

January • February • March **2020**



AMERICAL

JOURNAL

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

AMERICAL DIVISION 23RD INFANTRY DIVISION



WORLD WAR II
SOUTH PACIFIC
COLD WAR
PANAMA
VIETNAM WAR
I CORPS

UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

Locator Requests

(continued on page 27)

Looking for: Information about PFC George A. Preece who was in the Americal Division 182nd Company G and killed in WWII on April 12, 1945 on Cebu. Contact: D. Preece; djpreece@gmail.com



Looking for: Any info about my grandfather who was in the 182nd Infantry Regiment from the start to the finish of the war. His name is Theodore St. Laurent. He was drafted in April of 1941 and fought on Guadalcanal, Bougainville and the Philippines. He got out as a Tec 4. Attached is a picture of his service uniform. Contact: David St. Laurent; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Information about my grandfather, George Bernard Douglas. My grandfather was in WWII, Americal Division. I was told he was on 115s. I saw his discharge once when I was little boy and he had five 5 bronze stars devices and Purple Heart. I believe back then you got bronze stars for campaigns. Contact: James Douglas; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Information about my Uncle Kenneth E. Carter who served in the Americal Division during WWII. He was born Jan. 2, 1924 in Mapleton, Maine. Contact: Name: Jim Carter; Email: [REDACTED]



Looking for: Anyone who knew Mike Howington in Vietnam USMC 1969-1970 at LZ Baldy. Looking to connect with anyone who served with him. Contact: Jackie Ruskey; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Info on 132nd Aviation of the Americal Division for Stephen L Siganowick who was part of a Helicopter Maintenance group and was a Crew Chief from March 1969 - July 1970. He served in the East Chu Lai area. Looking for anyone who knew him there. He is deceased now but would like to give his grandchildren and mine more info on his service. Contact: Linda Siganowick Fredrick; [REDACTED]



Looking for: Anyone who knew Norman A. Jensen, KIA on February 13, 1969. He served with 3/1st Infantry and was killed near Duc Pho. Contact: Ken Benson; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Info on 132nd Aviation of the Americal Division for Stephen L Siganowick who was part of a Helicopter Maintenance group and was a Crew Chief from March 1969 - July 1970. He served in the East Chu Lai area. Looking for anyone who knew him there. He is deceased now but would like to give his grandchildren and mine more info on his service. Contact: Linda Siganowick Fredrick; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Dave Orendorf, or Ray Spears. Or others from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade, Americal Division, 1967-1968. Contact: Jeff Terte; [REDACTED]



Looking for: Anyone who served with my brother, SP4 Paul M. Cahill, from Aug 69 to Apr 70 in Co D 1/20 11th LIB at LZ LIZ & LZ BRONCO. Photo shows SP-4 Paul M. Cahill and fellow Company D brothers. Contact: Name: Mike Cahill; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Anyone who served with my brother Daniel G. Myrand SPEC 4 from Lewiston, ME. He was in Vietnam June 1970 to June 1971. The info I have is 3/21st of 196 Light Infantry, Americal Division, Company B. He was in Chu Lai (Firebase Center). These are the names he gave me. Rick Hullick (PA).. Ed Stevenson (VA).. Donald Miller "Cheyenne" (Bellingham, WA).. Dale Gross (Hercuma, NY).. Chuck Torres (San Diego, CA).. James Burkhoef (Bronx, NY).. Ed Deeb (IN?).. Joe Dalton (St. Louis, MO).. Harry Gray (Dayton, OH). Also; my brother David J. Myrand (E7 Sergeant) did two tours 66-67 and 68-69 with the Land Clearers. Contact Mary Fortin; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Four guys who served in the 4th/3rd, 11th LIB, based off San Juan Hill firebase. Sgt. William S. Huey, Jr.: he served in Delta Co, 2nd platoon and was wounded and sent on to Japan in August 1970. Doc Cherrick, the medic of Polish descent who served in the same unit during 1970. Chuck Conlogue (or Conologue), who served in Recon, 4th/3rd, also off San Juan Hill. And Ruben Valentine, who served in both Delta Co. and in Recon, 4th/3rd. Contact Steve Andrews; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Dave Orendorf, or Ray Spears. Or others from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade, Americal Division, 1967-1968. Contact: Jeff Terte; [REDACTED]

What's In A Name?

By Gary L. Noller

The cover photo shows a rendition of the Americal plaque that will be installed at the soon to open National Army Museum at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. The plaque indicates the three years of activation along with the theater of operations it served in. It also lists the names of the Americal Division and 23rd Infantry Division.

Many times in the past I have encountered the discussion of the name or names of the division. I am settled in my interpretation of the names but I also understand that there are others who are unsettled or confused about the dual names.

At the beginning of World War II a large group of U.S. Army soldiers and equipment departed the United States for the South Pacific. They sailed from Brooklyn, New York and were named Task Force 6814. Most of the assets of this contingent came from the 26th Infantry Division (Yankee Division) of the Massachusetts National Guard. This included the 182nd Infantry Regiment along with artillery, administration, cavalry, medical, maintenance, ordnance, engineers, and other troops.

Task Force 6814 eventually landed at the island of New Caledonia and received orders to protect Australia from Japanese invasion. As more forces reached New Caledonia they were formed into a unique Army division. It was given the name Americal by joining the names AMERICA and CALEDONIA.

Several things made this division unique. One was that it was formed outside the United States. Most others were formed within the United States. The Americal Division also did not conform to the standard strength of an Army division. The Americal Division was larger- it contained more assets than the usual Army Division.

The Japanese never invaded Australia. In October 1942 the Americal Division sent soldiers of its 164th Infantry Regiment ashore at Guadalcanal to replace the gallant marines of the 1st Marine Division. The marines were on the offensive against the Japanese since early August 1942. They were in need of relief.

The Korean War soon followed the peace of World War II and once again aggression plunged the United States into war. The authorized strength of the Army was set by Congress. The Korean War cease fire was tentative. The Army wanted to maintain top strength in case a hot war flared up. In 1954



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

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the Army formed a provisional division based in Panama. It was named the 23rd Infantry Division.

The 23rd Infantry Division took the colors, lineage, heraldry, and traditions of the Americal Division of World War II. This was probably done due to the similarity of the jungle environments in the areas of operations and the fact that the units were formed outside the boundaries of the United States. The division was never fully filled but was on the ready in case an additional Army division was needed to satisfy war needs. It was not needed for that purpose and the division was deactivated after several months.

In early 1967 the U.S. Marines engaged North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong forces in the northern part of South Vietnam. This was a hotbed of activity and U.S. military leaders recognized the need to get additional forces into the area very quickly or face dire results. Beginning in April 1967 the U. S. Army sent forces to Chu Lai to operate under the formation of Task Force Oregon. Some troops were already in Vietnam and others were soon to arrive.

In October 1967 Task Force Oregon was transformed into the Americal Division. The Americal Division was chosen on purpose because of the similarities of circumstances in World War II and the Vietnam War. Specifically, in both cases, the division was formed outside the United States, it was formed on the basis of a task force, it did not conform in size and strength to the usual division structure, but it served in a jungle environment in the South Pacific command area, and it took an area of operations formerly assigned to the 1st Marine Division.

It is my belief that in the Vietnam War the Army always wanted to use the name Americal Division and not the name 23 Infantry Division. This was evident when I arrived in June 1970. All signs said Americal Division. The return address I used on letters home said Americal Division. All we heard was Americal Division. But the Americal Division and the 23rd Infantry Division were forever linked due to the association made during the Korean War era.

I did not see any references to 23rd Infantry Division until early 1971. I noticed that the division name abbreviation on the bumpers of vehicles was being changed from AMCAL to 23INF. Since then I have obtained written records which used 23rd Infantry Division.

One such record is a copy of a hand written Daily Staff Journal of the 1/46th Infantry dated January 24, 1971. The battalion served on FSB Mary Ann at the time and my duties were that of a battalion radio operator. Under the title ORGANIZATION the entry states S-2-3, 1/46, 196 Bde, 23 Division. The name Americal Division is not indicated on this report.

I do not struggle with the naming. I recognize both names and I prefer Americal Division. World War II veterans are correct to say that their division was never named 23rd Infantry Division. Those that say the Americal Division was always the same as the 23rd Infantry Division are incorrect. I expect that the confusion by some will continue to exist. It is not as easy as it looks.



Cover: Artist's rendition of proposed Americal Division plaque to be installed at the soon to open Army Historical Museum at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia.

Adjutant's Notes

By Roger Gilmore, National Adjutant

I open the National Adjutant report with a Happy New Year to all ADVA members. I hope all had a great holiday season in 2019 and your 2020 is off to a great start.

Our ADVA membership rolls did experience some moderate growth over the past three months. That is not unusual for the association during the holiday season, as many vets are involved with family activities and travel. We did benefit from some group and individual new member recruiting initiatives in 2019. A group of ADVA members, led by member Chuck Holdaway, attended the annual all veterans gathering in Kokomo, Indiana this past September to recruit new members. We have had recruiting initiatives at Kokomo in past years, and most all have been successful. From this recruiting drive, we picked up eight brand new members. The group also signed up five former ADVA members to be reinstated. This past December, member Richard Waggoner sent me a list of Americal Division veterans who served in the 1/52nd Infantry Regiment. Richard pulled the names from the reunions he and these men attend every other year and he felt these could be recruited for ADVA membership. I mailed membership application forms to 21 names from this list. To date, two have joined ADVA and we have hopes others will join soon.

Total new members added for this reporting period is twenty-two. Of this count, five joined as life members. Six annual pay members paid the required life member dues to upgrade their membership. The life upgrades count is slightly less than we normally experience over a three-month reporting period. Eleven former members reinstated their ADVA membership. This number is bolstered by the Kokomo recruiting effort. Hats off to ADVA members Jessie Gause, Rich Heroux, Bill Schneider, Dale Melton, Dan Gross, Richard Waggoner, Jack Logsdon and PNC David Taylor for their recruiting efforts this quarter. And a hearty thanks to the Kokomo new member recruiting group of Chuck Holdaway, JVC Bob Cowles, Les Hines and others I may have failed to mention.

The reports listed above on recent new member recruiting illustrate the value in these types of efforts. I know it is not possible to conduct group recruiting efforts such as the all veteran Kokomo event on a regular basis, but these types of recruiting drives do pay off. Some years ago, a group of ADVA members held recruiting drives at the big veterans' get together in Melbourne, Florida. I believe these efforts were fairly successful. Maybe thought should be given to doing another membership drive there. The Melbourne 2020 event is scheduled in early May. Large group recruiting efforts are helpful for bringing in larger numbers of new members, but the ongoing efforts of our ADVA members to recruit can be the best ongoing program. Many of us see other Vietnam Veterans at other functions and veterans' facilities, so we have the potential to meet other American Veterans. In past issues, I've mentioned VFW or American Legion posts and VA Care facilities as places that provide opportunities to recruit new members. I've found that local firearms shows/expos are good places to meet veterans and Americal vets – if you are into those types of events. I'm always ready to help provide prospective members information about the association if you have a name and mailing address. Send me the information and I will mail the prospective member an application form and instructions on filling out the form. The Americal Journal publication is available on request, and a good tool for recruiting new members.

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 MAY19, SEP19 or JAN20, please mail your dues renewal check ASAP. January 2020 renewal notices were mailed December 26, 2019. **If your renewal date is January 2020 and you did not receive your notice and new annual pay membership card, contact me and I will mail you another.**

The Taps listing lists our ADVA members and Americal Division veterans who passed away recently. This is the first time we have listed only Vietnam era names. We've likely had a few our WWII vets pass away recently but have not received word on any over the past three months. Please inform me when you know of the passing of an ADVA member or Americal Division veteran so his name, hometown and unit information can be listed in the Taps section.

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 for address change to this address: [REDACTED] Richardson, Texas 75080

New Members**James Baillie**C/4/31st Inf
Kokomo, IN
★ Kokomo**Larry Barker**16th CAG HHC
Aurora, IL
★ Self**John P. Blechschmid**630th Engrs (Attd) Chagrin Falls, OH
★ Kokomo**John L. Crothers**26th Engrs
Hamilton, OH
★ Kokomo**Theodore V. Esquivel**23rd S&T Bn B Co San Antonio, TX
★ Self**James F. Dowling**B/3/21st Inf
San Rafael, CA
★ Roger Gilmore**Edward C. Gittens**A/1/46th Inf
Brownsville, MN
★ Bill Schneider**Lee M. Groves**A/1/20th Inf
Kokomo, IN
★ Kokomo**Rick Herring**1/82nd Arty C Btry
Deland, FL
★ Kokomo**Ryman P. Holland**C/1/6th Inf
Southfield, MI
★ Self**Robert L. Kaloostian**198th LIB
Wake Forest, NC
★ Rich Heroux**Jerome E. Laack**A/5/46th Inf
St. Francis, WI
★ Jessie O. Gause**George Lefman**HHC/5/46th Inf
Higginsville, MO
★ Dale Melton**Rex A. Ritchie**4/21st Inf
Kokomo, IN
★ Kokomo**Kenneth Rowland**B/1/6th Inf
Minneapolis, MN
★ Dan M. Gross**Sherman Staton**1/52nd Inf
Archdale, NC
★ Richard Waggoner**Ronald Swain**1/82nd Arty
Du Quoin, IL
★ Kokomo**Claude Vires**1st/1st Cav E Trp
Greensburg, IN
★ Kokomo**New Paid Life Members****Jessie Flanagan**
1/82nd Arty A Btry
Haleyville, AL
★ Jack Logsdon**James J. McGinnis**
196th LIB
Waldwick, NJ
★ PNC David W. Taylor**Pablo C. Rodriguez**
B/1/46th Inf
Von Ormy, TX
★ Self**Neil Schultz**
E/1/52nd Inf
Iron River, WI
★ Richard Waggoner**Harry H. Winning, III**
A/2/1st Inf
Scottsdale, AZ
★ Self**Michael S. Filbin**
C/1/6th Inf
Dufur, OR
★ Mark Deam**Frank P. Hofacker**
3/18th Arty
Pennsville, NJ
★ Robert J. Pinto**Richard Mikl**
26th Engrs
New Auburn, WI
★ PNC David W. Taylor**Tom Fox**
17th Cav F Trp
Milwaukee, WI
January 1, 2020**Kenneth A. Howe, Jr.**23rd Admin Co
Crestview Hills, KY
★ Eric J. Wadleigh**Richard K. Keil**E/2/1st Inf
Westminster, CO
★ Roy Anderson**Robert Paulick**A/5/46th Inf
Durham, NC
★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis**Stephen J. White**6/11th Arty
State College, PA
★ Self**Reinstated Members****Joe Armstrong**
E/3/1st Inf
Gaston, IN
★ PNC David W. Taylor**Gary F. Beach**3/18th Arty HHB
Newport, WA
★ PNC Larry Swank**Robert F. Fisher**6/11th Arty A Btry
Rockport, MA
★ Self**Robert J. Fossett**A/4/3rd Inf
Avondale, PA
★ PNC Rollie Castranova**Daryl Guffey**E/1/52nd Inf
Laurel, MT
★ Wayne E. Butler**Ed Haag**23rd MP Co
Vinton, IA
★ Rich Merlin**Lawrence L. Lovelace**A/1/52nd Inf
Riceville, IA
★ Dan Young**Eric Donelson**C/4/21st Inf
Kokomo, IN
November 6, 1997**Allen W. Query**17th Cav H Trp
Poland, IN
★ PNC David W. Taylor**Jerry Sears**1st Cav E Trp
Rineyville, KY
★ PNC David W. Taylor**John Welsh**23rd Admin Co
Hemlock, IN
★ PNC David W. Taylor**TAPS LISTING;
MAY THEY REST IN
PEACE****Corrections –
Vietnam Veterans****John M. Gasper, Jr. ***
(Spelling LN)23rd Admin Co
Carlisle, PA
May 10, 2019**World War II
Veterans**None reported for
this period**Vietnam Veterans****Maurice Beauregard ***
4/31st InfLexington, SC
May 29, 2019**James D. Brice ***
B/2/1st InfSulphur Springs, TX
November 30, 2019**Ernie L. Carrier ***
C/1/6th InfApopka, FL
May 12, 2018**PNC David A. Chrystal, Sr. ***
23rd MP CoCentralia, MO
November 8, 2019**Richard Mikl**
26th Engrs
New Auburn, WI
★ PNC David W. Taylor**Tom Fox**
17th Cav F Trp
Milwaukee, WI
January 1, 2020**Edward B. Froelich ***C/3/1st Inf
St. James, MO
Date Unknown**Roddy Hopkins**3/21st Inf
Grand Prairie, TX
July 23, 2018**Paul A. Terry ***
4/31st InfBaldwin, NY
October 17, 2019**Johnny Jones**
C/5/46th Inf
Vidalia, LA
September 15, 2019**Gary Troxel**
C/1/52nd Inf
Phoenix, AZ
November 24, 2019**Thomas D. Webb**
C/4/21st Inf
Altha, FL
September 6, 2019

* ADVA Member

Editor's Note: As the National Adjutant mentions in his report, this is the first time that no World War II veterans have been posted to the TAPS listing. They are some still with us and I wish them continued good health in 2020.

I was also struck by the entry of the name of PNC David A Chrystal, Sr. Dave was always a cheerful presence at our national reunions. I spoke with him briefly at the Oklahoma City reunion in 2018. But as always, I had no idea it would be the last time we would chat.

Dave's bright outlook was due in part to the fact that he said he was living his second life. He was a heart transplant recipient and had great success with his new heart for many years. His heart ailment was inherited. Dave's son also had the heart condition but unfortunately his son did not receive a heart transplant and preceded Dave to his Eternal reward several years ago.

Dave not only served as a national commander for the ADVA but also as chairman of the national reunion held in Kansas City. He was a truck driver by profession and always told me of driving through my hometown of Dodge City, Kansas. He was a good friend and his smiling face will be missed. May he rest in Peace. [GLN]

**ADVA MEMBERSHIP
31 January 2020**

World War II	266
Vietnam	2,514
Cold War	6
Associate Members	184
Total Members	2,970

Americal Legacy Foundation Report

By Roger Gilmore, Chairman, Board of Directors

Foundation Web Site

Earlier last year, we had our web administrator set up a contact email account for my use in answering various inquiries posted on the Foundation web site, www.americalfoundation.org. Initially I had some difficulties configuring my email profile but have worked out those issues and am now able to access the webmail forms with the sender's inquiry text. After cleaning up many SPAM inquiries, I'm now able to focus on responding to the remaining questions and inquiries on Foundation related topics. I encourage you to use this online tool for questions about the Foundation, our fund-raising goals, our memorialization programs and the Foundation's scholarship program. You can also order additional 2020 calendars with this inquiry tool. Use the Contact Us link in the website to send your inquiry. I ask that you not send inquiries related to ADVA membership, locator requests, questions about Americal Division history from WWII and Vietnam or your personal questions about service with the Americal Division. We have a tool for those types of inquiries on the Americal website, www.americal.org.

The Foundation web site does have a great source for research on Americal Division action and key battle dates. From the web site Americal History link, a drop-down box lists the three eras of activation. From here, information specific to each era of Americal Division activation can be obtained. The information available for WWII and the Cold War era is more general and high level. Documentation available here includes the Division news sheet titled Southern Cross, distributed in country commencing in May 1968 and Division Tactical Operations Center logs that recorded the minute-by-minute activities of the units in the division.

Several recent donors have made use of the PayPal tool on the website to make a foundation donation. You have the option of using PayPal or your personal debit or credit card to make the donation. Use the Donate link and click on the yellow oval image (with the word Donate) at the top left of the screen to get into the donation process.

Americal Legacy Calendar – 2020 Edition

The 2020 edition of the Foundation calendar is proving to be very successful in our fundraising program. To date, donors for the 2020 calendar edition have donated \$20,150.00. This is from 750 donors. Our heartfelt thanks go out to all of you who steadfastly support the Foundation's various monument and grant programs through your generous donations. All calendar donations are considered "unrestricted" which means these funds can be directed to any of our programs. Our primary use for these funds is the current monument placement program for VA cemeteries as well as grants to worthy memorialization projects brought to us.

We certainly appreciate the fine work David Taylor and Lisa Anderson did on the 2020 calendar edition. The unique nature of each month's pictorial layout is something you don't see in many veterans' calendars and is certainly worthy of keeping once 2020 is over.

As I indicated above, additional calendars are available for order. You may have Americal Division veteran buddies that are not on the calendar mailing list who may enjoy receiving the calendar. Contact us via the Foundation website (outlined above) or call me to order more.

Americal Monument Programs – National VA Cemeteries

Our program for placing monuments at VA cemeteries throughout the nation is starting to look up. We have the proposal paperwork submitted at four national cemetery sites and these are in various stages of review. We continue to work with our POCs at these locations to be sure the documentation is complete and is being moved up the approval chain. Late in 2019, we received an inquiry from Massachusetts NG Adjutant's Office about a grant opportunity to help refurbish an Americal Division monument located near Camp Edwards, MA.

Following is a recap of VA cemetery sites selected and where we stand with our placement proposals.

Long Island National Cemetery - (Farmingdale, NY)

We have really great news on our proposal at this VA cemetery. I received word from the new cemetery director in mid November this proposal is approved by the District Director. In subsequent discussions with the cemetery director we agreed to initiate the placement process in late Spring to avoid any inclement weather in the Long Island area. The cemetery staff selected a placement site in a roundabout near the cemetery flagpole. ADVA member Steve Leventhal is working with us to locate local contractors near the cemetery for bids on pouring the monument's concrete foundation. Steve provided a contact for a local masonry company in mid-January. As of the writing of this article, we are in touch with that contractor for a bid to pour the concrete base for the monument. More on this project's installation progress in future editions of this publication.

Camp Butler National Cemetery - (Springfield, IL)

We submitted revised documentation to the cemetery POC as requested in late October 2019. Nothing in the way of a response on the package approval came out through the end of 2019. I followed up with the POC in early January to determine where the proposal stands. He advises he is working on the proposal package to go to the district director and expects to have it submitted by the end of January.

Rock Island Arsenal National Cemetery (Rock Island, IL)

Our POC (a new one as of October 2019) advised that the cemetery field engineer requested additions to the monument drawing before the proposal package is submitted to the district. In January, the cemetery POC advised he is working with the field engineer to prepare the drawing additions. He did advise the final approval will have to be given by the Deputy Undersecretary of Field Programs. I am not sure if this means the district director - as has been the case at other cemetery locations. At the time this article was written, we are awaiting more information on exactly what is needed for the monument drawing to complete the proposal package.

Washington Crossing National Cemetery (Newtown, PA)

We submitted our monument placement proposal package to the cemetery POC in December 2019. In early January, the POC advised us they would like to discuss a preliminary monument site within the grounds before the package is submitted for approval. ADVA member John Farley, our lead in the area for this project, plans to contact the cemetery staff for a meeting to view possible monument sites for the Americal monument. More on this project in future issues of this publication.

Americal Monument/Memorial Programs Other Locations

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

In response to Director Gary Noller's inquiry to the Museum staff POC in January, we received the artist rendition for the Americal Unit Tribute plaque. We approved the rendering in mid-January. Once the Museum staff received the approval notice and provided payment instructions, Gary authorized the payment. Foundation Finance Officer Spencer Baba issued the \$5,000.00 check immediately thereafter for the plaque purchase.

The Museum staff advised the plaque can be in place by the Museum opening, scheduled for June 2020. Unit Tributes will line the Path of Remembrance leading up to the Museum. The 12"x 18" plaques will honor individual Army units of any size and period of time. The plaques are engraved in polished Mesabi Black granite. See the picture below of the Americal Division Unit Tribute plaque.

Fort Polk, LA

The latest information I was given from the new POC overseeing the proposal is the package will have to be reviewed by the post memorialization review board. That board is scheduled to convene at the end of January and will review our proposal at that time. The complete proposal package was submitted to the POC in mid-2019. The post POC for this project advises the board plans to meet and vote on our design (first quarter of 2020). The memorialization board may ask for other inscription wording to be placed on our current monument design for VA cemeteries. We await the decision of the Fort Polk Memorialization Board on placement at the post's Warrior Park.

Fort Rucker, AL

Our Americal monument placement proposal package was submitted to the post HR Director in November 2019. The package, including the initial design by Columbus Monument Company, has been reviewed by the post memorialization board. My POC on post advises me she is readying the package for distribution to the post command personnel (JAG office, deputy garrison commander and garrison commander) for review and decisions for approval. At the time this article was written, the plan was to have the package out to this Ft Rucker command group for review

by late January. Final approval for the placement proposal must be given by the garrison commander, and this approval could take some time. More on the project approval progress in future issues of this publication.

Camp Edwards, MA

I was contacted by BG Len Kondratuk, Adjutant Massachusetts ANG, in late 2019 about helping refurbish an Americal Division monument located near Otis AFB Massachusetts. An Americal Memorial Plaque was dedicated at the Otis Memorial Park, Otis Air National Guard Base, on April 8, 1978. The 26th Infantry Division, Massachusetts National Guard was stationed from 1941 to 1942 at the then Camp Edwards later Otis ANGB when the War dept ordered the 26th to provide units for Task Force 6814 later designated as the Americal Division. The Massachusetts NG provided the following Americal units: HHC, Americal Division; 121st Medical Bn, 221st Field Artillery Bn, 182d Infantry Regt; 26th Signal Co, 57th Combat Engineer Battalion, 125th Quartermaster Co, 721st Light Ordnance Maintenance Company. Americal veterans and PNC William F McGoldrick was behind the project. He died just before the ceremony. At the time, Massachusetts had the largest number of members of the Americal Division Veterans Association than any other state.

The monument needs refurbishing, as the metal is faded and the blue paint in the Division shoulder patch is gone. BG Kondratuk is in the process of locating a local contractor to do the refurbishment. Once he has some cost estimates, the Foundation directors will review the project and decide on a grant to fund the project

Other Foundation Projects

The Vietnam Center and Archive

ADVA Vietnam Historian Les Hines is in contact with Dr. Maxner, Director of the Texas Tech Vietnam Center and Archive regarding next steps for the Foundation's non endowed gift agreement entered between the Foundation and the Archive Center. Dr. Maxner advises they project has money remaining from the initial grant and has the student intern ready to work on more materials for archive. In early January, Les mailed an updated ADVA database to Texas Tech for work to begin archiving that data. We need ADVA members/other volunteers to access the Americal portal on the archive website and do some research on records that may be of interest to your Americal Division tour of duty. This is critical to ensure the archiving process is handled correctly.

A brief video tutorial (five minutes) is now available on YouTube to assist members accessing the website to search records. The YouTube link to the tutorial is https://youtu.be/Sdv_3L2zvq4. I highly recommend viewing this tutorial before you attempt to access Americal Records via the portal. The tutorial is also available on the ADVA portal page. The new Americal portal address is <https://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/portals/americal.php>.

The Texas Tech VN Archive staff is happy to assist ADVA members with searching and using the Virtual Archive at any time. The staff can be reached via phone [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]

AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION REUNION – AUGUST 19-23, 2020
WYNDHAM INDIANAPOLIS WEST – INDIANAPOLIS, IN
HOTEL RESERVATIONS: [REDACTED] OR [REDACTED] - REUNION RATE \$129

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19

1:00pm – 7:00pm
9:00am -
Reunion Registration Open
Hospitality Room – Hours to be posted throughout the reunion.
Unit Hospitality Rooms open at discretion of coordinators

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20

8:00am – 11:00am
9:00am – 2:00pm
2:00pm – 6:00pm
Reunion Registration Open
INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY TOUR
Reunion Registration Open
Hospitality Room – Hours to be posted throughout the reunion.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21

8:00am – 11:00am
9:00am – 3:00pm
10:00am – 5:00pm
3:00pm – 6:00pm
Reunion Registration Open
INDIANAPOLIS CITY/MONUMENT TOUR
American Legacy Foundation Silent Auction
Reunion Registration Open

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22

8:00am – 9:00am
8:00am – 10:00am
10:00am – 11:30pm
12:00pm – 3:30pm
5:00pm – 6:00pm
6:00pm – 7:00pm
7:00pm
Executive Council Meeting
Reunion Registration Open
Association Business Meeting
DALLARA INDYCAR FACTORY (description follows)
First Time Attendee Reception
Reception and Seating
Banquet Dinner

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23

Farewells and Departures

TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY TOUR

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20
The Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum's mission is to preserve and share one of the world's premier collections of automotive and motor racing vehicles and artifacts, with one of the world's largest and most varied collections of racing, classic, and antique passenger cars. Take a self-guided tour of the Museum. Its collection encompasses automobiles and artifacts representing more than a century of Indianapolis 500 culture, drama and competition, plus vehicles representing NASCAR, Formula One, American short-track racing, drag racing and motorcycles. See thirty-two Indy "500" winning cars on display and view the half-hour film depicting the history of the track. Board the Speedway buses for a special "Kiss the Bricks" tour – take one lap around the oval

with recorded audio commentary by an Indianapolis Motor Speedway personality, with the option of exiting the bus at the world-famous Yard of Bricks. The Indianapolis Motor Speedway Hall of Fame – comprised of drivers, team owners and personalities who have had a significant impact on IMS – is also housed at the Museum. Proceed to Main Street Speedway for lunch on your own at one of many local restaurants.
\$63/person includes bus, escorts, and admission.
9:00am board bus, 2:00pm back at hotel. Lunch on own.

INDIANAPOLIS MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS CITY TOUR

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21

Indianapolis, home to the American Legion since 1919, devotes more acreage than any other U.S. city to honoring our nation's fallen, and is second only to Washington, DC in the number of war memorials. The Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Monument Circle is the physical and spiritual heart of Indianapolis. The basement contains a Civil War Museum and the top is crowned with a statue of Victory. Nearby is Veteran's Memorial Plaza, the centerpiece of which is an Obelisk that reaches 100 feet. We'll stop and spend some time at the Indiana World War Memorial & Museum that pays homage to the Indiana men killed in World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. At University Park you'll see Depew Fountain, a five-level fountain built in 1919. There are sculptures of President Benjamin Harrison, Abraham Lincoln, Schuyler Colfax, and Ulysses S. Grant. Adjacent is the American Legion Mall, flanked by the American Legion National Headquarters and the Scottish Rite Cathedral, judged in its early days by the International Association of Architects to be one of the most beautiful buildings in the world. Also drive by the Medal of Honor Memorial, the USS Indianapolis CA-35 Memorial, and the Indiana 9/11 Memorial. Enjoy lunch on your own at Circle Center Mall or City Market
\$54/person includes bus, guides, and admission.
9:00am board bus, 3:00pm back at hotel. Lunch on own.

DALLARA INDYCAR FACTORY

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22

The Dallara IndyCar Factory offers visitors the chance to explore 23,000 square feet of interactive and hands-on exhibits centered around the engineering and technology of the world's fastest sport! The tour begins in the Dallara Theater, complete with real racing seats, where you'll see a 9 minute film on Gian Paolo Dallara, the founder of Dallara Automobili. Don't forget to check out the specs of, and get your picture taken with, the brand new DW12! Take a garage tour to learn how an IndyCar is made and see where the two-seater IndyCars are built, maintained, and decaled! After learning the elements of building an Indy car test your driving skills in a racing simulator, equipped with iRacing – the software real drivers use at home. For those who want the extra thrill of a real open cockpit (and for those who can squeeze into one and figure out how to get OUT of it), pay an extra \$20 to take a ride around Speedway in a 2-Seater Street-legal IndyCar or NASCAR. The tour departure and return times may vary depending on the number of folks who register.
\$51/Person includes bus, escort, and admission.
\$71/Person includes bus, escort, admission and IndyCar or NASCAR ride.

12:00pm board bus, 3:30pm back at hotel.

ceremony that were taken from the crowd—but they are kind of blurry. You can even see the "official" photographer taking pictures, and dad says he remembers them taking his picture. We haven't been able to find any official photos through the National Archives as of yet.

Dad only knew the names of four of the men who also received the award— Leonard Kirkpatrick - from Greeneville, TN - we found him, but he also never received orders for the award; man with last name Fields (Kirkpatrick thought his first name was Isaac or James - he was from Whitesburg, KY; man with last name Scott; man with last name Dodd (Dad thought he was an E-6). Dad said it a one-star general that presented the awards—he drove up in a jeep that had a shiny star on it. Dad also said he thought it was the only award ceremony held during the year he was there.

I know it's been 50 years, but we're trying to find someone who remembers what happened. We are trying to find some evidence (pictorial, memos, names of men who could verify this, etc.) that would corroborate what happened during that action or with the ceremony. We have tried in the past, with no luck. I know there were lots of guys on LZ Bayonet—hoping that will work in my favor that surely there are some who have pictures or remember what happened. Surely it was a big deal and there are pictures or memos somewhere about it.. We just have to find them.

Laurie Charles Tucker; [REDACTED]



Dear editor,

I am an Australian living in Bandung, Indonesia. In Australia a friend of mine's wife was a little girl during WW2 and had some American soldiers stay with the family. I have some letters and an envelope showing an address from the soldier. We believe him to be Staff Sergeant V.E. or maybe J.E. Di Nicola, Army number 20610230, Co A, 132nd Infantry APO. 71670 P.M. San Francisco. The letters are signed off by Jim or J.E. Di Nicola?

The 132nd Infantry Regiment was part of the Illinois Army National Guard and saw much action in the South West Pacific theatre. For some time now I have been trying to gather information on this soldier without luck. I can find the history of the 132nd Infantry Regiment easy enough but nothing on this specific soldier is difficult. Can you please help or provide some links where I can find this information?

Daryl Mills, [REDACTED]

Dear editor,

My father became attached to the Americal Division in early August 1945 as a replacement infantryman. He served

on Cebu until his unit was transferred to be a part of the Japanese occupation. He never spoke of any battlefield action, but I have read that the Americal Division continued to oppose the Japanese troops on Cebu until they surrendered their weapons in late August. Dad recalled being at Okinawa as well as Tokyo.

I would appreciate any information about the Americal Divisions activities on Cebu after the atomic bomb attacks on Japan of August 6 and 8. I am also curious about the Divisions occupation activities. I know that Dad remained in the Tokyo area after the Americal Division returned to the U.S. in the autumn of 1945. He was attached to a salvage operation until he shipped home for discharge in November/December 1946. I can be reached at cell phone number [REDACTED].

George Bowers; [REDACTED]

Dear editor,

David Fredenthal (1914 - 1958) was one of America's most respected watercolor artists. He was famous for his bold, intensely vigorous and complex paintings and drawings that expressed his deep feeling for excitement with life and living. He was a brilliant natural draftsman with a special gift for catching anything, physically and emotionally on the spot, and he never went anywhere without three or four loaded pens and a sketchbook in his pocket. He was a War Artist Correspondent for both the State Department (the European and Asian fronts) and Life magazine from 1943 to 1946 and his work was featured in Life Magazine regularly during the war and after until the end of his life.

Fredenthal apparently spent some WWII time with the Americal task force. One of his works is titled : "A Little Poker Enroute to Noumea" and it is featured on the June page of the National Museum of the United States Army 2020 Calendar. The picture depicts soldiers aboard a Navy vessel doing the things GIs do. The original artwork is owned by the U. S. Army Center of Military History Art Collection. The Army History Museum at Fort Belvoir will be open to the public in June 2020.

Kenneth Rollins; [REDACTED]

Dear editor,

I just read your recent column about the beginnings of the americal.org website. Wow! It doesn't seem like 25 years have passed. Also, I think I need to write down some things about my service so that the next generations of my family have something more than my retirement flag and medals.

Tony Greene; [REDACTED]

Dear editor,

I served in the Americal Division in the Vietnam War. I've run across an article that might interest World War II Americal vets as it has to do with Tulagi Island in the Solomon Islands. Apparently, the Chinese Communist government has negotiated a renewable 75 year lease for the entire island. This island was part of the Guadalcanal campaign. The New York Times article that mentions the lease appeared on October 16, 2019.

Mark Paul Zirngibl; [REDACTED]

My Destiny With The Americal

Richard Sytsma
(As told to Les Hines and Dave Taylor)

Tour of Duty

My tour in the Americal Division in Vietnam revolved around being a Radio-Telephone-Operator (RTO) from the platoon level to the battalion command level, seeing the war from the perspective of urgent communications in the heat of battle. And the memories will remain with me forever.

Here is how it all began. I was drafted in 1967 when I was married and would have a son born before I departed for Vietnam. I went to Fort Dix for basic training and Fort Polk for Advance Individual (infantry) Training (AIT). I was assigned to the Americal, did my one week in-country training at Chu Lai then was sent to LZ Thunder, south of Duc Pho, and assigned as a new guy to be an RTO in Bravo Company, 1/20 Infantry Battalion,



The PRC-25 ("Prick 25"). The most important equipment I carried in the field.

12

11th Light Infantry Brigade.

After arriving in-country, I observed the need for RTO's in the field. I became a squad RTO. My introduction to combat was on the second day when we stopped to take a food break and I was eating some rations when the guy sitting next to me, Monty Henderson, was killed by a sniper round. After that I met Richard Gray from Iowa. He was a six-month veteran who showed me how to survive for the first month I was in the field.

My thoughts at the time were, "the better I learn how to use the radio, I will move up the ranks to be the platoon RTO, then company RTO, and each move up would provide more men around me". So I learned as much as I could about call signs, correct radio procedures, the phonetic alphabet, etc. I was also very good at reading maps and often called in Dustoff's. I moved from squad RTO to Platoon RTO in 4-5 months. Then I was assigned to be the Company RTO/Battalion-push a month later. As a Company RTO I could see more of the "big picture" of the company operations.

Although we road in Huey's to get to places, we walked everywhere, never moving in armored personnel carriers or trucks. We were true "grunts"

I wore out three pair of boots in those six months with the company and our resupply was horrible. Once, the company commander and I flew back to LZ Duc Pho on the last resupply chopper to our own rear resupply area. Some of his company support personnel he never met, like the company clerk and supply personnel because he was in the field so much. The first thing he did was get to our two guys on the resupply pad and told



Drying out my feet, waiting to be picked up east of San Juan Hill. Radio is behind me.

them to get their rucksacks; they were going to the field. Then he had two short-timers come in from the field and work the resupply pad because he knew they would be more loyal to our guys in the field because they knew them and knew what it was like to be out there.

The company commander ended up sending four rear guys out to the field and they didn't handle it very well. One guy kept crying every day. After about two weeks when the short-timers went home he sent these guys back to the rear and we never had problems with support again. It was understood there would be no more excuses for the lack of support, they were told to "find a way" especially getting food and clean socks during the monsoons out in the mountains.

LZ Cork was a rough battalion-size LZ, 1st/20th Battalion, out in the mountains. We chased the 3rd NVA Regiment in those mountains, finding elements of them from time to time. We located a huge NVA hospital by the Laotian border and spent 4-1/2 days there. General Gettys, the division commander, flew out to look at the situation and asked me what we needed. I told him we had been in the boonies a long time and would like a pallet of beer and a pallet of soda. His RTO made a call and an hour later a Chinook appeared with the resupply by our encampment in the NVA hospital area. This was on a mountain so when they dropped our supplies they rolled down a hill and it took us a day to recover it.

Facing Hell in the My Lai's

We were on numerous operations with the battalion in October 1968 and lost a lot of folks in the My Lai area (My Lai 1 ("Pinkville"), My Lai 2, 3 and 4, far north of Duc Pho. There was a heavy artillery preparation before we went into the area and I thought it was artillery but learned later it was the Navy with their offshore guns. Those large shells blew the peninsula apart. That area was the most heavily booby-trapped terrain in the Vietnam War. So our company, Bravo, came in as a blocking force for Alpha and Delta but Alpha walked into a mine field and took a lot of casualty's so we moved up to replace them and walked into a mine field ourselves.

We lost about eight soldiers plus those who were wounded. Me and another soldier, Garcia, went into the mined area and hauled out as many as we could before we became exhausted. Some other guys took our spot and thought, "If we walk in the same path and footsteps, we'll be OK." Well, they hit another mine so we lost a couple more. That incident has stayed in my head for the rest of my life. And we got no help from the locals who were there; they certainly knew where the mines were but professed ignorance to our interpreters.

Later in the My Lai's we would get into a mode where we would call in our company position just before dark, and then, at darkness, we would move out because every evening the enemy would mortar us. We would move about one-half klick and then settle in. The problem then became that our artillery would "recon by fire" at night and a couple times we almost got hit by friendly fire so we

13



NVA River Crossing off of LZ Cork. They used this to escape to the south and we used it to go after them.

stopped our night movements. Our "night loggers" had listening posts so we reconed by fire with our mortars throughout the night and that kept the enemy fire away. This was all new to us as we were used to operating in the mountains.

In December 1968 I went on R&R to Hawaii to see my wife. It was tough to know I had to return to the 'Nam after that...would have preferred to go home and call it a completed tour. On the plane coming back you could hear a pin drop among all of us who were married...wondering if we would make it through the rest of our tours. We were all going back to the jungles, the rolling piedmont, and the rice paddies; the mines, booby traps, main force NVA and the VC. Take your pick.

Moving Up The Ladder

As the Company RTO we made a lot of commo with the battalion commander flying overhead, whom I referred to as "the spy in the sky". Well, after being in the field for about five months, in the 3rd week of January 1969 I was told to move to the battalion headquarters to be the battalion commander's RTO on LZ Liz. We were very busy, having four line companies to communicate with as well as Echo Company Mortars and its Recon Platoon. Every day somewhere in the battalion we were in contact with the enemy.

My position in the battalion commander's command & control (Charlie-Charlie or C&C) helicopter was to sit on the floor facing backwards so I could see him and get his orders to make radio calls. I had my rucksack on and my back was up against the backside of the pilot's seat. There was a bolt that extended out behind the pilot's seat so I tethered by rucksack onto it so I wouldn't fall out of the bird when we made some steep banks.

From time to time our bird would take some enemy rounds. One round

hit an ammo can onboard where we kept some smoke grenades to mark positions on the ground, but none of them went off. I remember thinking, "Oh boy, I thought I was making the right move being the battalion commanders RTO, maybe I made the wrong move!"

The worst part of that job (and I was the RTO for two battalion commanders) is when there were wounded on the ground and dust-offs were going to take some time to get to us (the flight from Duc Pho or Chu Lai may be 20-30 minutes depending where we were), then our battalion commander would order his bird down to the ground to get the wounded.

We were not equipped and did not have the knowledge to take care of the severely wounded. We tried to keep them alive until we could get them to Duc Pho or Chu Lai. I mentioned to the battalion commander about this shortfall, and he brought another aid kit on board. That was it. We evacuated severely wounded about 2-3 times and my regret is that the system didn't allow me to follow-up and see if they made it in the hospital. Of course you had to get on with other things but I always wondered about those we brought in.

Intense Combat

In March of 1969 my old squad leader got ambushed by a sizable NVA unit and they had them pinned down by a river about 5 klicks southwest of LZ Liz. This was the battle in which Sergeant Stone, whom I knew, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. He has been a squad leader when I was with the platoon but was now the platoon sergeant even though his

citation said he was a squad leader.

I was with battalion commander flying over that battle - we were flying at about 1,500 feet. The situation was horrible. He called in for air strikes and other support. I had all the frequencies written on my hand that I kept showing to him: the artillery support, dust-off', Helix (Jet fighters) etc. I handled the dust-offs. I could tell our commander was getting stressed-out during the battle and at times it was becoming overwhelming. I was given an extra set of head phones and used them to communicate with fighter jets and called for Armored Personnel Carriers (APC's) from Duc Pho. At that point the APC's were nearby and I told them to get to the site immediately and I gave the jet fighters the information they required.

When we returned to LZ Liz our brigade commander, Colonel Treadwell was there on the landing pad and our battalion commander

was reassigned when he got off the bird. He was replaced by a Major Booser who was in line to be promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and he ultimately took command of the 1st/20th Battalion on LZ Liz.

I have a picture of that battle and the jet fighters dropping ordnance. I gave a friend of mine who was in our battalion recon platoon on LZ Liz, my camera so he could take some pictures while we rushed to the area. Our C&C Huey is visible flying over the fighting (Editor's note: The referred to picture can be found on the ADVA 2020 calendar for the month of October)

When the American Association a few years ago had their annual reunion in Norfolk, Virginia I attended and met some of the men who were in Stone's platoon and were on the ground in that battle. I told them I was flying over it with the battalion commander. Obviously it was a very emotional discussion. I was glad I was able to help those guys to the best of my ability.

The next month in June, 1969 we supported the Recon platoon of the 1st/3rd Battalion who was in trouble. APC's were available and we brought them in. We asked for gunships at Duc Pho (UH-1C Huey Gunships - the Sharks, 174th Assault Helicopter Company) but they were committed to another mission, so they gave us Cobra's. But my exposure to Cobra's is that they stayed too high and we had better results working with the "slicks" the UH-1C'. The sharks would hover over the enemy and unload their ordnance. The Cobra's came in too high and fast and, in my opinion, they were not helpful that day.

Two weeks later with our new battalion commander we were in another situation where our Delta Company got pinned down in a big firefight about two miles west of Duc Pho and we could actually see the NVA maneuvering against Delta from our vantage point in the air.

From my position in the bird looking back at the battalion commander and out to the rear I could see the terrain we had just passed over. The door gunner did not have that view unless he hung out over the struts to see beyond the bulkhead. I could see the NVA wait until we passed over them, then they would shoot at us from the rear.

This mission was another time when we went down to pick up the wounded and our bird took about six rounds in the process. The aircraft commander took a round in his right hand so the "Peter Pilot" the co-pilot, took control of the bird and took us back to Duc Pho. When we landed we jumped out of that bird, jumped into another one and



One of the areas in the My Lai's prepped by artillery. We still took casualties from mines.

flew back to the firefight.

On another mission with my vantage point looking to the ground in the rear as we passed over terrain, we were approaching LZ Liz near Duc Pho when I saw the NVA firing 122mm rockets from a ridgeline into our base at Duc Pho. I called in artillery and had the location pretty well pinpointed on my map. Later they had a recon platoon go out and check the area and found the launching equipment smashed up from the artillery fire.

(To Be Continued)



A UH-1C Shark Helicopter Gunship



LESTER R. STONE Jr., SGT
ARMY, BINGHAMTON NY



(Stone, aged 21 at his death, was buried in Chenango Valley Cemetery, Binghamton, New York)

LESTER RAY STONE JR. Medal of Honor Citation

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Sgt. Stone distinguished himself while serving as squad leader of the 1st Platoon.

The 1st Platoon was on a combat patrol mission just west of Landing Zone Liz when it came under intense automatic weapons fire and grenade fire from a well concealed company-size force of North Vietnamese regulars. Observing the platoon machine gunner fall critically wounded, Sgt. Stone remained in the exposed area to provide cover fire for the wounded soldier who was being pulled to safety by another member of the platoon. With enemy fire impacting all around him, Sgt. Stone had a malfunction in the machine gun, preventing him from firing the weapon automatically. Displaying extraordinary courage under the most adverse conditions, Sgt. Stone repaired the weapon and continued to place on the enemy positions effective suppressive fire which enabled the rescue to be completed. In a desperate attempt to overrun his position, and enemy force left its cover and charged Sgt. Stone. Disregarding the danger involved, Sgt. Stone rose to his knees and began placing intense fire on the enemy at pointblank range, killing 6 of the enemy before falling mortally wounded. His actions of unsurpassed valor were a source of inspiration to his entire unit, and he was responsible for saving the lives of a number of his fellow soldiers. His actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military profession and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the U.S. Army

Trip to the Mountains

By Bill Staebell

As I was writing the article (Wounded in Action) for the Americal Journal Magazine (April-June 2019), which took little over a year, I would put a draft of it to bed and then I would go to bed. There I would think about another situation in Vietnam to add to it. But I was getting concerned about length and afraid that the magazine editor would chop it down to size with or without my permission. I was happy to see that he used what I submitted verbatim.

One situation I would have liked to expand on was my time at the Fitzsimons Army Hospital. In my article I said I was there 13 months. As you might expect, a military hospital is different from a civilian hospital, at least during war times. Most surgical procedures were reconstructive in nature. When a person has lost a leg, they would take skin from another part of his body and place it over the end of his stump thus providing some cushion and an infection barrier between him and the prosthesis he would finally be fitted with. In my case, reconstruction of my lower eyelid.

In virtually all cases this was a multi-procedural surgery. A surgery was performed followed by convalescence on the hospital ward for a week or two to recover and be checked for any infection. Then if we were able, they move us to an outside barracks for a month or two to heal completely. In the barracks they would have us do light duty, like make your bed in the morning. When you were on the hospital ward an orderly would do that for you.

As you might expect once you made your bed and finished breakfast there was no requirement for your time. Sometimes, if you were physically able, you would have the duty to shine the barracks floor with a buffer.

It was one of those days of seven guys with nothing to do. We decided to buy a keg of beer and place it in the back of a guy's pickup truck and drink it on one of the obscure parking lots on base. That was fun for a while, but it got boring. Someone suggested that we head for the mountains, so we did.

The hospital was located in the city of Aurora, which is east of Denver, but close enough to get to the mountains within a couple hours, under normal situations. A normal situation was not to be had. We were heading out on I-70 west in two vehicles, a truck with keg of beer in the back with its spigot sticking high up for all other drivers to see and the rest of us in a car following close behind to make sure the keg did not fall out.

Almost immediately we came to a screeching halt. It was a stand still on I-70. This was not your ordinary back up where you inch along at five miles per hour. Ten minutes passed, no movement. Some of the guys were getting out of their vehicles to refill their glass (plastic) of beer. There was a driver in the next lane that asked if he could have a glass of beer; we gave him one.



Twenty minutes passed, no movement. At this time Mother Nature decided to call. Where were we to go? We could not just step out of the car and go by the side of the road with all those other people in their cars nearby. Besides, it was a three-lane highway and we were in the center lane.

Finally, after 30 minutes or more we started to move, and we were all in pain. They say suffering builds character; we were full of character and needed to relieve some of it.

An accident had caused the backup. As we were driving forward, we thought we might have to pass by highway patrolmen directing traffic at the site of the accident, sure enough they were there in force. I could just see myself trying to walk the line bent over in pain. But we were ready to disavow any knowledge of those guys in the truck in front of us with the keg in back with its spigot up high. Both vehicles got passed them without being stopped.

We got off the highway at the next exit and there was a gas station there. We realized that seven men rushing to the restroom would cause quite a commotion by knocking over people and merchandise; we decide to drive around back of the gas station. After everyone said ah-ah, our character was back to normal.

I don't remember how long we were in the mountains or where we went but it was only a day trip because we had to be back to the barracks by curfew which was 2200 hours.

[Bill Staebell may be contacted by email at [REDACTED]]

Donut Hole: A Marine's Real-Life Battles in Vietnam During 1967 and 68, U.S. Marines, 1st Force Logistical Command Clutch Platoon

I just finished a book called Donut Hole, It is available on Amazon at this link <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1951630254>. It starts out about me in the first two chapters, then the U. S. Marines, and then the Vietnam War. I wrote it with honor and respect.

The book also covers topics involving the U. S. Army and the Americal Division towards the end of my Vietnam tour (1968). I describe the After Action Reports (AARs) and how the Army's operation Task Force Miracle offered the diversion we needed, in our Donut Hole, in the Marine compound called Echo 4. This action was only second to Hamburger Hill for one day of casualties.

The Amazon review includes the following, "This book is about war. It tells my experiences of the paths I took as a United States Marine in Vietnam. The mouths of many soldiers will say the same – the same soldiers who had shared my paths with the experiences of my many paths in life. I have not shared these words or reflections with anyone, except in bits and pieces, and that too, with other veterans in the form of bunker talk."

Semper Fi. Bob Lebeau; [REDACTED]

Through My Eyes: A Story of Hope

By Bob G. Witworth (c) 2012 – Fourth Of A Series
Continued from Jul-Aug-Sep 2019 Americal Journal

Chapter 9 Fools Rush In

In the morning, we headed back along the path and up the hill to the rest of the platoon. David, from Third Squad, and I were talking about the night before and decided to ask Lt. John about improving the way these ambushes were pulled off. David accompanied us on more than his share of ambushes, as he was the only one trained on a starlight scope.

We started walking across the clearing at the top of the hill, and I noticed Bozo tying a thin rope to a piece of wet cardboard sticking up out of the ground. After getting lost with him, needless to say, I wanted nothing to do with him. Curious about what he was up to, David and I stood and watched from a safe distance as he stepped back about 50 feet, lay on the ground, and pulled the rope. As he pulled on the rope, a little piece of cardboard tore off. Swearing, he walked back over and tied it again. He repeated this several times. Each time he pulled the rope he crouched a little higher up off the ground. Soon he was just standing.

We got bored watching him, so we headed over behind a large boulder to talk with Lt. John about the ambush. The lieutenant didn't seem too happy to see me. I had barely started to mention some of our ideas when he suddenly jumped in the air, grabbed his helmet, and slammed it to the ground.

"Whitworth, you S-O-B!" he hollered.

He continued with his yelling: about my dad being no good, my mother spending time with men other than my dad, and me having my head up my butt. It was the same kind of stuff he had said to me before, but this time his speech included something about an air strike he had witnessed, and what had happened there. I didn't know what that had to do with our previous night's ambush, but there must have been some kind of connection, because he was saying something about killing the blankety-blank enemy over and over again.

Wow! He was mad about something and I had set him off! Maybe he didn't like me after all, or maybe he'd just had a bad night, too.

When I was at Fort Polk and had not yet realized the proper procedure in addressing an officer, I made the mistake of hollering, "Hey, you!" when I needed someone to give me a hand.

A lieutenant had responded to my request, along with informing me of his rank. No big deal. However, he soon called the company together in formation and had us stand at attention. He ordered me to report to him in front

of the 140 men. As I stood at attention, he informed the entire company of the error of my ways. Then he began a lecture, using army nomenclature, directed at me. He stormed up and down in front of me, waving his arms and yelling how he had a clear understanding of how polluted my parents' gene pool was, and how there had certainly been incest in my family. Next, he hollered about my low IQ and shared his personal knowledge that even my brothers were illegitimate.

He maintained his inspirational talk for quite some time and just about wore himself out imparting his knowledge of profanity. I kept his admonitions in mind after I was ordered to return to the formation. I must admit it had been quite a revelation to understand how important second lieutenants thought they were.

Lt. John wasn't a bad guy, even though he was saying derogatory things about my family and me. He was just a little more eager and "gung ho" than I was, that's all. One thing I did know about him: if there was going to be a fight, he would be there with us. I wouldn't have to worry about getting support the way I had when I was a kid.

BOOM!

There was a HUGE explosion.

Big chunks of dirt and rock rained down on us.

I thought I knew where the blast had come from and took advantage of a good chance to get away from the lieutenant so he could think about our suggestions.

David and I ran around the boulder and looked for Bozo. He was still where we had seen him standing, but was now lying on the ground with a dazed look on his face. I looked to the left and saw a hole about eight feet in diameter and six feet deep.

Looking back over at Bozo, I couldn't believe he was alive. The lieutenant, David, and I had been protected somewhat by the large granite boulder, but he hadn't. Rex said that when he heard the blast, he looked over and saw Bozo hovering horizontal in the air before falling to the ground.

After the commotion died down, the platoon sergeant told me he had stepped on a booby trap the night before and the ground gave way under his foot. He thought for sure when he moved his foot he would be dead, but it didn't go off.

That incident must have brought the cardboard-covered booby trap to Bozo's attention, and for some reason he decided to fool around with it. The only thing protecting him was that the booby trap must have been set too deep in the ground, blowing most of the charge upward in the air. It seemed like a miracle he wasn't hurt and it was amazing he could still hear.

This was a true example of "a fool rushing in where angels fear to tread."



Bob Witworth in Vietnam

Chapter 10 Interrogation

By the time I saw the prisoners they were blindfolded, hands tied behind their backs, sitting on the ground about four or five feet apart, and facing away from each other.

Three of our guys, checking an area, had come across a small cave that was slightly concealed. Two VC were hiding inside wearing only dirty white shorts and smelling of urine. They weren't armed, so there hadn't been a big problem capturing them.

A South Vietnamese soldier had been sent out to interrogate them. He brought an old crank telephone with him. After he talked to them for a while, it was obvious he wasn't getting any information. He set the phone behind one of them. He then took two bare copper wires and connected one end of each to a hookup on the phone. He tied the other ends to the little fingers on the VC's hands.

The interrogator asked more questions, but still not getting any answers, gave the old phone a few cranks. The VC started shaking, talking, and crying. He didn't know what electricity was, which was somewhat of a surprise to me.

The two VC ended up telling where they had hidden two hand grenades. We located the grenades and the ARVN left with his prisoners.

I realized the little shock he received from that telephone was nothing compared to what the VC

often put others through when torturing them in the villages.

Lying in ambush, we sometimes heard the sounds of someone being beaten, as crying and wailing came from the village. It felt terrible, listening to cries we could do nothing to stop. The villagers sometimes had to pay with their lives when they didn't give the cruel VC thugs what they wanted.

We patrolled through the area a few more days, going into villages, searching the grass huts called "hooches" for weapons, explosives, booby traps, or tunnels, and checking out anyone or anyplace that seemed unusual.

Most hooches had a small dirt bunker either inside or just outside the entrance, where the family could take cover or hide. Every now and then a bunker led to a tunnel where the VC were hiding. If we found one and it looked suspicious, we threw a hand grenade inside. It was hot, tiring work, especially seeing as how we had to pull guard every night and an all-night ambush every third night.

I couldn't get used to being a soldier in a combat zone. We were armed to the teeth—and a danger to ourselves. Sometimes I felt confident, only to have a sniper's bullet shake me up. I wanted to be able to know if his next shot would get closer or not.

Did I have to worry about the wild shots that weren't very close as much as the ones that snapped past me? How many VC were there?

I wanted answers, but there were none to be had, and there weren't going to be any soon.

Most of the time when we were in brush or trees, if we received fire, it was over so quickly that we couldn't tell where it came from, or how many were shooting at us. The only good thing about it was that our reflexes were getting faster at hitting the dirt.

The night ambushes always scared me. I hated them because there were so many unknowns in the dark. It was easy to get lost while moving to our location for the night. When things didn't go as planned, it was confusing and hard to correct anything that went wrong. I wanted to see the enemy if he was coming, so I never went to sleep. I was one of those kids who wouldn't pull the covers over my head when I got scared at night. If something was going to get me, I wanted to see it. It was the same on a night ambush. I lay there with my eyes open all night, looking into the darkness. I needed to get used to the different sounds and smells, and to realize the enemy was troubled too. I was still learning.

We were up at dawn one morning after sleeping in the bush. The soldiers who had been out on an all-night ambush came back into camp. But there was a problem: Bozo had forgotten his hand grenades at their ambush site. Now, some of us had to hump back to find his grenades. I was given orders to be one of them.

I definitely had an attitude about going and made it clear to anyone who was or wasn't listening. It was becoming obvious we were going to have to keep an eye out for this guy as much as for the VC.

The sergeant called me on my whining. I knew he was right because I wasn't helping with a bad situation. I had to learn how to work with Bozo and be okay with it.

Was that even possible?

I needed to try. I couldn't help but think that, if he'd been dealt with back when we were lost, we wouldn't be having this problem now.

[Editor's Note: Bob Witworth served as an infantryman in the Duc Pho-LZ Bronco area of operations. To be continued in a future edition of the Americal Journal magazine.]

THE DA NANG GANG

By Dietmar Schneider-Hector

This is the story of the events that led to my days in the "Da Nang Gang," that is, the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry (the Regulars), 198th Light Infantry Brigade, Americal Division, and several of the important incidents that occurred from 1967-69.

I was born on July 3, 1949 in Rastatt, Germany. My grandparents (oma and opa) Lydia and Karl Schneider raised me in Waldkirch, Germany until 1956. On March 6, 1956, my mother, Monika Schneider Hector, and I arrived from Germany on the troopship USNS Upshur. She had married SFC Gilbert (Radar) A. Hector, an American soldier. He would be stationed at several missile battery sites protecting Travis Air Force Base, California. He received reassignment orders for White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico. We arrived at this isolated post in late December 1961. In 1962 my mother and I became American citizens.

I completed the tenth grade at Mayfield High School in Las Cruces, New Mexico in May 1966. On July 3 I turned 17 years old. I entered the U.S. Army on July 25, 1966. From July 29 through September 24 I completed basic training in Company C, 4th Training Battalion, 2d Training Brigade (BCT), at Ft. Bliss, Texas. I received a promotion upon graduation to Private E-2 on September 25 just before I departed to Advanced Individual Training (AIT), at Ft. Huachuca, Arizona.

I arrived at Ft. Huachuca and began my AIT in Company C, 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade USACSS/TC, as a supply clerk (76A10). I completed AIT on November 18. Upon graduation from AIT I received orders assigning me to the 544th TC Company (Med Boat) in Okinawa, Japan.

The orders directed me to report to Oakland Army Terminal on December 4, but I reported two days early. I remained at Oakland Army Terminal, California from December 2 until mid-December 1966 because



1/6th Infantry Welcome Sign

my assigned unit in Okinawa had been transferred to Vietnam. I was a holdover because I was 17 years old and a change in age policy prevented my departure.

I received orders for Ft. Hood, Texas assigning me to the 2nd Armored Division. I arrived on January 3, 1967. My first unit was Headquarters Company (HHC), 2nd Battalion (M), 50th Infantry, 2nd Armored Division. I received infantry training in a mechanized unit because the battalion had an excess of supply clerks. On January 25 I received a promotion to Private First Class (PFC).

On March 7 I had the good fortune to go Temporary Duty (TDY) at Ft. Lee, Virginia to attend a unit armorer course. I completed that training on April 20. Upon my return to Ft. Hood I received an official change in my job; my new primary MOS 11H10 with a secondary MOS of 76K30, I received a promotion to Specialist 4 (SP4) on May 7.

In May the 198th Light Infantry Brigade formed with units drawn mainly from the 1st Armored Division as well as individuals and an attached unit from the 2nd Armored Division. On June 26 I received a reassignment to C Company, 9th Support Battalion, 198th Light Infantry Brigade as a unit armorer. I remained with C Company until the unit declared me excess. Subsequently I received orders for B Company, 9th Support on August 1 but pronounced excess again. On August 24, 1967 I received orders for the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry as an armorer with duty in the S-4. The battalion as well as other units of the 198th Light Infantry Brigade engaged in intensive field training exercises to prepare us for our eventual destination- South Vietnam.

In early October 1967 the main brigade departed the U.S. aboard two ships, the USNS Upshur and the USNS Gordon. The 1/6th Infantry, aboard the Upshur, departed Oakland Army Terminal on October 4 and arrived in Da Nang harbor, South Vietnam three weeks later. This included a day-long stay in Okinawa.

On October 23, 1967 we boarded an LST that carried us to the beach at Chu Lai. Much to our surprise we could hear music as we marched into the sunlight. Unknown to us, General William Westmoreland welcomed and inspected the 198th Light Infantry Brigade. We would become part of the Americal Division.

Following two weeks of in-country training at Duc Pho, the 1/6th Infantry was deemed ready to engage the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army. The 1/6th Infantry's first base camp was LZ Gator. At LZ Gator I became part of the Service Platoon in HHC. Due to a conflict with the S-4 warrant officer, I remained at LZ Gator until late January 1968. Once the battalion became the roving battalion for the brigade, I was given the opportunity leave LZ Gator to become the S-4 forward with the line companies.

Enemy movement near the beginning of Tet 68 indicated that elements of the 2nd North Vietnamese Army (NVA) were preparing attacks against American



SP4 Dietmar Schneider-Hector

and allied forces in Da Nang. On January 29, 1968 the 1/6th Infantry received an order to prepare to deploy troops to the 1st Marine Division Area of Operations while continuing offensive operations in the Chu Lai area. Initially under the operational control of the 1st Marine Division and later under Task Force Miracle, the companies boarded Marine Corps helicopters (CH 53) and one Army helicopter (CH 47) for Lo Giang, a village near Da Nang.

Sgt. Howard Walker, the NCOIC of the Ammunition Section, and one soldier departed LZ Gator on February 4 to organize the resupply of ammo with the Marines in Da Nang. I accompanied A Company on February 7, 1968. A Company 1SG Rodriguez, who knew me from LZ Gator, realized my situation and attached me to his company. It was at that time he presented me the Gunfighter blue scarf (which I still possess) that signified that I was part of the company.

The events that followed were horrific as A, B, C, and E companies (and G Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment) became engaged in heavy fighting that resulted in

the death of 266 enemy soldiers. They belonged to the 60th Main Force Viet Cong Battalion (60-70% were North Vietnamese Army - NVA-soldiers) which was supported by the 370th NVA Headquarters Company of the 1st NVA Regiment, 2nd NVA Division. It is noted that field evidence revealed more than 300 additional dead or wounded enemy soldiers had been removed from the battlefield. The official American Division report cited 800 enemy soldiers had battled the 1/6th Infantry. The battle included vicious hand to hand combat. The 1/6th Infantry did not escape unscathed from the battle: A Company lost 20 soldiers killed and 35 wounded; B Company lost 1 soldier killed and 2 wounded; C Company lost 1 soldier killed and 27 wounded; and HHC lost 1 soldier killed.

My memories of the battle are sketchy but the rice paddies, graveyard, the noise and smell of the conflict as well as the fear and exhilaration of the direct combat remain with me. The 1/6th Infantry losses occurred on February 8. Further 1/6th Infantry search and destroy operations continued until February 10. The following day, LTC William Baxley, the battalion commander, received orders to redeploy to LZ Baldy thereby terminating Task Force Miracle. The Battle of Lo Giang had lasted from February 7-11, 1968. As the line companies were airlifted to LZ Baldy, I received directions to go by truck convoy to establish myself at LZ Bowman. On the road to LZ Bowman we lost several trucks because of roadside explosions.

As I reflect upon the Battle of Lo Giang I recognize that I lost many friends whom I had known since Ft. Hood days. Many of the soldiers who survived the battle such as Lt. Wendover, Cpt. Prather, Cpt. Brennan, Cpt. Bradley, Sgt. Allen, Kaiser, and Brewer with A Company received well-earned valor awards. I apologize for the many omissions. The 1/6th Infantry (HHC, A, B, C, and E companies) received the Valorous Unit Award (VUA) on October 29, 1968 for its actions at the Battle of Lo Giang. Sadly, many of the 1/6th Infantry personnel who had participated in the battle were no longer in country when MG Gettys, the division commander, presented the battalion the VUA. The 1/6th Infantry personnel who had participated in the Battle of Lo Giang became known as the "Da Nang Gang".

I arrived on LZ Bowman (Hill 218) on April 8 to handle the resupplies for the companies in the field and receive the field extractions including the bodies of soldiers killed in action. Three days later we were mortared for two days with 107 rounds of 82mm. We also endured daily sniper fire.

I unexpectedly received word to relocate to Hill 54 near Tam Ky. The work remained the same, loading and unloading the helicopters. It was at Hill 54 that



UNK, LT Adams, CPT Bentley, UNK



LT Ramirez and Dietmar Schneider-Hector

a chopper to LZ Center. I arrived at LZ Center the next evening. The landing zone was perched high on a ridge surrounded by deep, thick green ravines. The ridge line and the immediate area around LZ Center gave the appearance of an ideal location. However, the landscape's serenity was deceptive. It was not very long before that tranquility would be shattered.

I was assigned perimeter guard duty, along with another soldier, at the base of LZ Center. My new friend and I commented repeatedly how idyllic the landscape appeared. We were so relaxed that we even exchanged jokes and stories about home.

As the sun set we detected the absence of any bird sounds. We instantly concluded that something was very wrong; there were no natural sounds emanating from the heavily vegetated area below our position. One of us used the land line (field telephone) to notify the command staff that something was terribly out of place. It was too damn quiet! We received permission to withdraw to the top of LZ Center.

If I recall correctly, enemy fire began after midnight. The enemy included the 3rd NVA Regiment, 2nd NVA Division, the 2nd NVA Division's Reconnaissance Company, and the 31st Anti-aircraft Battalion. I do not remember the number of infantry or artillery defenders. During the next two weeks LZ Center received incoming mortar rounds, 50 caliber rounds, and rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) as well as enemy infantry attacks against our hill position. I remember Lt. Michael "Big Mike" Miller and Sgt. Young having discussions about the attacks.

Resupply helicopters, Hueys and Chinooks, did not land on the landing zone (unless casualties had to be evacuated) but hovered briefly 20-40 feet above the ground or flew at a low level while either the crew chief or gunner threw the supplies out of the helicopter. Part of my duties included retrieving ammunition cases, C-rations cases, and any other supplies that were dropped from the choppers. It did not concern me to any great length that the supplies would land in an open area

that greatly increased the risk of recovering the necessary supplies. A portion of the landing zone humor was the fact that someone had to do it, so why not me.

At night Sgt. Young and I kept constant vigilance as we sat atop the bunker overlooking the steep side of the hill. Each of us had gathered hand-grenades into a pile. When we heard the enemy approaching both of us lobbed hand grenades non-stop until the voices were silenced. It was also at night when gunships arrived and let loose a barrage of gun and rocket fire on enemy positions. I will always remember the red tracers; I labeled them red rain, as they cascaded from the gunships. From my point of view, it was an awe-inspiring sight. I recall only one time when both us ran to an exposed place on the ridge, setup firing positions, and commenced firing our M-16s at the NVA. I was certain that we would be overrun; therefore, during an interlude I wrote a last letter to my parents. I hoped someone would find it and mail it for me after the battle.

On May 5 the defense of LZ Center resulted in the loss of two helicopters carrying a portion of E Company's recon platoon. The recon platoon lost six of its members including a friend, Sgt. Freeman, whom I had known since Ft. Hood. To our disbelief, my friends and I on LZ Center witnessed the helicopters crash into the valley. By May 15 daily American airstrikes directly in front of our position along with gunships raining red death upon the enemy at night and the line companies' patrols eventually relieved the pressure on LZ Center. I must not neglect to mention that PSG Finnis McCleery of A Company, 1/6th Infantry, earned the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions in the defense of LZ Center.

The LZ Center defense cost the 1/6th Infantry 18 soldiers killed in action while the battalion killed approximately 90 enemy soldiers in the immediate vicinity of LZ Center. That number increased to 145 enemy KIA as the 1/6th



Dietmar Schneider-Hector, SGT Seelbach, SGT Lippincott at Bn. TOC



PVT Dietmar Schneider-Hector

Infantry continued its pursuit of the NVA as it struggled to disengage from LZ Center. As I prepared to leave LZ Center I gathered my gear and personal items, but I could not find my last letter. I must admit that I was relieved and thankful to be alive.

I received an order to establish an S-4 forward presence at LZ Baldy. I was the NCOIC of five or six soldiers on the hill representing the 1/6th Infantry S-4 forward element. The most memorable experience was the arrival of the 2/1st Infantry in retreat from the NVA; the NVA had overrun their positions. All of us were apprehensive as we watched this dark mass of men heading in our direction. We did not know their identity. One of us finally detected green uniforms and that reassured us that they were on our team. I left my firing position and approached the group's leading element; only then did we relax our guard. However, our time on LZ Baldy did have its harrowing moments with the sporadic mortar firing into our positions. Luckily none of us was killed or wounded.

Near the end of May 1968 my little group received orders to abandon LZ Baldy and return to LZ Bayonet. It should be noted that this was the second time that I had been to LZ Bayonet since the battalion's base camp had been relocated from LZ

Gator. The month of May was costly in manpower for the battalion; it lost 30 soldiers, not including the wounded.

The 1/6th Infantry remained busy during June and July as it engaged the enemy in the Rocket Pocket (Dragon Valley-Que Son, area). I shuffled among Hills 69, 76, and 54 performing resupply operations and learning helicopter hookups. Lt. Livingston and SP4 Martin were instrumental in teaching me the techniques of running a helipad resupply operation. As was the case with many soldiers, my birthday went unnoticed, but I finally turned 19 years old.

August and September were anxious months for many soldiers in the battalion as they were nearing the end of their year tour in Vietnam. There were many short timer parties despite the battalion's continuous operational missions in the Rocket Pocket. In September I had decided to extend my tour in Vietnam in order to leave the Army before my regular ETS (expiration term of service) on July 24, 1969; because of the extension the new ETS would be May 12, 1969. I received assurance that upon my return from leave I would assume the NCOIC duties of the battalion helipad. I continued working at the different hills until my departure for a 30 day leave in the U.S. in mid-October. Consequently, I missed nearly all of the fanfare and celebrations of friends and other Regulars departing for stateside.

Upon my return to LZ Bayonet in mid-November I met Lt. Sonny Ramirez and SP4 William (Spanky) Stocks working on the battalion helipad. Lt Ramirez was a short timer while Stocks was a newcomer and my designated replacement. My hooch or place to bunk was in the ammo dump adjacent to the helipad. It appears odd today, but the arrangement worked well. I could always hear incoming helicopters whether they were scheduled or unscheduled.

The soldiers representing the line companies on the helipad constantly rotated because they were usually short timers who were pulled out of field duty. I do not recall all the personnel working on the helipad but several of those are: Sgt Mark Seelbach, Sgt. Don Harper, Sgt. Roger Hutson, SSG Tony Rabelo, Sgt. Jackson, Sgt. Wooster, SP4 King, and SP4 Bud Isenberg. I apologize for all the guys whose names I have forgotten.

My duties on the helipad included coordinating company resupply location drop zones, hooking sling-loads for Chinook and Huey helicopters, hooking water trailers (water buffaloes) to Chinook helicopters, and ensuring radio (PRC-25) communication remained open with our resupply helicopters and appropriate personnel. It was challenging work that occurred seven days a week and always on call.

During this period of my Vietnam tour I had the opportunity to meet outstanding helicopter pilots, crew chiefs, and door gunners from the Rattlers and Minutemen helicopter companies. I do not remember the correct ranks of these individuals, but a partial listing includes Womack, Trevino, Wyatt, Schaefer, "Snowball", Wayne Chasson, Bentley, Kohler, and Mathis.

As was the case with many of the soldiers of the 1/6th Infantry, these aviators were outstanding



Dietmar Schneider-Hector on water buffalo



Marine helicopter loading for movement in February 1968

individuals in accomplishing the missions for the battalion and in their interactions with me on the helipad. They added a new dimension in my collective Vietnam experience. I received "stick time" as well as opportunities to become a door gunner. This knowledge allowed me to become the second WOC in my class to find the "hover button" when I attended flight school at Ft. Wolters, Texas in 1971.

One of the most memorable events on the helipad concerned the helicopter crash that cost SP4 Stocks his life on February 13, 1969. The helipad crew collectively renamed the helipad "LZ Spanky" to honor Bill. It was a reminder to all of us that the work we performed was dangerous and should not be taken lightly.

The battalion base camp experienced periodic mortar attacks and infiltrations by sappers. The NVA pressed their attacks with the approach of Tet 69. The war continued unabated but with varying intensity levels. Additionally, the rainstorms caused havoc with the resupply missions.

Today I am Professor Emeritus in History, New Mexico State University and Staff Sergeant, USA Retired; not too bad for a high school dropout. I reside in Hillsboro, New Mexico and welcome any correspondence concerning this article. My email: [REDACTED]

day on the helipad was May 9 and when I signed out of my company. The 1SG and company clerk did not know me. They assumed I was signing into the company. It is a revelation of how secluded I had become in the unit.

When I departed the 1/6th Infantry I received NOTHING after serving in the unit almost 22 months! I must admit that I had no idea of the identity of the company commander, the first sergeant, and company clerk. Except for a few men such as SSG Howard Walker, The Da Nang Gang was no longer there; consequently, my departure from the 1/6th Infantry was uneventful except for my personal excitement.

In retrospect, I never realized that the 1/6th Infantry had 103 men killed in action plus several hundred men wounded during the first year. Perhaps this explains my indifference or stoicism when learning of the deaths of many of my friends. I left Vietnam and the Army on May 12, 1969 a disillusioned, emotionless sergeant who was two months short of his 20th birthday. When the 1/6th Infantry departed Vietnam two years later the battalion had 203



Dietmar Schneider-Hector in Vietnam

The Best Job In The Whole Damn Army

By Cameron Baird

I was drafted in 1966 and had the good fortune of having Basic and AIT at Ft. Ord, California. Good fortune because I had grown up in central California and was very familiar with the Monterey area. Even better fortune because orders for my next assignment were delayed, so I was put to work in the Reception Station as a roster guide.

My job was to collect the inductees off the bus, then get them through the various requirements for in-processing, which took four to five days. Here I was, a mosquito wing PFC acting as Platoon Leader and Drill Sergeant combined. It was wonderful.

Haircuts were top of the list. It was amusing to see the reactions of the people losing their personal identities and suddenly looking like everyone else. Uniforms completed the transformation. You're in the Army now, buddy. On it went for the next several days with swearing in, orientation lectures, medical checks (confirmation of a pulse), aptitude tests, inoculations and so forth. It was made much easier to get people around by giving some basic instruction in formations and marching early on, and I was surprised at how quickly they picked it up. Left face, right face, forward march, platoon halt, even column left or right. During slack time, I spent a lot of time explaining what the next few weeks would bring and answering questions in an effort to reduce some of the anxiety, especially of the draftees, since I had been one myself a few short weeks before.

So why was this the best job in the whole damn Army? It started at the first stop inside the gate, at the MP station. The MP's gave the lecture about contraband: weapons, alcohol, pornography, drugs and probably some other stuff too, and if you got 'em you better put 'em in the trash can being passed around or go to jail. Or maybe face a firing squad. Afterwards the MP's would divvy up the haul, and they would give me the girly magazines they already had.

I was the senior person in the barracks and had my own private room and nobody breathing down my neck. I got a group from Hawaii, and many of them had nice flower leis around their necks. I took the leis to the ladies who worked in the snack bar and got plenty of free hamburgers and cokes. By the way, those Hawaiian troops were the easiest group I ever processed. They were way ahead of the game because most of them had been in High School ROTC together, so they knew the drill and they already had their pecking order figured out.

Early on, everyone was given the opportunity to ship their civilian clothes home because they weren't allowed to have them during basic training. Most didn't. I would collect a duffel bag or two of the best stuff and take it to a flea market, where I would sell it cheap and quick and still walk away with some nice spending money. Every so often I would send a couple of the guys to the mess hall for KP duty, so the orderly room was always well stocked with pie and cake. I got a lot of three day passes, and sometimes my girlfriend would drive up in her red GTO for a weekend in Monterey or Carmel. Talk about

some long faces as we left the parking lot!

I don't recall exactly how long this idyllic existence continued, but it was a good three months. It was much too good to last, but I don't regret that it came to an end. I taught a little, but I learned a lot, and those lessons served me well for the rest of my time in the Army.

Vietnam Historian Report

By Les Hines: [REDACTED]

I met with Col. David Taylor on the trip back from the Rhode Island reunion to pick up past issues of the "ADVA newsletter". These are now scanned and added to the newer "ADVA Journal". We have nearly 6,000 pages of ADVA newsletter materials that can be provided electronically. There are some missing issues that I have identified. It may be possible to fill these in with materials that were donated to Carlisle Barracks in May of 1981. There are issues like the ones from 1973-74 that members might be able to share with me.

Texas Tech University Vietnam Center continues to work with materials from the Americal Division Veteran's Association. The materials provided in September 2016 had been processed. A new update was requested and provided this December 2019. TTU has been taking a more favorable view about what and how our materials will be displayed. TTU has developed an online portal to access the ADVA materials. It is a bit daunting to view our materials through the portal, but TTU has provided spreadsheet to me to help me locate the materials and review them. Work has been discussed regarding making the portal more user friendly as they have done for the materials for the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association. I can share the spreadsheet with veterans who would like use this to view materials on the T.T.U. site.

I have been providing support for veterans filing claims and writing books. One of the items is for a lawyer who is filing a class action suit in Connecticut for veterans who were given "bad conduct" discharges rather than being treated for PTSD issues. A form will be provided to me to share with members of the ADVA. It is a questionnaire to determine if Americal Division veterans were screened for PTSD issues as they left from service in Vietnam.

I can work with individuals who are interested in preparing a document for their company or battalion of their actions in Vietnam. I must mention that this can only now be done because of years of prep work from Bruce Flaherty, John Boyer, Conrad Geibel, Larry Swank, and Col. Wayne Johnston.

Progress has been made on compiling articles regarding our eleven infantry battalions. The 4/31st, 3/21st, 3/1st, 2/1st compilations have been updated with photos taken from our "Southern Cross" newspapers. The compilations so far have resulted in around 600-800 pages per unit. Work is continuing on 4/3rd, 1/6th, 1/20th, 1/46th, 1/52nd, 5/46th and 4/21st Inf. Bn. Some other compilations are available for 26th Engineers, 176th AHC, H Trp 17th Cavalry, Military Police, 3/16th Arty, 6/11th Arty, 3/18th Arty (not all are complete).

Boston Sleepers

Photos by Sheri Murphy (Mrs. Mike Murphy)

ADVA reunions are always great fun. The 2019 reunion tour to Boston was well received and covered several sites of interest. The pace of the reunion often means that guests must multi-task activities. These photos show tour attendees returning to the hotel and at the same time getting a little much needed shut-eye.

PNC Dutch DeGroot,
Executive Committee
ChairmanPNC Larry Swank,
Reunion ChairmanPNC Gary L. Noller,
Editor-in-ChiefVonnie Gilmore and Roger
Gilmore, National Adjutant**ADVA Annual Election**

The ADVA annual election is scheduled to be completed by June 2020. A ballot is included in the envelope with this mailing of the Americal Journal. Please note that ballots can only be completed by active members. Associate members are not authorized to submit a ballot.

The ballot lists candidates for the positions of National Commander (1), Senior Vice-Commander (1), Junior Vice-Commander (2), and Executive Committee (11). Ballots must be completed and returned prior to the May 1 deadline in order to be properly counted. Newly elected officers take office on July 1, 2020.

The ballot also has one bylaw amendment proposal concerning the filing of annual

reports by ADVA chapters. The ADVA Executive Committee reviewed the proposed bylaw amendment and recommends approval of the change.

Ballots are to be returned by postal mail no later than May 1, 2020. Send completed ballots to Mr. Jim Turner, [REDACTED] Whitehouse, TX 7579. ADVA elections are held bi-annually in even numbered years. Complete rules with regard to elections may be found in the ADVA bylaws.

The nominating committee is chaired by Jim Turner. Members of the committee are Joe Kotarba, Wayne Bryant, Rich Heroux, and Gary Noller. The committee is appointed by Reggie Horton, National Commander, with approval from the Executive Council.

Americal PX CLOSED

The Americal PX closed on January 1, 2020. Wayne and Gina Bryant carried out the duties of PX managers for many years and did an outstanding job. They have decided to retire and enjoy a bit of leisure for a change. The PX still has many items and a decision will be made as to how to proceed in the future.

Wayne and Gina greatly expanded the product line of the Americal PX and it was a huge success. Although the association did not make a large margin on items sold the steady volume of sales produced much needed income for the association. Wayne and Gina dedicated a great deal of time at reunions as well as out of their home to bring interesting items at a reasonable price. We thank them for their dedication to this task.

The association desires to continue this service but a new manager or managers will have to volunteer and step forward and accept this duty. If no one wishes to take the job then it is likely that the remaining items will be cleared out and the service discontinued. If you wish to know more about this contact National Commander Reginald Horton at [REDACTED].

Locator Requests
(continued from page 2)

Looking for: Information about my father, Robert (Bob) Gosnell "Goose Gosnell". He was in Vietnam from March 1969 to February 1970. Those are the dates on his Bronze Star award. I am looking for anyone that might have known him or why he received the award. I have a picture of him standing in front of a red sign with gold letters that says Charlie Battery, 3rd Battalion 16th Artillery. Contact: Tessa Gosnell-Sater; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Information about a Vietnam casualty. A man from our town was killed in action 50 years ago in Vietnam. His name was SP4 David Ira Styles. He was a combat medic in HHC, 3RD BN, 1ST INFANTRY, 11TH INFANTRY BDE, AMERICAL DIV. As a matter of introduction, my name is Eric Niemann and I currently serve as the Mayor of the small town of Philomath, Oregon. Contact: Eric Niemann; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Information about my father, John J Barrows (who passed in '08), served with the Americal Division in Vietnam 68-69. He was proud of his service and the men that he served with. Contact: Shaun Barrows; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Anyone from 1st Cav 1st of 8th H H C in 68. I was there from Nov to Nov 68-69. Contact: Jim Farrell; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Rick Phillips, mechanic/door gunner with the 176th Aviation Battalion, Americal Division.

Stationed in Chu Lai 1970/71. Contact: James L Toth; [REDACTED]

Looking for: SFC Charlie McKissic (sic). He was the field first for B Company 1/46 Infantry in 1971. Please let him know CPT Mc is searching for him. Contact: John McDaniel; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Radio logs and after action reports for 2/1 Infantry, 196 LIB, time frame of December 1969 to January 1971. I was the S-3 Sergeant in BTOC from January 2, 1970 to July. August to November member of the 2/1 Infantry Recon Platoon. Contact: Fred Baumann; [REDACTED]

Looking for: How many of my brothers are left out there? C Co. E Co. and A Co. 69-70 Duc Pho, LZ Bronco an FB LZ Liz. Contact: Gary O Mooneyham; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Anyone who served with Don Williams in I Corps in Vietnam in 1970. Don served in Company E, 4th/3rd Infantry, 11th Brigade, Americal. Don may have also been transferred to a Recon unit in the 11th Brigade. I am writing for Don's daughter, who lost her father at two years of age in a car accident in 1976. Don's daughter has suffered from a series of birth defects her entire life, and would like to know of any specific incidents where Don may have come into contact with Agent Orange. (I am also a Vietnam vet and would also appreciate any stories of Don's time in Vietnam.) Contact: James Stoffers; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Anyone who remembers me, Jon Franks. I arrived at LZ Siberia August 12, 1970. I was in the hooch next to communications. My bunk was next to "shorty". Contact: Jonnie Franks; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Charles Formby from Alabama. Served with D Co, 1/6 INF, 198th. Time was around 68-69 or 69. Contact: Leandro [Lee] Navarro; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Any information on a Kenneth Bottom. He was my uncle. I know he was in The Americal division in Vietnam and had 2 bronze stars. Contact: Michael Stevens; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Assistance for a friend who was tank commander in the 1/1 Cav B Troop 1968-1969, in locating the after action reports. His name is Gerald Peplinski. Contact: Brad and Sharon Anderson; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Veterans. I was a member of F Trp/8th Cav from May 70 thru Jun 71. I was a Blues Plt Sgt for a while then Scott Plt Sgt. We are always looking for former members. We have a reunion every year. Contact: T. W. Barker; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Sgt. Bell, HHC 26th engr bn 67-68. or any one remembers me- HHC Co dispatcher. SP4 Ruiz. Sgt. Bell motor pool Sgt. any one from motor pool 68-69? Contact: Victor Ruiz; [REDACTED]



David W. Taylor

Medina, Ohio 44256-2908

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