G. screen. The V.I.P. helipad was located directly in front of the BTOC. In my book there is a picture of the runway at Kham Duc on page 169, a picture of a C130 landing at Kham Duc on page 165, another cargo plane on page 163, and on page 161 one of the three rows of Hueys lined up to airlift the 2nd/1st Infantry to Kham Duc.

Bob Spangler; [REDACTED]

Dear editor,

Reference the last issue of the Americal Journal. The pictures on page 32 and 33. On page 32 with COL Kennedy and Mr. Walters standing in front of the helicopter. This picture was taken at Hawk Hill. That is my helicopter, tail number 358, 71st AHC Rattlers and Firebirds. Mr. Walters was Rattler 25. Our unit was assigned to fly the COL around the area. I was the crew chief for his C&C helicopter for about two months. Mr. Walters was the assigned pilot for the COL. We flew him to wherever he wanted to go. The pictures of Kham Duc are from the times we flew him out there. He made numerous trips to Kham Duc.

Steve Mackey; [REDACTED]
71st AHC; Rattlers - Firebirds; 3/70-3/71

Dear editor,

Thanks much again for fitting in the Morton interview in the last issue. I know it will please Charlie and Isabel and their family. My name in the title was rendered Weist instead of Wiest, but you got it right in the author credit at the end. No great matter, I am used to the eternal-ie vs. -ei confusion and the important thing is that Charlie got his due.

Richard C. Wiest

Dear editor,

I am a member of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA and a Vietnam vet (1st Cav., Dec 69-70). Our national organization has a Vietnam Veterans Committee of which I am currently the chairman. The JWV Vietnam Veterans Committee has an on-going project to collect the military stories of Jewish military personnel who served during the Vietnam Era (1959-1975).

I am requesting the following: Military story of Jewish personnel (1959-1975), 1.5 to 2 pages, and if possible, a "then" photo and a "now" photo. Mail story and photos to [REDACTED]. If you have any questions feel free to call me at [REDACTED].

Bob Jacobs

Dear editor,

Please publish the following information regarding the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Association Reunion.

St. Louis and Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. August 7-11, 2019.

Hotel Reservations: Sheraton Westport Plaza, [REDACTED], St. Louis, Mo. 63146 Toll Free: [REDACTED]. Guest Room Rate: \$129.00 plus tax (single or double) includes breakfast for two each morning. The special reunion room rates will be in effect from August 3, 2019 - August 13, 2019. However, reservations prior to August 7 or after August 11 are subject to room availability. When calling for reservations, reference 1st Squadron-1st Cavalry

Association. Reservations must be made no later than 7/18/2019.

Registration begins on August 7. Jefferson Barracks Tour Friday is on August 9. This tour and transportation is included in your registration fee of \$149 per person. St. Louis City Tour and Anheuser-Busch Brewery Tour is August 8. This tour is offered as an option at a cost of \$69 per person. Paddlewheeler Dinner Cruise is also on August 8 as an option at a cost of \$82 per person. Buffet dinner on August 10 is included in registration fee.

Register on-line and pay by credit card at: www.signmeup.com/1S1CA2019Reunion or send your check, payable to 1/1 Cav Assn, to: 1/1 Cav 2019 Reunion c/o Bob Brahm, 7420 N Mercer Way, Mercer Island, WA 98040. For more information contact John Murphy at [REDACTED].

John Murphy

Vietnam Locator Requests

Looking for: Information on my uncle, Sgt. Robert C. Witcosky, Co. K, 182 Inf. Regt. on Leyte or Cebu Island. He was wounded on Apr. 1, 1945 and died in Manila Apr. 5, 1945. We call him Woody and he was a good musician. Contact: [REDACTED].

Looking for: Information that may help me rectify an omission on my DD-214, which does not include a Purple Heart. All other awards that I am entitled to are correct. I have obtained my military records from the National Personnel Records Center in St Louis, but there were no records of a Purple Heart. I was assigned to Co. B, 5/46 Inf., 198th LIB. I was wounded during an attack on LZ Fat City on April 1, 1970 at approximately 2:00 AM. I sustained to my left cheek from a ChiCom or RPG grenade. I was dusted off to 91st Evac Hospital in Chu Lai, along with several others wounded in the attack. I wish to obtain a copy of the orders for a Purple Heart that I appear on. Contact: Christopher Gile Blanchard; [REDACTED].

Looking for: Information about a truck blown up with a platoon of soldiers during a troop movement from the field to L Z Liz. It happened on the L Z Liz access road sometime in September or October 1970. The drivers name is Sp4Theodore Smith. There were three infantry KIAs and 29 WIAs. I was a truck driver in HQ Co., 1/20th from March 1970 to January 1971. Contact: Daniel Jackling; [REDACTED].

Looking for: Pictures or information on my grandfather, Gabe Howard. He was a part of 132nd Infantry at Guadalcanal and Bougainville. Contact: Matt Howard; [REDACTED].

Americal Legacy Foundation Report

By Roger Gilmore, Chairman, Board of Directors

Foundation Web Site

We are well aware the Foundation web site needs updating in some areas. We have let some of the links information become stale, and we will make an effort in the coming months to refresh some of this data. The scholarship link needs updating as we have made some changes to the eligibility rules. More on that change in the scholarship section of this article. Our web site administrator, Director Gary Noller, advises there is a change in web site servers in the offing. Once the changeover is complete and he is assured there are no issues, he can begin making some of the changes outlined above.

Americal Legacy Calendar – 2019 Edition

The 2019 edition of the Americal Legacy Foundation calendar has proven to a very good motivator for donors to support our monuments programs. Many of you have opened your checkbooks and given generously to the Foundation. As reported to the Foundation directors by Finance Officer Spencer Baba, donations through March 31, 2019 total \$23,821.00. **Our sincere 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.

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 – National VA Cemeteries

I’ve written about the progress (or lack thereof) in previous editions of this Americal Journal, but some of it is worth repeating for the benefit of new members and those who may not have kept up with past news. The monuments placement program at national VA cemeteries is probably our most prominent project underway at this time. We experienced initial success with placements at cemeteries near where directors are able to meet and interact with the cemetery staff. Now we are pursuing other sites where the contact and discussion are not direct or face to face, but via email and telephone conversations. We are seeing the bureaucracy and “red tape” that can be typical of working with a government agency. At some VA cemeteries, placement of a monument honoring a military unit is not high on the director’s priority list, and the approval process moves much more slowly. 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)

Placement of an Americal Division monument at this location was approved in mid 2018. After the approval was given, 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 for an extended period of time, possibly not until mid 2020. Follow up communication with the cemetery administrative staff this past April confirms this time frame is unchanged.

Long Island National Cemetery (Farmingdale, NY)

It has been a real challenge over the past months to get much response from this cemetery staff regarding our proposal. The proposal documents were presented (hard copies mailed via USPS) to the administrative assistant to the director in mid 2018. A new staff person took over administrative duties there in late 2018, and subsequent follow ups with the new administrative assistant indicate the package has been reviewed by the director, and the proposal will have to be reviewed by the district office. In early April, I was informed some new documents need to be submitted. One new document is a specification sheet outlining the cemetery’s standard acceptable monument size and shape. Attempts to reach the administrative assistant by telephone to confirm what monument dimensions are acceptable have been unsuccessful. More on this project in future issue of this publication.

Camp Butler National Cemetery (Springfield, IL)

In February 2019, Foundation Director Bob Cowles put together a complete placement proposal package for submission to the cemetery director. Bob recommended I write a cover letter outlining our Foundation’s monument placement program. The cover letter with Bob’s placement package was mailed in early April. We do have confirmation the cemetery received the package, and are awaiting a reply from the cemetery director regarding the proposal.

Dallas Fort Worth National Cemetery (Dallas, TX)

In the last issue of this publication, I mentioned expenditure to replace 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. A granite base was ordered from Keith Monument Company to replace the concrete base supporting the monument stone. In early April, the cemetery maintenance staff removed the monument and the existing concrete base. They poured a concrete sub base to support the replacement granite base. At the time of this article, a local monument company is scheduled to do the monument re-set on the new granite base and the work is expected to be complete by the end of April.

Rock Island Arsenal National Cemetery (Rock Island, IL)

In March, ADVA member Lyle Peterson contacted us about placement of an Americal Division monument at the Rock Island Arsenal National VA Cemetery. Lyle visited this location and advises they have a nice memorial walkway where our monument will be a great fit. Lyle spoke with

the cemetery director about a potential placement. The director furnished us their terms and conditions and liability documents for signing. The complete placement proposal package with required documents was submitted to the director in early April. The director confirmed receipt of the proposal package and advises she will review it and get back with us if more documentation is required for review. We are awaiting a response about the package review and decision.

Americal Monument Programs Other Locations

Museum of the U.S. Army – Unit Tribute Plaque

I mentioned this legacy project in the last issue of this publication. Director Gary Noller is coordinating this project. In late March, Gary prepared the required form requesting placement of an Americal Division unit plaque at the Museum and submitted it to the Museum staff for consideration. We are awaiting a response on our request.

National Museum of the Vietnam War (Mineral Wells, TX)

The museum is situated on a 12 acre site near the old Fort Wolters helicopter training base. The National Vietnam War Museum project was formalized in 1998 to develop a national venue focusing on an atmosphere of learning about the Vietnam War era, and present a balanced view of the conflict for people of all ages, nationalities, and political points of view. The museum draws sponsorship from local and national veterans’ organizations, as well as the private sector.

ADVA member and former helicopter pilot James Messinger is one of the directors and the treasurer for the museum nonprofit corporation. This past February, Gary and I spoke with Jim about possible placement of an Americal Division monument here, and Jim was very receptive to the idea. Jim agreed the current design we have for the national VA cemetery program would work well at Mineral Wells, and advised us the museum would cover the costs to pour the concrete base and place the monument. Monument delivery to the museum was completed in early April. Jim had the concrete base poured and cured in by mid April, and the monument installation



completed on April 20. See the picture below of showing the monument in place along the pathway accessing the Vietnam Memorial Garden.

Fort Polk, LA

We consider this post a key potential site for an Americal Division monument. During a 12 year period during the Vietnam War (1962-1974), more soldiers were shipped to Vietnam from Fort Polk than from any other American training base. For many, Fort Polk was the only stateside Army post they saw before assignment overseas.

ADVA member James Tarver approached post personnel about placement of an Americal Division monument in 2018. In January 2019, we submitted a monument placement proposal with documentation to the post administrative staff. Director Ronald Ellis and I stopped off at Fort Polk during our March trip to Fort Benning to view their monuments park. We identified two vacant concrete bases in the Warrior Trails monument park as possible sites for placement of an Americal Division monument.

In mid April, I was informed a new POC will be our contact for discussions on the proposal. At the time this article was written, I have not been able to establish telephone contact with the new POC. More on this monument project in future issues of this publication.

Fort Rucker, AL

Director Ellis and I made a stop at Fort Rucker in late March to view the U.S. Army Aviation Museum and the post’s monuments’ grounds. Fort Rucker’s monument park is just east of the aviation museum and has a number of excellent monuments of varying designs and detail. Ronald and I spoke with the acting HR director there regarding the monument placement proposal document requirements and came away with more insight for our planning.

Foundation directors are currently in discussions about this U.S. Army post as a potential site for an Americal Division monument. Our initial discussions are focusing on design and the appropriate text for honoring Americal Division aviation in the monument’s inscription.

Scholarship Donations and News

In October 2018, the Foundation received a very generous scholarship donation I failed to mention in the First Quarter 2019 Americal Journal Legacy article. The donation came from veterans of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment. Alpha Company veterans had a sizable balance in their unit group’s bank account near the end of 2018, and voted to close the account and donate the monies to the scholarship fund. Their donation amount was \$3,521.00. On behalf of the Americal Legacy Foundation directors, our thanks go out to Ralph Heatherington (donation coordinator) and all Alpha Company veterans for their generous donation to assist qualified applicants with their higher education goals.

Scholarship Chairman Bill Bruinsma has done another outstanding job preparing the 2019 Scholarship fund raiser mail out. This is an immense job as the mailing goes to over 3,000 ADVA members. ADVA members have always given tremendous financial support to the scholarship program, and this year is no exception. As of our last quarterly financial report, Foundation finance officer Spencer Baba reports nearly \$22,000.00 in scholarship donations for the reporting period. **Thanks to all who generously support this very worthwhile program for ADVA members and their families.**

Earlier this year, Foundation directors agreed to make a change to the Foundation’s scholarship eligibility requirements. Each year we seem to get a small number of applicants sponsored by a deceased veteran. In many of those cases, we cannot verify ADVA membership. The change will permit documents such as a Form DD-214 or award orders proving Americal Division service to be submitted with the applicant’s application package. Specific wording will be worked out by Chairman Bruinsma and web administrator Noller for the Foundation web site scholarship link.

Many Reasons To Attend A Reunion

Edited by John Mansfield

My name is John Mansfield. I am a member of the 196th LIB Association, the Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA), and the 31st Infantry Regiment Association. Some of us at the 196th reunion held in July 2017 at Louisville talked about the reunion and decided to capture "why" we attend reunions. I volunteered to collect the articles (I called them insights), assemble them, and provide them for use in the associations' publications. Below is the response that I received, edited and am submitting for others to read.

Staying for the rest of the events by Charlie Tapp

I will chime in on my experience with attending reunions. I, like many of us, put the army and Vietnam behind me when I ETS'ed out of the Army in 1971. I was busy as most were raising a family a career and a business which took a lot of my time. I was arm-twisted by LT Harvey Mize to attend my first reunion in 2005 in Columbus, Georgia.

I was extremely busy with my business and agreed only after I was told who would be there and was only going for the Friday and Saturday. I planned on checking out on Saturday but after meeting several that I served alongside found myself talking and catching up on old times and families. I had checked out as planned on Saturday and by Saturday afternoon my wife said you might as well see if we can get our room back and stay for the rest of the events. I am so glad I did. I have not missed a reunion since that first one in Columbus in 2005. I have been honored to attend several functions since that time. I traveled to Ft. Drum and spent a special event that was full day training with the active duty guys and attend a black tie dinner. I have had the honor to be the commander for two years and serve on the board along with plans to host the reunion in Myrtle Beach SC in 2018. I also was able to connect with my company commander Colonel Karl Lowe from Vietnam and get to know his entire family and speak at his funeral at Arlington. I have also got to know many who I didn't serve along side. I have attended several other funerals. It has made me appreciate the bond of my brothers in arms. I hope to see many more of my brothers before I depart this earth. Hoping to see you at a reunion soon. Charles Tapp Delta Company 1969.

My Tribe by Timothy (Tim) F. Hunt Jr.

The reasons why I attend these reunions date to my tour in Vietnam. Everything I did for one year was with a core group of young men with whom I shared misery and laughter, hopes and dreams, fear and resolve. Our very survival, for the most part, depended largely on each other. Our ability to face each day, each step and suppress

our ever present fear was based upon the collective strength of the group whether a squad, a platoon or the company. Even when I was on R & R getting married to the woman who embodied my hopes and dreams my thoughts often were with those facing daily trials. After leaving Vietnam I was stationed at Ft. Ord, CA. for the last year of my enlistment. My company was almost all draftees returning from Vietnam awaiting release from active service. None of these guys, although Vietnam Vets, were from the 196th or even I Corps so not from "My Tribe". Except for a couple of guys no relationships were developed or pursued.

Upon my release from active service my wife and I went back to Florida to start our life as civilians. I joined the Army reserves where two of our men were Vietnam Veterans. These relationships were and remain important to me. But for the next 20 years my wife and I worked, started and grew a family, and I read a lot of books and articles on Vietnam trying to understand my Vietnam experience, the loss of so many young lives, especially from our platoon and company. I tried to remember details from our units' engagements especially those of May 1968 when our platoon lost most of us either killed or wounded. The men and events remained in my thoughts yet were foggy which was also troubling. The questions of why, and what else could have or should have been done for a different outcome, continued to trouble me and still do.

Clearly something was missing that was not provided by family, the reserves, work or professional / civic groups. These relationships were and are essential but there was a void. I stumbled onto a notice for a reunion in Hampton Roads, VA for the 196th L.I.B in the early 1990's and I decided to attend. Three members of my "tribe", 1st platoon A/4/31 recognized me and we (I) had a wonderful experience. I found what was missing in my life. Renewing the bond that had been severed in late 1968 with my "tribe" and the expanded brotherhood of the 196th L.I.B. The questions that haunted me are still not answered but they are now in a context more acceptable thanks to our collective memories. Our reunions allow me to continue my quest for understanding the Vietnam experience; revere those lost lives, and question, with much skepticism military adventurism today. They also allow me to experience these men and their lives following Vietnam and on into our extended middle age. I look forward to each and every reunion. Timothy (Tim) F. Hunt Jr. , A/4/31, 1st Platoon, 67 - 68

A Family by Sam Mazzola

John, in response to your question about why we attend reunions, I could say that reunions give me a chance/reason to visit a location that I would not normally travel to. But that's not the real reason that I attend the reunions. I may attend other reunions such as the Americal only because it's nearby or it's some place I really want to see,

if my guys aren't there then it's just a site seeing trip.

I attend the reunions because I want to link up with the guys that also experienced and understand the most life changing event in my life. They are the only people that can truly comprehend what we endured. Those events have created a bond that others will never understand. We had each other's life in our hand. I cover your ass and you cover mine, so that we can all go home whole. Most people don't get to hear our stories/details, as per my family/friends.

Here we are a bunch of guys from all over the country, different backgrounds, ethnic groups and religions thrown in to the melting pot of Alpha 4/31. Most of us were strangers to one another (exception Bob Brown and me). The bonds were the closest with guy in the same platoon, but everyone in the company was like family.

Yes, we like to tell our war stories at the reunions, but all our stories are not about combat battling the VC or NVA. Some are about our battle with the strange and hostile environment we were in. As noted by our telling of the water buffalo event, or ambushing the Vietnamese workers from Chu Lai Air Base. There are many other war stories that are not about blood and gore, just trying to survive.

Those events have formed a bond that cannot be broken; we suffered together, no matter when you got to company or how long you were in the company/family.

You are my brothers whether you served before me or after, we are family, a bond that will never be broken. Those that chose not to attend the reunions are the losers, really, they will never heal.

A Celebration of Life by John L. Mansfield

As I analyze my thoughts and feelings I believe there are two reasons I attend reunions; first; I like many attend to associate with the comrades / brothers of my youth, those that shared the most trying times of my life, those of us, who pledged our lives to one another, and those to whom I literally owe my life.

There is beyond a doubt, a bond that is formed because of circumstances not just of time. Whether you are there a day, a month or a year, it is the shared experiences and the deeds accomplished not the hours that are important.

I believe we all struggle to put these feelings into words yet come up short. Shakespeare's writings are world famous and to my mind, he says it best in the St. Crispin's Day speech from his play Henry V; *"This story shall the good man teach his son; And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by, From this day to the ending of the world, But we in it shall be remembered, We few, we happy few, we band of brothers. For he to-day that sheds his blood with me, Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile, This day shall gentle his condition; And gentlemen in England now a-bed Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here, And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks That fought with us upon Saint*

Crispin's day."

Whenever I read these words above or listen to the entire speech, I know that it describes how I feel and what I want to say, but can't quite accomplish. I also know that it is OK with me and with my brothers, because it is not about what we say, but how we feel toward each other and what we are able to share and communicate just by being there.

Second; and most important to me is the fact that these reunions for me are a celebration of life. When I attend I celebrate the fact that we are still alive. That what we went through a long time ago in a land far-far away, changed us in ways that we may never know, yet share with each other. Some will believe it is selfish, but I rejoice in the fact that we lived through those times together, yes I am saddened by those that did not, yet I still rejoice that I am alive and more so that my brothers are also alive, and that we now live to share these times.

Supporting Each Other's Memories by Ervin Bridges

What I found great about the reunion was that the men of Alpha Company were a family during our tours in Vietnam. I have known that all along. When I discuss my tour with Co. A and HHC with someone who asks about VN, it isn't about what I did there. My answer is about what the people that I worked with did. It was about the courage shown when asked to do a task. It was about standing up and getting the job done when common sense said that it was a crazy idea. It was about people who cared about the welfare of their buddies and in some instances of other Americans caught in bad circumstances and needing help to survive. Many times their courage was not acknowledged in the form of medals or promotions. But they did a great job anyway. I can't ever say enough for all of them.

What I also enjoyed about the reunion were the discussions of what happened while in Alpha Company during our various operations and especially the battles in the Que Son and when we worked with the 1st Cav. I remember some things different from what others remembered. Some of my memories were accurate, but many needed some adjustments. I learned names of people who were in other squads who helped me and I was able to help during my tour. I was reminded that in our assaults that platoons often became inner mingled and that everyone gains a different perspective of what happened during a particular action.

But the number one thing that I was reminded of while in Louisville is that old soldiers do need to come back and remember together what we went through. That there was life after Vietnam and that they are still supporting each other's memories and healing by getting together. I don't know why it's taken me so long to realize that and to attend one of these gatherings. I know that it will not be the last. Thanks for the invite. Ervin (Ranger 26)

Images From My Lens

The Americal Photos of
Herbert Brady



(Contributing Editor's Note)

This is the second edition of Herbert Brady's iconic photos taken while assigned as a combat photographer for the Americal Division in Vietnam, from August 1969 until September 1970. He was originally 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"

This issue is devoted to his photos taken in the field while deployed with the divisions 1st/1st Armored Cavalry Regiment. His comments for each photo are those thoughts that came to his mind with his images.



ARMORED CAVALRY



1st/1st Armored Cav maneuvers their "tracks" in the Hiep Duc Valley.



1st/1st Cav soldier with 12 gauge shotgun in hand watches the "back door".



Looking for trouble.



Track Commander.



Alpha Troop, 1st/1st Cav staging on a road coming out of Tam Ky; they are waiting for the rest of the units to get underway in a multi-troop venture going into the Hiep Duc Valley.



ARMORED CAVALRY



SP/4 Jack Marvin Baker, July 13, 1949 – September 5 1970. Panel W7/Line 39... RIP Jack.



M551 Sheridan, Alpha Troop, 1st/1st Armored Cav, working in the Hiep Duc Valley west of Tam Ky; The M-551 is a light tank, not as powerful as the big M-48's but gets around quite well in the rainy season.



Alpha Troop, 1st/1st Cav on patrol; Captain George Williams is on the radio calling the shots.



This M-113 in the armored cav carries rolled up fencing on the side of the track, to be used at night as a screen against RPG's.

Our Band of Brothers

By Tom Luedde

[Originally written on November 1, 2005]

This is a true story of how, one day, I was able to finally face a troubling reality that has been on my mind almost every day for the past 32 years.

In March 2001, I was visiting with Terry Sater, a friend, business acquaintance, and Vietnam combat veteran. Terry was assigned to the Mekong Delta Mobile Riverine Force. Both of us are combat veterans and we exchanged stories of some of our experiences. Terry asked me if I had ever tried to contact anyone from my infantry platoon from Vietnam. I had a hard time answering him because the thought of those guys and the fate that some may have had was a lingering thought since I left the platoon in December 1969. For 32 years I couldn't bear the heartache if some of my platoon brothers had sustained a combat injury or death. For all of these years only a few of the 35 platoon members were in contact with each other. When a platoon member went home, we never heard from them again.

Terry made a point that I need to make contact with them. He said that maybe someone was looking for me. I gave him my unit information, Co. D, 1/6 Inf., 198 LIB. Terry typed this info into the computer and told me to read the message he found. The response changed my life from that day forward. I am forever grateful for Terry's assistance in bringing closure to many years of unanswered questions.

To my amazement, David Gibson, "The Budweiser Kid", was looking for platoon members and had listed those found thus far. His request was for other platoon members to call him. I was in shock, as I didn't know how to handle this. I couldn't bear the fact that if I contacted Budweiser he would have information about platoon members that I didn't want to hear. I would rather not know than know if some of the guys didn't make it home or had endured combat wounds.

I was deeply troubled the rest of the day. I told my wife, Janet, about this news. She was my high school sweetheart who I married in 1970, four months after I was released from the Army. She urged me to call Budweiser.

I sat on my bedroom floor, dialed his telephone number – he answered, his voice was like hearing him 32 years ago. I told him who I was and then I cried. After he settled me down he wanted to make sure I was who I said I was. He asked me about an incident that happened during a battle with the Viet Cong. In that incident we called in an air strike near our position. Only a few platoon members were able to witness the incident, which after it happened, was hilarious. But I thought I was going to die; I was not even wounded. I recounted the incident and we laughed so hard it hurt – and I cried.

Talking with him released emotions and feelings that had been pent up in me for 32 years. He told me who they had located so far and encouraged me to call all of

them. I asked him about "Doc" Carl Landwher. Doc was our platoon medic and had performed some of the most heroic life and limb saving feats imaginable. Doc saw it all – the combat and the ensuing tragedy of the combat. Doc left the platoon only a month before me, so I know he made it home, but didn't know what life had dealt him since.

Doc was alive and well in DePere, WI and was looking forward to talking to all those that Budweiser found. After talking for an hour, I finally got enough courage to ask him about Terry Andreessen, "Swede". Swede was one of the only platoon members that was married and had a child. For 32 years I wondered if Swede made it home. We would often sit on the jungle floor, picking off leeches, cooking c-rations with the C4 explosive from a claymore mine and talking about his wife and child. For 32 years I couldn't bear the fact that he didn't make it home. I left Vietnam a few months before him. Budweiser, in his west Kentucky drawl said, "Hell yes he made it, he's a car dealer in Libby, MT – want his telephone number?" I was shocked, relieved, elated – emotions bottled up for all these years released.

The next day I gathered the courage to call Swede. Hearing his voice and talking with him was as emotional as talking to Budweiser. We reminisced for an hour, cried, said our good-byes and vowed to stay in contact forever.

Over the next several weeks I received telephone calls and made telephone calls to the other members of the platoon. In the ensuing weeks, Budweiser, Swede and Doc were on a mission to find all platoon members. I became involved in a small way and elicited my help with finding the remaining members.

Budweiser, years ago, secured our company roster from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO. The roster was a copy of very poor quality and was almost illegible. Budweiser, however, was able to piece information together from the roster to do internet searches to locate members. He had been doing this for a few years.

There were only a few he located that were not interested in talking with him. The war had changed their lives forever and they did not want to relive any part of it. Some information that Budweiser, Swede and Doc located was heart-breaking news. Veterans' family members told stories of tragedies in their lives and eventual deaths. The three became discouraged at times and thought they would just let it go – until they found another platoon member that was elated to be found.

As new members were found we would all exchange telephone calls and bring each other up to date on our lives since Vietnam. Then one day, while talking with Budweiser, he mentioned that he, Swede and Doc were contemplating a reunion. The thought of seeing these guys again after all of these years, all of these years without any contact with them what so ever, was overwhelming. As can be imagined, the reunion was a definite go. Time and place would need to be coordinated with 27 individuals. As can be imagined, this was not an easy task, but most

wanted it to happen. Finally a date and time was set – November 7, 2002 in Washington, D.C.

We arrived in Washington DC on November 6, 2002. I was emotionally drained at the thought of seeing everyone again. Janet and I had a late lunch at the hotel. I left the hotel restaurant and walked down the lobby hall and rounded the corner. Walking towards me was The Budweiser Kid. My knees went weak and without a word we hugged and cried.

After a few minutes he told me some of the guys were in the lounge and I should join him. I went back and told Janet that I was going to the lounge and didn't know when I would be back. She understood. I walked in to the lounge and saw for the first time in 33 years some of the guys. After 33 years I remembered them all. We sat, drank and talked. More guys would walk in and emotions would flow all over again.

Later that evening we all met in a room reserved for our reunion. The hand shakes, hugs and crying didn't stop for hours. Seeing Budweiser, Doc and Swede and the others completed a phase in my life that is indescribable.

We viewed photos of platoon members that were wounded and the last time we saw them was when we put them on a Medivac helicopter for their trip to the 95th Evac Hospital or 27th Surgical Hospital in Chu Lai. We knew they were alive but didn't know what fate had brought them. Of the original 31 platoon members, 20 were wounded, some received three Purple Hearts. Five were Killed In Action.

Our platoon leader, Lieutenant Smith, "LT", talked to us and brought our combat lives in South Vietnam into perspective. We were on many missions that we had no idea what they were for. We boarded helicopters and dropped in strange places, not knowing where we were or why we were there. LT told us about our missions, results and facts that most of us did not know, but often wondered about. Our main focus

was all night movement, stopping at predetermined locations and setting up ambush sites for infiltrating Viet Cong and NVA soldiers.

We were young men, most drafted into a war that was becoming increasingly unpopular in the United States. Our year in basic training and AIT (Advanced Infantry Training) kept us shut out from everyday life. Most of us were unaware of the protests and riots against the war. We came from big families, small families or no family.

We all arrived individually from the United States and were placed into the 2nd Platoon as replacements for guys that had served their tour and were headed home or replacements for a war casualty. We all arrived within weeks or months of each other and the majority of the platoon was now all of us – FNG's – x new guys. We had no experience with combat and became an instant band of brothers. We helped each other cope and survive, we endured the hardships of rice paddy and jungle living conditions for one year. We shared food, stories, combat rage and a Budweiser that was dropped from a helicopter once a week. As Swede said during our reunion that night, "We have a bond that cannot be explained, a bond that will be with us forever."

Our platoon sergeant, Sgt. Joe Carbonneau, talked to us in a manner that set things straight about our duty to our country and the hope that our experiences in Vietnam made us better men. One of the most thought provoking things he said is that one of the reasons we were drawn to each other after all of these years is that we never really got to say good-bye to each other in Vietnam. Some of us were plucked from the jungle or rice paddy, were sent to the rear, LZ Bayonet, and then off to Cam Rahn Bay and were home within a day or two, of being in a firefight. No welcome home parades, no dignitaries thanking us for what we endured – we were just sent home. This feeling lingered with us for decades and we never had the opportunity to say good-bye to our buddies still stuck in the war zone. Sgt. Joe told us that this was the first opportunity we had to say good-bye to each other. But not a good-bye, a reunion and in a few days a good-bye, but only for a while, because we will be visiting by telephone, email and more reunions for the rest of our lives.

As the evening wore on we became more and more reacquainted. Stories were told as each of us had a different perspective on events that occurred. We laughed, we cried, and we laughed some more. A few of our wives were talking and a comment was made – "How, after all of these years, can you guys gel so well together?" My response – "We have a bond that cannot be explained, a bond that will be with us forever."



The next day, a beautiful fall day in Washington, we boarded a bus and for most of us, our first trip to The Vietnam Memorial- The Wall. As we exited the bus we noticed the large amount of people in the area. It was only a few days until Veterans Day and many Americans had come to Washington for the Veterans Day events. We walked together as a group towards The Wall, many of us being held by one of our platoon brothers. We were actually holding each other, as the emotion of seeing the The Wall with 58,000 names of fellow Americans who had died in the War was indescribable and overwhelming. We stayed for a few hours, talking, walking, telling each other stories that we had bottled up for 33 years. It was again one of the most dramatic and emotional events of our lives.

Later that day we returned to the hotel and visited with each other. Our wives and/or girlfriends became acquainted with each other and brought each other up to date regarding children and grandchildren. That evening we had our farewell dinner. We made a promise to stay in touch with each other and to reunite every three years.

Over the past three plus years we have done just that. Writing, emailing and telephone calls have kept us together. Budweiser, Doc and I have been on a few road trips to visit platoon members, some of these have been surprise visits. We have also visited with family members of one of our platoon brothers who died years ago. His family had absolutely no idea who he served with and what he endured as a young man. We presented his mother, brothers, sisters, son and grandchildren the medals he never received.

To understand the Vietnam Veteran, one must understand the Vietnam War. The Vietnam War was the longest war, from 1963 to 1975. An estimated 2.5 million individuals served in Vietnam. Of these 58,000 plus lost their lives. An additional 300,000 were wounded and approximately 2,300 are still Missing In Action.

It was a guerrilla war. No boundaries, no definite front lines or rear zones. The enemy was evasive, and as likely to be a 13 year old girl or a pajama clad grandparent. American soldiers were sniped at, rocketed and booby-trapped. For the first time, news of the war was broadcast daily at home or as actual battles were being fought. The protests at colleges and universities were ramped and the returning Vietnam Veteran was branded as the aggressor.

The Vietnam Veteran was our nations youngest soldier. The average age



of the Vietnam Veteran was 19 to 22 years old. The monumental impact of the brutality resulting from combat in Vietnam on a 19-year-old adolescent was overwhelming to him. Think about this, we were in our late teens and early twenties when we were plucked from our families or schools. Our job, as young men, was to kill someone before they killed us ---- think about that. This is why today we are truly a Band of Brothers and have a bond that we cannot explain and most cannot understand.

I would be remiss if I didn't identify the members of our platoon - we fought together and saved each other every day: Terry Andreessen (Swede) Libby, MT; Tommy Barnes, Tomball, TX; Charles Bradley, Cement, OK; Frankie Broschious, Shamokin Dam, PA; Pat Bullock, Oakville, MO; Sgt. Joe Carbonneau, Derby, VT; Jimmy Cheek, Yancyville, NC; Benny Clayton, Savannah, MO; Cpt. Joe Collie, Vilas, NC; Tom Constant, Gilmanton, NH; Charles (Sam) Elkins, Talladega, AL; Jarvis Ellis, Decatur, GA; William Fotis, Niles, IL; David Gibson (Budweiser Kid), Bardwell, KY; Norbert (Norby) Hagerty, Rhinelander, WI; Donn Hylek, Cedar Lake, IN; Ron Kimball, Cypress, TX; Paul LaFata, Chesterfield, MI; Carl Landwehr (Doc), DePere, WI; Johnnie Lingerfelt, Cherryville, NC; Tom Luedde (Bull), O'Fallon, MO; Sgt. Paul Miller, Doddridge, AR; Jack Nelson, Rapid City, SD; Lt. Larry Smith (LT), Athens, GA; Jerome Schwenk, East Springfield, PA; Doug Sykes, Melbourne, FL; Donald Van, Orange, CA; Sgt. Howard Walker, Loveland, CO; Clopton Ware, Aberdeen, MS; Mark Willingham (Big Will), GA; Earnest Woods, Tuscaloosa, AL; Matt Bunk, not a platoon member, but adopted by us. Matt is a newspaper reporter and acquaintance of Swede's, who accompanied us throughout the reunion and wrote a story which was published in The Daily Inter Lake Newspaper, Kalispell, MT.

Not all of these fine gentlemen are with us today. Some have passed away from various causes, however they will be remembered forever.

Rear Job- Or Not?

By Tom Luedde

I was assigned to Co. D, 1/6th Infantry, from December 1968 through December 1969. During my tour we were assigned to the Rocket Pocket, Rocket Ridge, Dragon Valley, and sometimes in the LZ Gator area of operations. We often carried out company-wide missions. I will stand by this until my dying day - we were the finest, bravest and most cohesive group of Soldiers in Vietnam. And I am sure, during our tour of duty, the rest of the 1/6th had the same reputation.

In March 1969, as a PFC, I was selected to attend The Americal Division Combat Leadership and Recon Course in Chu Lai. One of the course requirements was expert map reading. After returning to the second platoon I walked point from March to the end of September. Almost every night we set up multiple ambush sites.

My term as a PFC was short lived. I received a promotion to Specialist 4, then within a month another promotion to Sergeant. In October I became the radio-telephone operator (RTO) for the company commander. This lasted for a month. I then got a "rear job" in mid-November 1969 that went until I left country.

I was assigned to the 1/6th S-3 command center located on LZ Bayonet. Was given the task of making map overlays. They were the onion skin pieces of paper that were placed on maps that indicted all of the multiple night-time company by platoon ambush sites. I was flabbergasted that I received this job and that it was not assigned to a combat infantry trained officer.

The overlays were thrown out of a helicopter into the perimeter of the platoon's day laager. These locations were also relayed to Fat City (I think) and also to each company's mortar platoon. In the event of enemy contact in an ambush site, all the squad leader needed to do is identify himself and the site location indicated by letter and number designation without trying to read the map while

under attack. Artillery and mortars would know those locations and the squad leader could adjust by meter increments.

In early December there was a turnover of officers in the command center. We received many new officers at that time. I remember one of the new officers screaming into the radio to the platoon leaders every time enemy contact was made. He ordered them to get off their ass and get a f'ing body count. Any excuse about the dangerous situation was met with more violent outbursts.

Because I was a short timer (end of tour December 13) one of the first sergeants assigned to the command center told me to get lost every day and not to let the new officer (whoever the new officer was at that time) see me. Because I was a sergeant formerly assigned to an infantry platoon, the new officer would send my ass back out to the field until my last day. This was because an infantry sergeant's job was to be in combat, not having a rear job.

For the record this is first time I have put this in writing. Guess I'm starting to feel my age, and a couple of my closest friends and brothers in arms tell me I should put my tour of duty in writing so that my children and grandchildren know what we did during the war.

Memories of Operation Russell Beach

By Bill Bowman

I had my in-country training at the Americal Division base in Chu Lai. The sounds of explosions and heavy machine gun fire could be heard in the distance as we walked along the beach of the South China Sea. I did not know at that time we were watching a pitched battle on the Batangan Peninsula. As a draftee straight from the States, I remarked to my fellow FNG's, "I hope we don't end up over there". Some of us did.

My first trip to the field with Co. B, 5th/46th was in January 1969 during Operation Russell Beach. I spent my first couple of days as a rifleman with B Co. I followed the more seasoned members of my platoon. Very soon I went from rifleman to radio telephone operator (RTO). I don't know if the platoon sergeant saw potential in me or if the RTO I replaced did not want to hump the extra weight.

I was present when several VC were extracted involuntarily and voluntarily from a tunnel they were inhabiting in the cold and rain. They were all wrinkled and obviously tired of their circumstances. If my memory is correct, two popped out of the same hole within 20 feet of our perimeter. After everyone realized what was happening, the Kit Carson scout assigned to our company proceeded to try to extract information from the two enemy Chu Hoi's. Their teeth were chattering so hard I don't think either provided a lot of information that night.

LZ Minuteman was built at the end of the operation. It was indeed a "death sentence" to those assigned to ward off the remnants of the 48th VC Battalion.

We ran patrols off Minuteman with the engineers who cut a road to Quang Ngai. On one of those patrols we hit a mine with a hand held mine sweeper. The explosion wounded three or four of our group of nine. Luckily no one died that day. However, on another patrol a week or so later, we lost Lt. Curtis Onchi to another mine.

I have a photo of a bunker that Co. B helped construct on Minuteman. It was for the platoon sergeant. The roof had four to five layers of sandbags and we thought was of sturdy construction. One night around midnight the NVA and VC mortared the LZ and blew four of the five layers off the roof. We found fins from several 61 MM mortars all around the bunker. Sergeant SFC Jose Pecheco-Toro was wounded during that attack as he tried to exit the bunker to check on the line. I was able to summons a medic with my radio. Sgt. Pacheco had a head wound but finished his tour of duty after he recovered.

MACV in the Americal AO — 1969

By Mike Ebert

MACV

I served in 1969 from January thru December with MACV Team 16 based at Tam Ky. MACV stood for Military Assistance Command Vietnam. MACV was established in Vietnam on 8 February 1962 and stood down on 29 March 1973. The commanding general of MACV was in charge of all US personnel in Vietnam regardless of service. The two commanding generals who were the MACV commanders when most of us were there were William Westmoreland followed by Creighton Abrams. MACV had many functions one of which was the MACV advisory program. MACV had advisory teams in every province of South Vietnam. All MACV elements in a specific Corps I-IV reported to the MACV HQ for that Corps, Da Nang for I Corps. The teams were larger or smaller depending upon the population, the number of districts and the degree of security. More non-military oriented programs could be pursued in more tranquil areas.

MACV in Quang Tin Province

The domain of Team 16 was Quang Tin Province and it was not a very tranquil province. It ranked at number four for US KIAs during the war. The province capital was Tam Ky. The province was divided into six districts, Thang Binh, Tam Ky and Ly Tin along highway QL1 from north to south were the most well established and populous. Just to the southeast of Ly Tin is Chu Lai, where Americal's HQ and largest installation including the major airfield were located. I believe Americal had the best sited base camp of any US major command in Vietnam. Why? Because of the view and the beaches. Southwest of Tam Ky on Hwy 533 (616 today) is Tien Phuoc District and town. A MACV district team for Tien Phuoc was only formed in the spring of 1969. Before that there may have been no more than a MATT team present (see below). The established US presence in Tien Phuoc since Nov 1965 was the Tien Phuoc Special Forces Camp. Southwest of Tien Phuoc was Hau Duc District and town (today Tra My). The MACV team in Hau Duc had been moved several kilometers northwest from where the actual town was located to what was termed New Hau Duc so as to be within range of Americal artillery support based at Tien Phuoc. To the northwest of Tien Phuoc is Hiep Duc District and town. Hiep Duc had been abandoned by the South Vietnamese in November 1965 because of VC/NVA pressure. In April 1969, about 4,000 refugees were "resettled" to Hiep Duc arriving in truck convoys from Tam Ky via Thang Binh. This was helped by the establishment of Landing Zone (LZ) Siberia occupied by 4-31 Infantry also in April 1969. LZ West was also able to support Hiep Duc with artillery. The MACV teams at Hau Duc and Hiep Duc were very

basic perhaps only a little larger than a MATT team if that. The Hau Duc and Hiep Duc districts had the least population but accounted for roughly half of the area encompassing Quang Tin Province from the Tranh River all the way southwest to Laos. Probably less than 3% of the ethnic Vietnamese population lived west of the Tranh. Montagnards accounted for the remaining population. As I recall the province native population was estimated to be around 400,000 in 1969.

Team 16 Composition

Team 16 was primarily composed of US Army personnel. The team had advisors for just about every facet of the provincial government with a heavy emphasis on those organizations bearing arms, military, pseudo-military and police. The US Province Senior Advisor (PSA) was a lieutenant colonel as was the Vietnamese Province Chief, Colonel Tho. His deputy was Major Cu. Who exactly Major Cu's direct advisor was is somewhat of a puzzle. It could have been the Team 16 Executive Officer, a major, the Regional Forces (RF)/Popular Forces (PF) advisor, a major, the Team 16 S3, a major or even me, no major, but I accompanied Major Cu on numerous field operations. From my perspective, the term advisor seemed more like a teacher to student relationship. I felt more like I was a coordinator. These people knew what to do. Our job was to persuade them to do it and provide what tools/incentives we had to help them get it done.

All US services were represented on Team 16 except the US Coast Guard. There was a USMC Security Squad for Payne Compound in Tam Ky. A USAF forward air control (FAC) team, call sign JAKE, with four aircraft based at Tam Ky "International Airport" and headed by an lieutenant colonel. A USN Military Field Hospital Assistance Program (MILFHAP) team, composed of three doctors, the head of which, in our case, was a Navy Captain (full colonel) who was a general surgeon, two other doctors and twelve Navy Corpsmen. Their primary duty was working at the province hospital. They did however do Medical Civil Action Program (MEDCAP) visits in villages on a regular basis. In Stars and Stripes, I read an article about how pacified a province down in III Corps was. It stated only 12% of hospital patients had war related injuries. I showed this to the Navy Captain and asked him what the percent of war related patients was at Tam Ky hospital. He said, "35%." Quang Tin was a much rougher "neighborhood" than that province down in III Corps to say the least.

One other interesting thing about the MILFHAP team is that they all arrived for duty on the same day and a year later all departed on the same date, assuming they had had no KIA or WIA who were evacuated. There may have been a day or two overlap as the old team showed the new team around before departing country.

Team 16 also had CIA representatives who worked with the Provincial Reconnaissance Unit (PRU) and the

National Police Field Force. The CIA representatives primary function was conducting Operation Phoenix, the effort to ferret out individuals belonging to the VC infrastructure and gather intelligence that could be acted upon. There were also representatives of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), at least one Team 16 officer, an Army engineer, was assigned to USAID, and Civilian Operations and Revolutionary Development (CORDS) assisting farmers and building infrastructure in hamlets and villages. CORDS in Quang Tin was supervised by a retired Army colonel, who had a multi-year contract. His villa was the most beautiful residence I saw in Tam Ky.

Within CORDS there was a program called Revolutionary Development (RD). A RD team consisted of 60 Vietnamese who were placed in a hamlet or village, wore black fatigues and were armed with essentially World War II weaponry. There were multiple teams in Quang Tin. They had received training in how to do public service projects such as well digging, making cement blocks, etc. in the hamlets/villages where they were sent to better the lives of the population. At night they set ambushes and manned static outposts. If necessary they could participate in military field operations like PFs. Advisors for the RD program called for an army captain and two NCOs, one E7 and one E6.

An operational component of the RF (Regional Forces)/PF (Popular Forces) Program were the US Army MATTs (Mobile Advisory Training Teams). A MATT consisted of a captain, a lieutenant, three NCOs and an attached Vietnamese interpreter. Every district had at least one team and the larger ones had multiple teams. What became the battle for Nui Yon Hill in May 1969 began when an RF company with a MATT came under attack on Nui Yon (H94) about 7.5km southwest of the province HQ, about 0045 on 12 May. Four team members were on the hill, the fifth was in Tam Ky. About 0130 the hill was overrun by the NVA. Three Team 16 members were killed. One team member managed to get off the hill and hide. He was wounded but not too badly and was recovered by the PRUs and taken to H110, Nui Charo, 2.5km NNW, from where he was medevaced to Chu Lai on the morning of 13 May. As you know, the actions of two medics from 3-21 Infantry, Daniel Shea, at the cost of his life and James McCloughan who was WIA resulted in each of them earning the Medal of Honor during this battle.

The US Marines had Combined Action Company (CACO) #1 based at Tam Ky with seven satellite outposts essentially ringing Tam Ky. A CACO was a modified USMC infantry company, actually about half the size of a regular Marine infantry company led by a captain. A Marine infantry squad at full TOE had 14 personnel led by a Sgt E5. One squad was assigned to each outpost, seven total. Each squad worked with a platoon of 30-35 PFs. Their company HQ and reserve in Tam Ky was no more than another twenty personnel at the most. They had three trucks, a 1/4ton, a 3/4ton, "The Little Bushel Basket" and a 2.5tn, "The Big Bushel Basket." An RTO was based at the province TOC 24/7 to get them extra help when needed, e.g., artillery, air, medevac, etc. The CACO Marines did not report to the Team 16 PSA but to USMC Combined Action Group #1 at Chu Lai. CACO #1 did however maintain close liaison with Team 16.

The Provincial Leadership

Colonel Tho and Major Cu were both northerners. They and about a million other northerners came to the south after the French called it quits subsequent to their defeat by the Viet Minh at Dien Bien Phu in far northwest northern Vietnam in May 1954. Colonel Tho had a beautiful wife and two small children. I met Mrs. Tho several times and the children during major holidays. Whenever Colonel Tho's intelligence people felt the VC/NVA might

be going to do something significant, he would set up camp in the ARVN side of the tactical operations center (TOC) and spend from one to three nights there waiting in anticipation and trying to have as many harassment and interdiction (H&Is) artillery rounds fired as possible. I remember seeing him several times sitting in his underwear, smoking Craven A cigarettes and reading Paris Match magazine. It was similar to our Saturday Evening Post, Look and Life magazines of the time. He could speak Vietnamese of course, French and English. Major Cu had the same language skills.

Colonel Tho, had his own squad or perhaps even a platoon of ARVN Quan Chans (MPs). They had at least two and maybe up to six of those big four wheeled armored cars that had two machine guns in a turret for armament. During periods of high tension, two of these were deployed right next to the TOC with the others spread out on the province HQ grounds.

I do not recall if Major Cu ever told me what his family status was. But one time out in the field, I asked him what he wanted to do when the war was over. He replied that he wanted to open an auto/truck repair shop in Dalat the resort town/city in the mountains about 85km west of Cam Ranh Bay. Unfortunately, he probably did not get to realize that dream. I have often wondered what happened to Colonel Tho, Major Cu and the other Vietnamese I knew and worked with in 1969.

Barrier Island and Quang Tin's "Sahara Desert" Stories

When you went to Vietnam what did you hear about, rice paddies, and jungle covered hills and mountains? Did anyone talk about sand except for perhaps saying beautiful beaches? My flight down to Tam Ky from Da Nang in January 1969 was in an Army Otter. I marveled at the beautiful white sand beaches and sand dunes and what appeared to be light forest going several kilometers

inland from the South China Sea. I was looking at Barrier Island and the sand dune country. "Oh, there are no VC down there, the VC are only out in the jungle." Well, that is the impression you got back in the USA wasn't it? Guess again. Those of you who were in 1-1 Cavalry, 2-1 Infantry and other Americal units came to know Barrier Island, and the sand dune country, only too well. It was crawling with VC.

The Beach Outing

On Sunday 27 April, 15 or 16 of us in a 1/4tn with radio and two or three Internationals what would today be called SUVs drove down to Chu Lai on QL1, passing thru the north part of the base to the Ky Hoa naval facilities where we were transported via landing craft to Ky Hoa Island. We drove to a beautiful beach on the north side of the island. We played football, swam, had water games with a Frisbee, ate and drank. Just the guys, no women, too bad. The only disturbing thing and this was for most of the afternoon we heard these loud "booms" individually or in succession. We thought it was air strikes somewhere but not very close. As we found out later, burning trash flew into a bomb dump up at Da Nang and set off up to 1,000lb bombs. Since the airbase at Da Nang was close to the sea the sound of the explosions had a clear path coming across the open water.

Spooky Wants to Work

During the evening of 8 June, the District Senior Advisor (DSA) in Thang Binh called in to request a Spooky gunship for an RF/PF outpost in sand dune country, Phuoc Am #3, BT2142. Now the MACV rule was that if there was no American on the ground to coordinate, the Spooky would not be sent. I called Da Nang and requested a Spooky and gave them the DSA's call sign. Within 20 minutes, a Spooky was calling the DSA at Thang Binh. The DSA explained he was in Thang Binh and there was no American physically

on the ground at the outpost. Did Spooky turn around and go home? No. The Spooky pilot asked if some Vietnamese was out there the DSA could coordinate with. The DSA asked for a few minutes time but gave Spooky the grid coordinate of the outpost. Shortly, the DSA advised Spooky he had his counterpart, the District Chief (DC), (Major Dang), seated across the table from him with a radio and he was in contact with the outpost. The DC asked his OP to mark its position. Spooky identified the OP's location.

The first target was at a designated compass bearing and distance from the OP. Soon this was broadened to a 90 degree arc firing much closer to the OP and subsequently a 180 degree arc. Finally, Spooky was cleared to fire 360 degrees around the OP and right up to the perimeter fence. It was sounding like this was going to be another Custer's Last Stand. But no, over a period of two or three hours we had Spooky 11, 12 and 13 on station. The crisis finally subsided and as Spooky 13 departed, an Americal artillery unit, call sign Paddle 99, wanted to get in on any left over action. If that was not enough, some Americal gunships came up on our frequency asking if they too could also be of assistance. One of the good things about being in a militarily populated area was that one or more units were monitoring your radio traffic and could possibly offer assistance.

I never heard a tally of VC casualties for this night action but the DSA at Thang Binh later said a VC rifle was found and it had four bullet holes in it. You can imagine what happened to the VC holding the rifle.

The lessons we learned from this action were that the Spookys wanted to work. It was not necessary for an American to be on the ground where the action was taking place. What was essential was that the Vietnamese at the requesting location had to stay as calm as possible and relay accurate information to wherever the American advisor he was coordinating with/through was located and this information could then be passed on to Spooky and changed as necessary. Yea! Progress.

I read in a book about the Vietnam War that no unit or outpost was ever overrun if a Spooky or similar gunship was on station.

The MATT Outposts in Quang Tin's Desert

On 5 August, I was told by the RF/PF major, "Ebert go out to the MATT at Binh Truc look around and get a list of what they want." I got on our daily Huey we were furnished courtesy of Americal and used as a command and control (C&C), for aerial recon, medevac or most often as a "taxi" and flew out to Binh Truc, BT 2438, landing in a cloud of dust and sand. I thought I had been transposed to the Sahara Desert in Africa. There wasn't a tree to be seen from my ground view. This place reminded me of one of those French Foreign Legion (FFL) movies about duty, patrolling and fighting in the Sahara. While taking in this scene, I briefly imagined a swarm of VC dashing across the sands with flags flying to attack this isolated outpost. No, that is what the Arabs did on horseback in the movies in the Sahara. The VC probably would have crept up as close as possible in the dark before launching their attack. Well, units of the FFL were in Vietnam for decades. Were any ever stationed in or fought in this dune country?

Back to reality, covering my face the best I could, the Huey took off throwing up a swirling cloud of sand. I proceeded to talk with all the team members present and thoroughly looked over the site. They prepared and handed me a list of what materials they wanted. Subsequently, the Huey returned and took me back to Tam Ky where I reported to the major and handed him the list. Upon looking it over he stated, "This is bullshit." In response, I told him what I had done while there and was convinced they needed what they had listed to improve their defenses and living conditions. I was then told I did not know what I was talking about. I said, "What the

hell did you send me out there for then?" There was no response. Discussion concluded.

On 8 August, I flew to Houng My, BT243403, 700m west of the Truong Giang River and our other sand dune country MATT locations excluding Binh Truc. This may have been a total of three sites. Houng My had a barbed wire fence and a bamboo fence but it had several holes in it. The living conditions were similar to Binh Truc. Here was another place that needed much improvement. As a matter of fact, all of these sand dune MATT locations were in need of a serious investment of barrier and building materials.

On 12 August, Houng My withstood a shelling and ground attack. 15 NVA KIA and 11 weapons were found within the perimeter. The favorable results of this action may have reinforced the RF/PF advisor's thinking that defenses of these sand dune MATTs were adequately provided for.

Use Your Own Discretion

One day in late August or early September, I was with Major Cu. I was informed that two Korean Marine Brigade officers and two USMC officers were coming to Tam Ky from Hoi An to propose an operation on Barrier Island. There had already been three prior major operations conducted on Barrier Island earlier in 1969 by the USMC, Special Landing Force along with Americal, ARVN and Provincial forces. When the officers arrived introductions were made and the ROK Marines and their USMC liaison officers, a major and a captain began their presentation. From my memory and research, the ROK Marines were going to make an amphibious landing onto the east shore of the Truong Giang River in the Quang Tin portion of Barrier Island. Exactly where the boundary between Quang Nam and Quang Tin Provinces was in this area I have forgotten. This would be the first combat amphibious landing in ROK Marine Corps history as I found out years later. The USMC Special Landing Force, 1-26th Marines, aboard a small US aircraft carrier, would send two companies to land via helicopter on the east shore of the Truong Giang and its other two companies would land on the South China Sea coast via landing craft. Elements of the 1st Marine Division were to secure the north and west sides of the target area. Americal units were to secure the south and southwest sides and other elements of the ROK Marine brigade would also be deployed on the north side. The troops on the north side would act as a piston moving southeast up the walls of a cylinder. USCG, USN and RVN Navy patrol boats were to patrol the South China Sea coastline and along the surrounding rivers to interdict VC attempting to escape. There would also be helicopter gunships, tactical air, naval gunfire and field artillery available to provide further support.

Major Cu appeared well pleased with this plan. The USMC Major asked Major Cu what the enemy situation

was in the area of the operation. Major Cu said, "Very bad, very bad, everyone VC. Kill everyone." To me, the ROK officers' eyes appeared to light up and the USMC Major appeared startled and alarmed. He came over to me and pulling me aside said, "What did he say?" I replied, "You heard him, use your own discretion." The operation called Defiant Stand was conducted and lasted for 12 days with a reported total of 293 VC KIA and 121 weapons seized.

Vietnamese Logic

On another occasion, I was riding with Major Cu as we went past a village near the Tam Ky airport. He said, "Very bad village, very bad. Everyone should be killed." I did not say anything in reply but I thought, "You have perhaps a couple of thousand armed individuals in the Tam Ky area operating in this alphabet soup of organizations. Why don't you get them together, surround the place and kill everyone if they are all VC as you imply?" If the ROK and USMC Marines and others involved had done as Major Cu suggested during Operation Defiant Stand and killed everyone, the South Vietnamese government officials would have been pleased because the VC problem would have been eliminated and they would not be seen as the instigators/perpetrators yet their purpose would have been achieved. On the other hand, if they would have killed everyone in the village by the airport, or during the Barrier Island operation they would be held responsible and they would bear any future consequences. This logic is summed up in the statement I heard at least a few times during 1969, "You (US personnel) come and stay one year and go home. We must live here." (Unsaid: We are going to do it our way. We do not want to be left holding the bag but you can.)

I believe we all did the best we could in the complex and confusing situation of Vietnam. The US armed forces, as someone has pointed out, had not faced a situation like we encountered in Vietnam since we were involved in the Philippines in the 1890s and 1900s and by the mid-1960s all the warriors from that earlier period had apparently gone over the horizon and we could not profit from their experiences.

Time Marches On

11 September, of significant note, the RF/PF Program major departed Tam Ky, his tour in Quang Tin was over. Back to the USA. I am sure the MATT members out in the "desert" each had a celebratory party and a "few" alcoholic beverages that day.

19 September another big operation (#5) was being planned for "the desert." A big question was if tracks could cross the Truong Giang. Operation Defiant Stand had barely been over a week or more. The VC/NVA evidently considered this area strategic territory because they kept infiltrating replacements in to make up for losses.

Team 16 Has its Annual General Inspection (AGI)

22 September, Team 16's AGI began. I do not know how many MATT "desert" locations were visited but on 26 September the IG Team Chief, LTC Provost, ordered the MATT pulled out of Houng My before sunset that day. It was done. Someone had to have alerted the Team Chief so that he made it a point to visit Houng My. I don't know who but it wasn't me but I am glad it was done. It is one thing to drop people on a hot LZ, opposition is expected. Another is to put people on a temporary OP as happened with USMC SSG Robert Howard and his recon team on Hill 488 (Nui Vu) (LZ East) in 1966. Howard's team spent two nights on H488. His battalion CO wanted to pick the team up but Howard begged to stay for one more night. It was one too many. You can read all about Howard's team's gallant stand in the book, Hill 488. It is still another to set up a more or less permanent base large or small and not make adequate provisions for its defense and the occupants living conditions.

Scavenging C-130 Parts

27 October, a C-130 had crashed in the sand dune country one to three days before. Someone had a wild idea to salvage some of its parts and use them to make something. I really can't remember what but maybe it was for a still? But, we had access to whiskey. Whatever, our Americal Huey "taxi" whisked us out the site and three or four of us got off with a toolbox and went to inspect what could be salvaged. I can't recall if the Huey shutdown and waited for us or flew off waiting for a radio call to return. If it had shutdown it would have been a sitting duck for any VC in the area who had access to a mortar and or an RPG. We might have been there 30-60 minutes. I do not recall that we found anything that could be useful. But nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Rounding Up Draft Dodgers and French Bread

28 October, the ARVNs had their own problems with draft dodgers. Up at 0330 and underway at 0455 driving down QL1 in convoy with Major Cu. We arrived at the Chu Lai gate where we wanted to enter at 0540. Hey, QL1 was now paved and the danger of mines greatly diminished and you could motor along smartly and we did. The Americal Provost Marshal met us at the gate. The idea was to have one group enter the base and drive north and then exit at another gate adjacent to Ky Hoa and deploy. Americal MPs were to monitor the base fence and some were integrated with the NPFF in case any AWOL US personnel were snared in these operations. There were also some VN Navy patrol boats watching the waterside for evaders attempting to flee by water. The other group would cordon off the southern exits from Ky Hoa. The northern group would move south to eventually join the southern group. The US MPs and VN NPFF worked well together. About lunchtime, the searching of buildings/hooches and people on the street had concluded. There were 130 people detained for processing.

Major Cu said it was now time for lunch. He went to a vendor and obtained boned chicken and bread for us. This was great. I didn't think Major Cu would patronize a vendor whom he did not think had quality products. The little loaves of bread were the Vietnamese version of French bread. This was one of the beneficial things the French brought with them when they came to Vietnam in the 1800s and the Vietnamese adopted it. The bread was just outstanding.

My wife and I returned to Vietnam in 2017 with the Americal Returns group. I can personally verify that the Vietnamese French bread is every bit as tasty as it was in 1969. Bravo.

If you worked with the Vietnamese and sometimes this was very frustrating,

you could be in the middle of a pursuit and around 1200 it was as if some magic bell rang and everything came to a halt for lunch. From what I saw on numerous occasions, this procedure was observed by the VC too. It seems to have been an unwritten law. Following lunch it was time for a siesta, also part of the SOP to around 1400 when an invisible whistle was blown and the "game" could start again.

The siesta was waived today however. Those not involved in processing people from the Ky Hoa roundup proceeded back northwest up QL1 thru Ly Tin to Ky Khuong where phase two of the operation was executed. Again, it was very well done. This time however several Vietnamese attempted to evade and there was some shooting to get them to halt. Another 130 were detained.

At both sites numerous people claimed they were workers for the Texas based contractor RMK and worked at Chu Lai Base. The police did not want to release anyone until the identity and status of each person was individually verified. At 1730 we headed back to Tam Ky. The operations had gone well.

Last Major Operation in Sand Dune Land for 1969

26 November, the sixth "major" operation was concluded in sand dune country. It had involved ROK Marines, the 5th ARVN Regt (2nd ID) and provincial forces. In this operation 300 VC/NVA were claimed KIA and 120 POWs captured.

The RD Program

This program was referenced above. I believe the officer who had been involved with the program, Smithhurst, had rotated out and back to the USA. One evening during the IG inspection in September, LTC Stafford said to me, "Mike how would you like to sleep in all the villages in the province?" My first thought was, "What is he talking about?" But my response to him, like a good soldier was, I would do it. A

problem to me was that Smithhurst spoke Vietnamese to one degree or another. I only knew phrases and would need to rely on an interpreter.

The Robert McNamara Defense Department was statistics crazy. The degree of security in South Vietnam was critical. The CIA and CORDS developed the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES). This was a detailed form filled out each month on the security status of every hamlet in South Vietnam. In an A hamlet security was the highest and an E hamlet, the lowest. A V hamlet was under VC control. What the colonel must have been alluding to was having someone(s) go into each village composed of one or more hamlets and make a personal assessment.

For whatever reason, I never had to implement the colonel's idea. Maybe he had had second thoughts? My relationship to RD didn't actually begin until November 1969. I had to wear a black dyed tropical uniform as did my two NCOs. It initially made me feel uncomfortable. Before I left the USA, my impression was that the VC were the ones who wore black and that this was their "uniform" color. Well, in my experiences in Vietnam, I saw VC wearing just about every color except white, or very vivid stand out colors like yellow, red, orange or purple. Mr. Doi was the Vietnamese Director of the RD program in Quang Tin. LTC Stafford, told me that Mr. Doi was one of the most important people in Quang Tin Province because he was a native of Quang Tin unlike the Province Chief and Deputy Province Chief. Mr. Doi lived out in sand dune country but much closer to Tam Ky. Under his personal command were several companies of Biet Laps. They were like PFs but were mercenaries and paid by Mr. Doi. According to Al Hemingway's book, Our War Was Different, about the Marine CAP Program, Skip Freeman who was with CACO #1 in 1969-70, says there were four or five companies of Biet Laps. Skip says they were paid by a rich Vietnamese lady living in Tam Ky. I never heard about the rich lady myself. She could have been Mr. Doi's mother or wife. Nor did I become privy to how the Doi family acquired its money. The Biet Laps however were extremely reliable, capable and aggressive.

The Banquet, What Was That?

On 26 December, I went with Mr. Doi to observe RD training at Huong Tra hamlet south of the Tam Ky River Bridge and along the river. Following this, Mr. Doi, wanted to drive out to his brother's house. This was out near the beach off of a fairly good road. The home was a substantial structure made of masonry with an orange tile roof. In a large room, there were two or three picnic style tables pushed together lengthwise. The tables were piled high with various dishes of food in a pyramid shape. There were at least a dozen to fifteen additional guests. My NCOs were also present having come out via separate transportation. After everyone was introduced, Mr. Doi motioned for everyone to sit down and begin eating. About half way down the pyramid, I came to

a bowl holding what appeared to be barbequed ribs. These ribs however were small and thin. They were much too small for beef or pork ribs. So what had they belonged to, a cat, rat or dog? As many of you know, rats in Vietnam could be as big as adult cats. Etiquette and decorum required me to at least sample this offering and not ask questions. They were quite tasty, so I ate them all and experienced no adverse effects later. We were in the Christmas/Holiday Season. This was my farewell luncheon and gifts were exchanged. On 29 December, I departed Tam Ky for Da Nang and out processing from Vietnam. Next stop Saigon.

Summary

In a country essentially characterized by rice paddies, jungle and hills/mountains, the above and many more incidents took place in a more or less desert like atmosphere. What a place! In a relatively secure area like Chu Lai, on the other hand you could go to the beach, swim and enjoy yourself and possibly even go fishing too.

Acronyms

- AO- Area of Operations
- HQ- Headquarters
- LZ- Landing Zone
- OP- Observation Post
- CO- Commanding Officer
- IG- Inspector General
- RD- Revolutionary Development
- RF- Regional Forces
- PF- Popular Forces
- MP- Military Policeman
- TOC- Tactical Operations Center
- RTO- Radio Telephone Operator
- FAC- Forward Air Control
- PRU- Provincial Reconnaissance Unit
- NCO- Non-Commissioned Officer
- PSA- Province Senior Advisor
- CIA- Central Intelligence Agency

Wounded in Action (WIA)

By Bill Staebell

During the Vietnam war over 58,000 US men and women were killed-in-action (KIA). This was heart breaking for the families and friends they left behind. Even though this was tragic, many more were wounded-in-action (WIA). Some were wounded severely, some were wounded superficially with most wounded somewhere in between. With that said, most, if not all, were wounded psychologically. This is my story about being on the path to being wounded.

When I graduated from high school in 1965 the Vietnam War was on. Several of my classmates joined the Navy, others joined the reserves and others went off to college. I knew I was going to college because I had developed an interest in science and the summer before I had worked as an apprentice electrician, therefore I wanted to be an electrical engineer. But the main reason I was going to college was that I wanted to find enough guys to start a rock and roll band and play guitar and sing. During high school I tried a couple times but was not successful.

In college, four other guys and I did get a band going called Colour which is the British way of spelling color; we were influenced by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. But the band did not prove to be compatible with college studies; performing and traveling every Friday and Saturday night and sometimes on Wednesday night with practices in between did not lend much time for studying. But I can't blame everything on the band. The band only lasted a year, but my grades did not improve after its demise. I was in a rut; after 3½ years of taking and retaking classes I had enough credits to be classified as a sophomore, so I decided to quit. It definitely was not my time to go to college (check out Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 in the Bible, also check out The Byrds' song Turn! Turn! Turn!).

My new-found freedom did not last long. This was January 1969 and the Vietnam War was still on. Sometime in June or July I got a nasty letter from the Selective Service complaining that I had not let them know that I had quit school. I was told to report for duty on August 11, 1969. Before then I did get a call from a recruiter trying to get me to sign up for three years; normally a draftee is in for two years. I said no, then he said I could sign up for two years. I asked him what the advantage was for signing up and he said that you may get better choices in job assignment if you sign up. As I found out later that was not true; it only helped him make his quota for recruiting.

On August 11 of that year I was off to basic training at Fort Lewis, Washington. The first day we were standing around outside of the barracks waiting for the drill sergeant to show up. I noticed that there were pay phone booths (like Superman used to change in) outside of each barracks and decided to call home. When

the drill sergeant showed up, someone asked if they could call home and he said under no circumstances were we to call home. There is an old saying that it is easier to get forgiveness than to get permission, although I was fortunate enough not to have to beg for forgiveness. After eight weeks of basic training I was stationed again at Fort Lewis for eight weeks of Advanced Individual (Infantry) Training (AIT). Then I was off to Vietnam.

During the first part of January 1970 I flew to Vietnam. I remember two hour-long refueling stops in Alaska and Japan. The airline was Tiger Airlines which I think only contracted to do military travel because I never heard of it before then and have not heard of it since. The flight took 22 hours including stops and it arrived in Cam Ranh Bay about 3:30 pm local time. I don't remember what I did the remainder of the day.

The next day before sunrise we were ordered into formation. We already knew what unit we were going to, so when your unit was called out you were supposed to gather off to the side and wait for further instructions. Several units were called out but not mine, so those of us that were left were assigned to fill sand bags. This irked me because where we were filling sand bags was between us and the ocean; besides I was a fighting machine and this was below my pay grade, although you couldn't get any lower than my pay grade.

The next day I got wise to this and fell out of formation whether or not my unit was called and then waited there to see if my unit was called; it was not. I then walked away and spent the day at the USO playing billiards and other games until the other guys got back from filling sand bags. The next day my unit was called, and I was transferred to Chu Lai.

What I remember about Chu Lai is that there was sand all over the place which made it hard to walk around. So I was put on a detail laying heavy corrugated sheets of metal which were about three feet wide and 10-12 feet long on top of the sand to function as a sidewalk. At Chu Lai we were there for a few days for additional training before going to our units. Some of that training focused on walking point and looking for trip lines to booby traps which was enough to put fear into your

heart. Also, Chu Lai was where I learned about Recon or what was more formally called Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols (LRRP). The Recon unit gave a presentation and were looking for recruits. It sounded interesting to me, but I hesitated and did not volunteer for it, later regretting that I did not.

After a few days I was transferred to my new home base which was San Juan Hill. It is a Fire Support Base (FSB) located on top of a mountain 12 miles from the coast, providing artillery, 4-deuce mortar and radio communications to the troops working in that Area of Operations (AO). The army divided South Vietnam into four sections, each one called a corps. I was in corps number one which was called I-Corps; it was in the northernmost part of South Vietnam. San Juan Hill was in the southernmost part of I-Corps. I was in the Americal Division of the Army, 11th Light Infantry Brigade (11th LIB).

The first thing that happened at San Juan Hill was that the new recruits (about 20 of us) were given a presentation in the mess hall by another reconnaissance unit looking for recruits. The difference between this recon and the recon at Chu Lai was that it was a Short-Range Reconnaissance Patrols (SRRP) unit, which meant that it patrolled the AO assigned to San Juan Hill which still was a large area.

Being in recon meant traveling in the jungle in a group of six to eight men called a tiger team; that seemed more clandestine than traveling with a larger group; this appealed to me. In recon, you needed to be in the jungle for only three days and then you were back on San Juan Hill for three days, which turned out to be not entirely true; there were times when we were out seven days. Up to this point many of the new recruits, if not all, were assigned to a line company. The companies were called "line" because they moved in single file as did everyone who traveled in the jungle; four such companies had about 100 men each, were out in the jungle on active operations for 21 days and then back on San Juan Hill for seven days as a security force. Five of us walked out of that dining room and volunteered for recon. None of us knew that recon was almost totally wiped out a few months earlier and that was why they were looking for new recruits.

The jungles and hills of Vietnam are quite beautiful; the vegetation varied from terrain covered with tall elephant grass to triple canopy jungles with majestic waterfalls here and there. At the bottom of these falls were pools of water to go swimming if you felt safe enough to; I never did. There were monkeys, apes, and bobcats and of course there were snakes. There was a snake that would coil itself up like a spring and jump through the air about 20 feet. I think they were harmless because they always jumped away from you, but they could really startle you. Also, there were leeches; thankfully they were only in the low lands, mostly around rivers and wet lands between mountains.

We would walk in a single file because in the jungle you would have to make your own path and the point man at times would have to use a machete to cut through the brush. There were some trails, but they were often dangerous to use because booby traps (now called IED's which stands for an Improvised Explosive Device) could be placed anywhere on them. This became too sadly evident when we were out one time and our point man, Sergeant Dave Slabaugh, tripped one which blew off parts of both his legs. On that particular mission we were working as a platoon with all



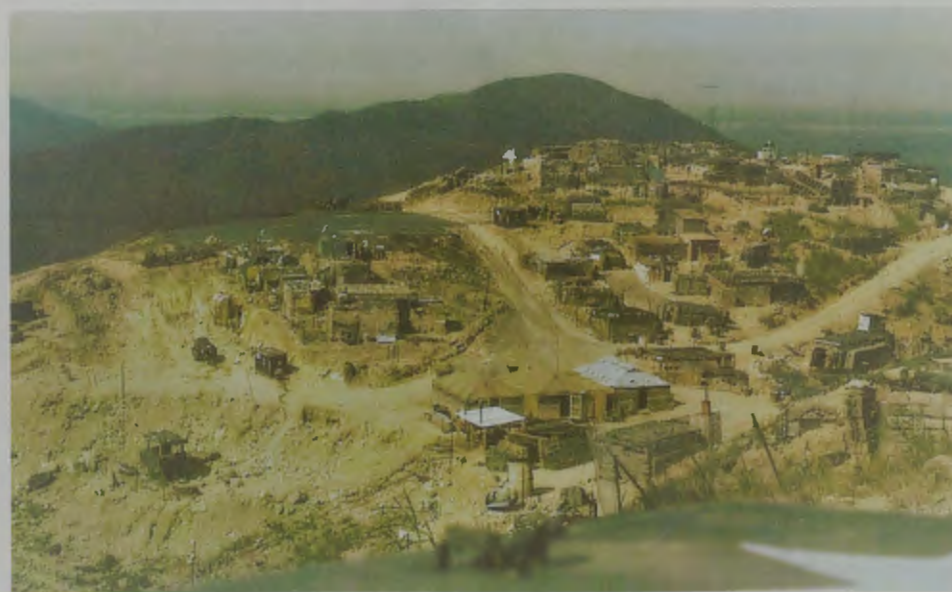
Recon platoon 1970 (Larry Barnes photo)

four teams together (about 25 men), so I was half way back and did not see it happen, but I can still hear the screams of pain and shock from him after the explosion. The closest men attended to him. As we waited for a Medevac chopper to take him out, I can still remember what I was thinking: if President Nixon had flown over in a helicopter, I would have attempted to shoot it down. This may seem strange but the thought of hating the VC or NVA that placed the booby trap there did not cross my mind, but I was not the one who was injured. At the time, the only anger I had was for the politicians who sent us to Vietnam. Larry Tayler, who was behind Dave, caught some shrapnel in the face; he was medevacked out too. His injuries were not serious, and he recovered fully.

At night, we would sleep under the stars or more often under the jungle canopy, each of us pulling guard duty for one hour by sitting up from where we lay. We laid side by side because most of the time it was completely dark, and we could not see each other or our hands in front of our faces; also, the cord for the radio handset was only a few feet long. One time we were getting ready to stop for the night and noticed a nest of red ants nearby; we moved on. At night we would pass a florescent watch from one person to the next to let us know when our hour was up. Every half-hour the firebase on the hill would radio us and ask: "If sitrep (situation report) OK, break squelch twice"; this meant if our situation was OK, we were to key the radio handset twice to let them know; we maintained radio silence because the VC could be nearby.

At times we would be flown out into the jungle by chopper (helicopter) for three to four days to recon the area. Other times we were flown out to be with a line company. The guys in the line company were always glad to see us because they knew that night, we would be pulling listening post (LP) outside their perimeter instead of some them having to do it. A listening post involved leaving the company's perimeter at dusk and going out a few hundred yards, spending the night listening for the enemy, forewarning the company if the enemy was approaching. If no action, we came back at dawn. There were times we came back in the dark; radioing ahead, hoping the guys on the perimeter got the message, which they always did.

Other times we would walk point for the company by leaving 30 minutes before them to check out the path. We



San Juan Hill (Larry Barnes photo)



Reading letters from home

could move a lot quieter with only six men versus their 100 men. Sometimes we would walk drag which meant we would stay behind to see if anyone was following the company, during those times we would walk about 30 minutes behind the company.

One time we were following a company when it came under fire from a sniper. A helicopter gun ship was called to take out the sniper but the pilot of the gun ship mistook some of the men in the company for the sniper thus firing upon them, killing one and wounding two. We were told to pop smoke which meant to use our smoke grenades to show where we were in the densely covered jungle. We formed a perimeter around the wounded and the deceased and waited for a Medevac chopper to come and extract them. As the chopper was coming in, I looked back over my shoulder and suddenly the chopper dropped down and the blades took off the top of a tree; branches scattered all over the place. The pilot was able to bring the chopper back up and glide it away from us and land it in the valley below. If it had crashed it would have produced a big fire ball and many of my comrades and I would not be here today. I don't know what caused the chopper to drop; maybe the pilot got hit and the copilot took over in a split second.

It had become dark, but we had flares going up to illuminate the area. It was decided to carry the wounded and deceased down the hill so they could be medevacked from the valley floor. The company moved out with them and recon stayed behind to insure their safe passage. As we were leaving, I was the last to leave and as I was walking backwards, to ensure we were not being followed, something hit the brush over to my right; if it was grenade it did not go off and I am thankful to God for that. When we got down to the valley I saw the abandoned chopper still there.

After I had been in Vietnam about three months a call came out for a recon team to go into the field to search a village. This was unusual because we normally operated in what was called a free-fire zone, which should have meant there were no friendly villages in this area, and thus you could fire your weapon at any sound in the jungle without

first having to identify what was causing it. I learned later that we weren't supposed to be involved in this mission and we were a last-minute replacement for a South Vietnamese National Police unit that was supposed to conduct the sweep through the village. My squad was already out in the field, I was on San Juan Hill recovering from an injury I received the day before. This ad hoc group was from different recon teams within the platoon and didn't necessarily know each other well, especially when it came to working with each other in the field.

Anyway, we were tapped for what was supposed to be an "in and out" mission. We carried no food or gear for a shelter or bedding because the choppers that took us in that morning would be extracting us that evening. We were told only to bring our weapons, ammo and water since we would return to San Juan Hill before the day was over.

Three companies had surrounded a village and recon was called to go in to search for weapons in the village. The village had only women and children in it; the oldest male was about twelve years old. The older males were out fighting the war; unknown to us which side they were on. Some may have been watching us from a hillside or were in tunnels beneath the village; one or both turned out to be true later in the day.

During the afternoon it started to lightly rain. On each hut there was a bench attached to the side of the hut; it was under a porch-like roof which extended out. That is where I sat to get out of the rain. There was a boy, ten to twelve years old, across from me smiling at me. He was holding his hand like a hand gun and pointing to a snail crossing between the two huts. He wanted me to shoot the snail, but I knew all hell would break out if all of a sudden there was gun-fire.

That evening it started to rain even more thus the helicopter pilots did not want to come to pick us up, which may have been a good thing because of what happened later. So, we had to stay the night, but we had not brought with us any provisions like ponchos to cover up from the rain nor carried any food. The companies had pulled away from the village and each had formed a circle of defense. All circles were touching so you could move from one to another. I was looking for a large piece of plastic that comes with mortar shells, so I would have something to cover up with when I slept that night while it rained.

As I was walking from one circle to another, I passed an area of thick brush, which I continued to walk away from. I stopped and started to look around toward that area. Then for a split second I saw debris flying by and then loud ringing in my ears. I could not feel my body. It was dark with a loud ringing but with that loud ringing I knew I was not dead. I knew what had happened; it was an explosion. It was so loud I did not hear it. I thought that the concussion from the explosion had made me both blind and deaf. But soon I could hear someone moaning and groaning. Then I realized it was me. I opened my eyes and the first thing I saw was my blood drenched hands which had been over my face. I was relieved to be able to see and hear but I was able to see with only one eye. My right eye had been taken out by a piece of shrapnel. Another piece hit me on the opposite cheek near the joint of my jaw which made it hard to open my jaw for about a week.

I never worried as much about being killed in Vietnam

as I did about being severely injured. Now I was injured but, thank God it was not as bad as I sometimes feared. The irony of it was that I was also afraid of being blinded so I had along with me safety glasses from a job I had in civilian life; but I did not have them on because I was not used to wearing glasses. I have no regrets though because I can still see.

The blast had knocked me to my knees. The next thing I saw when I looked to my left, which was further away from the blast was some guy who was sitting on the ground with his back to me. His back was all bloody and then in the next second, he tipped over onto the ground. I can only assume that a large amount of shrapnel passed in front of me and hit this poor fellow. If I would have taken one more step forward before the blast, I may not be here to write this today. Next a machine gun started firing, at which time I thought we were under an attack, so I scurried for the nearest foxhole, but thankfully we were not. So as things quieted down, I turned over on my back on the ground in the rain to wait for the Medevac choppers to come. Some guy came up to me and took one look at me and said, "Oh my God". He put a bandage over my damaged eye. I thought to myself that I must have a really messed up face. I was not much in pain, just a slight burning in the corner of where my eye was next to my nose, probably where the shrapnel was. Also, the right side of my face was numb but the feeling recovered sometime later.

I heard within the next couple days that seven were killed and 14 were wounded. Recently, I looked up the SITREPS (Situation Report) for the date this happen, April 2, 1970; it stated also that seven GIs were killed, 19 were wounded and three Vietnamese scouts were also killed. Of the wounded, two were not serious enough to be medevacked out, while another who was probably the most seriously wounded died two days later.

The Medevac choppers did come even though it was still raining. The severely wounded were taken out first as would be expected; I was probably on one of the last Medevac choppers taking wounded out. I found out years later (in 2002) from Steve Stoutenburgh, who was our Recon Team Leader that day, that more choppers came out to pick up those who were killed, and then finally other choppers came in to pick up body parts of which he took part in gathering; even the next day more body parts were found in the daylight and taken away.

Steve also told me that he and another guy were sitting on the ground talking before the blast. The other man was between him and the blast; the guy died but Steve was saved from serious injury. Since I was injured, I was spared from seeing any of this, but I imagine it was a traumatic experience for those who had to attend to the injured and deceased.

Later I learned the explosion was from a command detonated IED, which means that someone was watching us and then detonated it by wire when they thought enough men were gathered together. As I said earlier, it may have been a good thing that a helicopter did not pick us up earlier because this person may have detonated the IED when the chopper was on the ground picking us up, killing and injuring more people.

The question is how did an IED get planted within the perimeter of a Night Defensive Position (NDP)? There was a major mistake made that evening. There was a policy within

the 11th LIB (probably within the brigade) that infantry companies would not re-use old NDP's (a perimeter with fox holes that had been previously dug and used). Although using an old NDP would save the men in the line company a lot of work by reusing old foxholes instead of digging new ones, it could also be an obvious target for an NVA/VC to place an IED, hoping that a line company would return to that site in the future and be blown up by the IED they placed there. That evening the companies were allowed to use an old NDP that was near the village, presumably because the weather was so miserable, and it would make it much easier on the men. The IED went off at 1755 hrs. (5:55 pm). Eventually, after an investigation of the incident, the field company commander and the battalion commander were relieved of their duties and replaced for permitting the use of the old NDP.

Was this an avoidable mistake? Yes it was; there was a policy against using an old NDP and this situation demonstrates the reason for that policy. That said, there is no reason to dwell on this mistake and be angry at those who, though poor judgment, made them; it does not do us any good. Our anger at them affects us but does nothing toward them.

As I was being flown back to the hospital in Duc Pho, I remember someone putting their hand on my shoulder to comfort me. When I got to the hospital I was placed on a stretcher where there was a medical attendant on each side of me with a pair of scissors. They cut off my clothes by starting at my ankle, going up my side and finally to my neck; the reason for this was to check for other injuries. I was then covered up with a blanket. Steve Leithleiter (Baby Huiey), also in recon, who happen to be in Duc Pho, came by to visit with me. After that I was taken on the stretcher to another room to wait for surgery.

In the waiting room there was this other wounded soldier who was wailing because of his injuries. I didn't know what his injuries were; I assumed they were severe but at the time it was very upsetting to me and I threw up a couple of times. When I got in to the operation room I



Listening to cassette tape

asked the surgeon if he could save my eye, he said he would try but I knew he couldn't.

Sometime within the next 24 hours, back in South Dakota, a taxi driver from Sioux Falls would make a trip to my parent's farm 25 miles away. He met my mother at the door with a telegram from the army but would not open it until my dad came home from Humboldt where he was at the barbershop. A call was made to the barbershop and he came home as fast as possible. They were relieved that I was alive but were concerned about my condition. The same taxi driver would make two more trips to deliver updates on my condition.

I spent three days in an Army hospital in Vietnam, one week in an Army hospital in Japan and then 13 months at Fitzsimmons Army Hospital outside of Denver Co. They had to do reconstructive surgery on my eyelid because I had lost my bottom eyelid along with my eye.

It was great that they sent me to Fitzsimmons because my brother Denny, his wife Carolyn and their family lived in the Denver area; they provide a needed distraction from my time in the hospital. At Fitzsimmons I met many men who were more seriously injured than I. I bought a car and a bunch of us would go bar hopping sometimes or just go into the mountains. There I learned how to snow ski; some guys with only one leg learned how to ski too. A good friend of mine, Joe Theobalt, who lost a leg and was blind learned how to play the guitar. There was another guy, I wish I could remember his name (there are a lot of guys I wish I could remember their names, both at the hospital and in Vietnam). Anyway, he lost both of his legs and one arm but could saddle a horse and mount it from his wheelchair.

There was also one faker in the group. He was dating one of the nurses and confided to her that he was faking an eye disease so he could get out of Vietnam. She dropped him like a hot potato. He did his research well on the disease because the doctors could not verify he did not have it. Being a West Point Grad, he may have had plenty of time to research it when he was there.

In Vietnam there is such a thing as a million-dollar wound; it is a wound that is serious enough to get you out of Vietnam but not serious enough to result in permanent damage. I don't consider losing an eye a million-dollar wound but it did give me an early out from there. One consolation I thought of while lying on the ground after the explosion: I knew I was going home.

I've been able to lead a normal life without too many mishaps, like the two fender benders on my car. Also, to the numerous little old ladies that I happen to trample over who were unbeknown to me walking on my right side, I apologized to them. Also a few years later when my wife and I were at Disney Land in Anaheim, California we were going through the Pirates of the Caribbean attraction and I was still wearing a black patch over my injured eye; a boy about six years old was sitting in front of me and looked back at me, wondering if I was one of the pirates. If I had growled, I think it would have freaked him out.

After 13 months in the hospital, it became depressing being there even though a lot of time I was on leave between surgeries and I did get visitors from home (South Dakota), like good friends Bill Britton (Vietnam Vet and Colour guitarist) and his brother Dan. But I needed to get on with my life. On June 10, 1971 I was discharged from the Army, exactly 22 months after going in.

When I got home, I had the good fortune of having another good friend Bob Sechser who was also a Vietnam Vet. In fact, he was there and back before I went into army, so we hung out together after I got home. It was good to have a close friend who had gone through the experience of Vietnam like I did.



Bill and Marty at 2018 ADVA reunion

At that point in time, I met my future wife Marty; her real name is Martha. She was a friend of a friend of Bob's. It is amazing that she stuck with me because I looked a little rough around the edges. In public, I wore a black patch, was half shaven and wore an Army field jacket most of the time; no one who questioned my service in the war messed with me. That is what I wore when I first met Marty's parents. She had moved away from home and they were visiting her and were leaving, sitting in their car when I showed up. They were very concerned about me dating their daughter. Somehow Marty has cleaned me up over the years. For that, I am eternally grateful.

As I said at the start, many more were wounded in Vietnam than were killed. According to Wikipedia, 300,00 were wounded with at least 150,000 requiring hospitalization. This is not meant to take away from those who were killed, who paid the ultimate sacrifice, because they left behind many family and friends who were also deeply wounded by their death.

If you would like to respond to me, my email address is: devotedcountry@gmail.com. I would like to thank Steve Stoutenburgh and Steve Andrews (both recon Vets) in filling in the gaps in the story about the situation (Army term) that happened on April 2, 1970. Also, thanks to Larry Barnes, who also was in recon, for reviewing this story and making creative suggestions. Finally, I would like to thank Steve Andrews again for suggesting some edits to this story.



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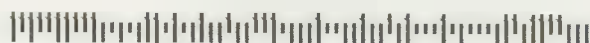
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