

April • May • June **2021**



AMERICAL JOURNAL

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



75TH ANNIVERSARY

UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

World War II

Looking for: Looking for some photo's of my father. His name was Thomas Paul Baum - he went by TP. He served in the Americal Division driving trucks on Feb 3, 1943. He was 23 years old. Discharged 10 Jan 1946. He was from Altoona, PA. Fingers crossed here - really hoping someone has something. Contact: Romaine A Butterbaugh; [REDACTED]

Vietnam War

Looking for: Information on 23 Sept. 1971. Charlie Co., 1-20, 11LIB, 2nd Platoon is OPCON to Charlie Troop, 1-1 Calvary. At BT038392 they hit a pressure type mine while on patrol results is 2 US WHA. Dust Off completed at 1425hrs. Charlie Co. reports that SP4 James M. Costabile and other was a photographer they were evac to 95th Evac Hospital. Looking for "PHOTOGRAPHER" anyone else present that day besides Costabile, whom I found. Contact: Wm. Gruendler; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Any information on Thomas Jonathan Lasher believed to be in A/3/21 Inf. Bn, 196th LIB, 1966-1967 time period. Daughter needs any information available. Contact: Vic Bandini; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Our lost brothers that were members of D Company, 1st BN, 6th INF, 198th LIB in Vietnam. We have located over 130 members and have conducted a reunion each year since 2011. (not counting 2020). This year the reunion will be in Chattanooga, TN from September 20-23, 2021. We will be visiting the National Medal of Honor Heritage Center, Chickamauga National Military Park and the TN Aquarium. Contact: Gary Salpini; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Anyone who served in Chu Lai in 1971 in Co. D, 1/52nd Infantry, especially our medic who carried an M-16. I got shrapnel in my neck during a firefight but no record was made of this. Also looking for Gary Thompson and LT Waterman. I found David Bohman who gifted me his M-60 machine gun when he went on R and R. I miss my Sgt. Woods. Contact: Bill Sheperd, [REDACTED]

Looking for: Combat Medics or Dust-Off Pilots who served in the Vietnam War in the Americal Division and interested in participating in a Virtual Zoom call on March 29th, 2021. Working with the Army Medical Medical Museum (AMEDD) at Joint Base San Antonio to honor a local man, SPC David Styles who was a combat medic who was KIA on March 29th, 1969 from . This is also National Vietnam War Veterans Day. Would like to hear history of combat medics and Dustoff pilots who are interested. Contact: Eric Niemann; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Capt. Mike Prothro. He was my commander when I was assigned to the 1st/1st Armored Cav. I went there to be the FO. Mike was a USMA grad. While under his command our 3rd platoon leader Lt. Tom Butler was KIA and I escorted his body home. I reported back to VN and returned to my original unit the 3rd of the 16th Artillery under the command of Lt. Col. Polk. This was late 1967 through 1969. Contact: Bill Theiss; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Anyone who knew Luis Godinez Cervantez, 11B, Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion 1st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade AMERICAL Div. Casualty in Quang Nam Province July 12, 1969. Seeking information about above soldier who is my cousin. Contact: Name: Raul Cervantez; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Anyone from A Co., 123rd Aviation Battalion in Chu Lai during 1969 and 1970. Getting older and many names escape me. A few I remember: Danny Nunnery from Georgia, John Ollifant from New Mexico, Mike Neruh from Michigan, (Capt Graff, Mr Hamilton, Mr Tiffany...Pilots). Contact: Jack Noller, [REDACTED]

Looking for: A friend I served with on Hill 63 near Hoi An, south of Da Nang. We were with HHC, 196th radio section. His name is Luis Russo. Contact: Al "Gramps" Robb; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Former members of Co. D, 3/21st Inf., 196th LIB. I am having a reunion in November and would like to make contact with you. I may be contacted through a friend. I am Dennis Whittaker. Contact: Brian Smith; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Eugene Molder or Eugene Moulder. He was from Las Vegas and in 1970-71 he was with the Americal Division. My mother moved me before he returned from Nam. We lived on Ogden, his 1/2 brother is Darrell Molder/Moulder. Contact: Juanita Ramos; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Information on Jonathan Thomas Lasher, possibly a member of A/3/21 in the 1966 - 1967 time period. Contact: Vic Bandini; [REDACTED]

Looking for: Anyone who served in Chu Lai in 1971 in Co. D, 1/52nd Infantry, especially our medic who carried an M-16. I got shrapnel in my neck during a firefight but no record was made of this. Also looking for Gary Thompson and LT Waterman. I found David Bohman who gifted me his M-60 machine gun when he went on R and R. I miss my Sgt. Woods. Contact: Bill Sheperd, [REDACTED]

Send your locator requests to [REDACTED]. Locator requests are archived on the Locator page on the ADVA website at www.americal.org.

Contact the ADVA

Dave Eichhorn
National Commander
[REDACTED]
General issues, PX sales

PNC Dutch DeGroot
Chairman, Executive Committee
[REDACTED]

Roger Gilmore
National Adjutant
[REDACTED]
Membership status, TAPS notifications

Spencer Baba
National Finance Officer
[REDACTED]
Payment of bills

Americal Legacy Foundation
www.americalfoundation.org

PNC Ronald Ellis
Asst. National Finance Officer
[REDACTED]

New membership applications, renewals, all dues

PNC Gary L. Noller
Editor-in-Chief
[REDACTED]

Submissions for Americal Journal

PNC David Taylor
Contributing Editor, WWII Historian
[REDACTED]
World War II stories

Americal Division Veterans Association
www.americal.org

VA Health Care As An Option

By Gary L. Noller

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) reports that as of September 30, 2019 there were 19 million living American veterans. Of this number, approximately 9 million veterans were enrolled in VA health care. This represents 47% of the veteran population.

Not all veterans are eligible for VA health care. Eligibility depends on several factors that include length of service, nature of discharge, and financial status. A veteran may apply for enrollment in VA health care by completing and submitting VA Form 10-10EZ. The VA will notify the veteran of acceptance or provide reasons for non-acceptance.

There are many eligible veterans within the 53% of veterans who do not receive VA health care. There are also many reasons why eligible veterans are not in the VA system. Some simply do not know that they are eligible. Veterans do not need to have a service connected disability to receive VA health care.

VA health care is not exclusive. A veteran may receive health care from a private provider in the community and also receive care from the VA.

Veterans sometimes worry that if they get care from the VA that they are taking it away from some one who has a greater need. But this is not the case. VA funding is determined by Congress and has continually increased over the years. Part of the method of determining funding levels is the number of veterans enrolled in VA health care.

There is a belief by some veterans that private care is of higher quality than VA health care. But customer surveys and independent evaluations show that VA health care is equal to or sometimes better than private community care.

So why should a veteran eligible for VA health care enroll in the system? One of the most important reasons is that enrollment in VA health care gives the veteran an additional option in choosing health care providers. One never knows when or where health care will be required. An additional option may prove to be the best source for much needed care.

A veteran in the VA health care system can obtain services from any VA medical facility. This may be valuable if a veteran becomes ill while away from home. The VA has 170 medical centers and almost 1,100 community based outpatient clinics.

The Kerrville VA recently announced the availability of the COVID-19 virus vaccine. I immediately phoned the VA and was able to secure an appointment for the immunization. I qualified due to my age and due to the fact that I am enrolled in VA health care. I have a very short wait to receive the vaccine.

If I did not use VA health care I would still be waiting to find out about a vaccine shot. I do not know when or where or who it would come from. Perhaps a local hospital or my primary care physician would notify me of availability. Or maybe it would be provided by a local pharmacy or by attending a mass immunization event at a local venue. Since I use VA health care I am already scheduled for the vaccine.

Veterans seeking information about vaccine availability should call the Kerrville VA at 830-896-2020 and ask for the call center. There may be a wait time to reach an operator. Phone lines open up later in the day and later in the week. Patience will be needed and is appreciated.

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[The above is a reprint of a newspaper column that originally appeared in a hometown paper. I urge veterans to contact their local VA health care about vaccinations for COVID-19. Many veterans have reported success with the VA vaccine effort.]



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

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

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Cover: World War II veterans founded the Americal Division Veterans Association 75 years ago.

From the National Adjutant

By Roger Gilmore

As we move towards mid-2021, many parts of the nation are seeing some relief from the COVID-19 infections. Some states are beginning to open more. The initiative to get many more citizens vaccinated to protect against the infection seems to be moving along well. Depending on what news source one reads, the different brands of vaccine are highly successful preventative measures against contracting and spreading the disease. I sincerely hope all members have received their series of vaccinations or will do so soon. I completed my round the end of March at the Dallas VA Medical Facility.

ADVA had another really good membership increase over the past few months since the first quarter issue of the Journal. We added sixteen new members to the Association membership roster during this past reporting period. This is on pace with the previous period. Of those sixteen, two joined as life members. The count for annual pay members on the roster upgrading to Paid Life is fifteen. This is an increase of three over the previous reporting period. Seven former members reinstated their annual membership for this period – slightly down from the last period. Again, the numbers for re-instatements can be partly attributed the annual dues payment reminder post cards we mail when we have no record of dues payment for their renewal date. Hats off to members PNC David Taylor, Gordon Williams, Bill Bectel, William Siano, Stephen Foor and PNC Gary L. Noller for sponsoring new members during this reporting period.

A small committee formed from the association leadership recently looked at the current life due's structure to possibly develop a tiered structure of differing, one-time payments based on member or veteran age. With many ADVA members and Americal Division veterans at (or over) the age of 70, a new slate of payment rates is now in place for annual pay members to consider for upgrading to life membership. Editor in Chief Gary Noller has an article in this issue that outlines the new Paid Life rate structure based on age. This is now a real value for annual pay members. Our expectations are that this new rate structure will encourage Americal Division veterans to join the association for a great membership rate. If you are currently an annual pay member and feel that annual pay is still your best option, please continue to keep your dues current when you receive your dues renewal notice. I will track new Life members over the course of the next few months to determine the impact of the new life dues rates. As always, each ADVA member is the best recruiting tool we have. Continue to encourage those Americal Division veteran non-members to join the association. Benefits of ADVA membership are this high-quality publication and Americal Legacy Foundation Scholarship grant sponsorship for any children or grandchildren attending college or vocational school.

Thanks go out to all January 2021 annual pay renewal members who mailed in their dues payment upon receipt of the renewal notice. Of the 380 renewal notices mailed in early January, eighty-five percent of those members paid their dues by mid-March. Please note your annual pay due date on the back cover (beside your name) and mail your payment if not current.

The Taps listing in this issue of the *Americal Journal* is again lengthy. The Vietnam portion includes name of Jimmy Turner, the South Midwest Chapter Commander at the time of his passing. Chapter Vice Commander Cameron Baird, PNC Ronald Ellis, ADVA member Larry Brown and I attended Jimmy's remembrance service in March. The service was conducted with full military honors.

The best way to inform me when you know of the death of an ADVA member or Americal Division veteran is email or telephone call. My contact information is listed on the back page of this publication. Please be sure to include the member or veteran's full name, date of death, Americal unit (if known) and hometown.

Please notify me when you have a change of address so the ADVA roster can be updated ASAP.

New Annual Pay Members

John F. Baxter, III
A/3/1st Inf
Charlotte, NC
★ PNC David W. Taylor

Donald R. Belt
163rd Trans Co
Salem, KY
★ Gordon Williams

Edward J. Brooke
17th Cav H Trp
Philadelphia, PA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Dennis C. Harter
357th Trans Co
Depew, NY
★ William Bechtel

Philip Pavone
Div HDQ
Mystic, CT
★ William Siano

Greg Reeser
198th LIB
Ashland, OR
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Robert W. Riggelman
1/14th Arty
Melbourne, FL
★ Self

Eric W. Robyn
6/11th Arty
Manns Choice, PA
★ Stephen Foor

Frederick Scardina
C/3/21st Inf
Baltimore, MD
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

William T. Shepard
198th LIB
E Northport, NY
★ Self

Roger P. Theberge
71st AHC
Hallowell, ME
★ Self

James Valenti
C/4/21st Inf
Batavia, OH
★ Roger Gilmore

New Paid Life Members

Paul Gannaway
11th LIB
Maricopa, AZ
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

James Logue
4/31st Inf
Osteen, FL
★ Self

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

David F. Bliss
C/1/6th Inf
The Villages, FL
★ Bill Lobeck

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

John L. Crothers
26th Engrs
Hamilton, OH
★ Chuck Holdaway

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

Richard P. Gerety
1/46th Inf
Santa Cruz, Ca
★ Self

Mayo K. Gravatt
B/146th Inf
Blackstone, VA
★ Bill McLaughlin

Danny Moss
328th RR Co
Battle Creek, MI
★ Self

James V. Occipinto
A/1/20th Inf
Holland Patent, NY
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Stanley C. Pijor
23rd MP Co
Grafton, OH
★ Rich Merlin

Robert Poznanski
TF Oregon
Linden, NJ
★ Self

Joseph M. Quinn
3/82nd Arty
Garwood, NJ
★ Self

Victor Taipale
3/82nd Arty C Btry
Tumbling Shoals, AR
★ Self

Jose Vargas
26th Engrs HHC
Northglenn, CO
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

David Weaver
3/16th Arty Btry A
Centennial, CO
★ Don Ballou

New Associate Members

Mary M. Grazioplene
Batavia, NY
★ Self

Paul M. Scardina
Laguna Woods, CA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Reinstated Members

Gary F. Beach
3/18th Arty HHB
Newport, WA
★ PNC Larry Swank

Ernest Byrd
A/4/21st Inf
Bunnlevel, NC
★ Dave Kennedy

Joseph A. De Frank
B/1/6th Inf
Belleville, NJ
★ PNC David W. Taylor

Robert F. Grubb
1/52nd Inf
Downingtown, PA
★ Terry Wyrick

Bruce P. Monaco
A/5/46th Inf
Vero Beach, FL
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Frank A. Sims, Jr.
661st Ord Det
Ama, LA
★ Richard Drum

James A. Sipe
C/4/31st Inf
Palmyra, PA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

TAPS LISTING; MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

World War II Veterans

Larry Hueine *
132nd Inf Rgmt
Downers Grove, IL
March 2019

Claude G. Mook, Jr. *
132nd Inf Rgmt Co L
North Bloomfield, OH
January 29, 2021

Vietnam Veterans

Charles J. Bertke *
3/18th Arty
New Weston, OH
March 3, 2021

Stephen Caballero
D/4/31st Inf
Long Beach, CA
January 12, 2021

Joseph R. Cousineau *
196th LIB
Clearwater, FL
March 20, 2020

Martin J. Gentile
11th LIB
Newtown Square, PA
November 3, 2020

Perry C. Hopkins
123rd Avn Bn
Clover, SC
May 30, 2019

James E. Johnson *
1/1st Cav B Trp
Copperas Cove, TX
January 31, 2021

Damon Kerns
C/5/46th Inf
N Judson, IN
June 4, 2019

Howard Nickel
C/5/46th Inf
La Fontaine, IN
December 21, 2020

David S. Orndorff *
A/3/1st Inf
Tewksbury, MA
September 13, 2020

Anthony J. Paluszek *
D/1/52nd Inf
Clearwater, FL
Date Unknown

Gary W. Peach *
3/16th Arty
Glouster, OH
Date Unknown

Daniel Porter
C/5/46th Inf
Victoria, TX
August 3, 2020

Peter Rico *
4/3rd Inf
Highland, IN
January 25, 2021

Lonnie Scipioni *
D/3/1st Inf
Hibbing, MN
January 10, 2021

Edward J. Soczienski
A/4/3rd Inf
Lyndhurst, NJ
February 8, 2021

Gary M. Suits *
26th Engrs Co E
Cleveland, TN
August 6, 2020

Jimmy R. Turner *
A/1/6th Inf
Whitehouse, TX
February 13, 2021

Stephen J. White *
6/11th Arty
State College, PA
May 3, 2018

* ADVA Member

ADVA MEMBERSHIP 31 March 2021

World War II	241
Vietnam	2,440
Cold War	4
Associate Members	180
Total Members	2,865

Americal Legacy Foundation Report

By Roger Gilmore, Chairman, Board of Directors

Foundation Web Site

Since the last issue of this publication, email requests via the Contact Us link on the Foundation website have diminished considerably. Several orders for merchandise offered for sale in the Legacy store came in January, but additional orders have since slowed up. Editor-in-Chief Gary Noller published an informative article inside the front cover of the first quarter Americal Journal about the Legacy Store items for sale. Since that issue was published, Gary has received about ten orders for Foundation sponsored merchandise. We very much appreciate the Foundation support through these purchases of Americal Division history items. If you lose track of your first quarter 2021 issue of the Americal Journal with the merchandise order information, ordering information is listed in the Legacy Store link at www.americalfoundation.org.

The Americal History link on the foundation website has a wealth of information about the division's history, specifically for the Vietnam era. The World War II and Cold War years are a high-level overview (see subcategories). The Vietnam Era has links to DTOC (Division Tactical Operation Center) logs. The detailed logs are detailed records of the division's daily activities from its time of activation until it was deactivated in November 1971. Other Americal Division records and publications available under the link include Operational Reports - Lessons Learned (ORLL), the Americal Magazine (published quarterly in Vietnam starting in May 1968) and the Americal Division news sheets. The news sheets were published under the title Southern Cross.

These logs and publications may be of individual value when trying to research a specific incident or date of action. In the coming months, we plan to update the Gallery link on the website. Some of the pictures in the Gallery are stale, and we have newer completed projects for site visitors to view.

Americal Legacy Calendar – 2021 Edition

The 2021 edition of the Americal Legacy Foundation calendar has exceeded expectations for "unrestricted" donations. We very much appreciate the remarkable generosity of all ADVA members that continue to support our programs is. Our goal is to apply these donated funds to projects that ensure the legacy of the Americal Division is eternal. Your donation shows appreciation for the work the Foundation is doing.

Every donation, no matter the size of the amount, moves us toward our goals of being able to fund not only the VA national cemetery projects but other memorialization initiatives for the Americal Division. It would be a great slight to Americal Division for its history in conflicts to completely disappear from the nation's history. Should you care to make an additional donation, specific information for the mailing address, as well as a donation form, can be found on the Americal Legacy Foundation website under the Legacy Store link. Our policy is to send a donation acknowledgment letter for all donations of \$50.00 or more. If your donation is

less than this threshold amount and you want a donation acknowledgment letter, please let us know.

At the time this article was submitted for the Journal publication, ALF director Gary Noller reported donation bank deposits of nearly \$25,500.00. Some of the bank deposits included monies received from the sales of merchandise.

Americal Monument Programs – National VA Cemeteries

The VA national cemetery monuments program has been in place since about mid-2016. For the current design, we originally ordered five units from Keith Monument Company to be constructed. Placement at VA Cemeteries throughout the country moved along well at the beginning. Then came a period of little activity at selected cemeteries. At some point during this time, we ordered five more to be constructed, thinking that program would move forward. While the program has sputtered somewhat, I think it can be considered a moderate success. Today we have placed six monuments at national VA cemeteries. The one exception for this design is placement at the National Vietnam War Museum in Mineral Wells, Texas (2019).

Foundation directors recently discussed a long-term strategy to move this program forward while at the same time ensure we do not end up some years down the road with completed monuments sitting in inventory at the quarry. Director and First Vice President Gary Noller did some online research of VA cemeteries in the 48 states to identify a prospect list for cemeteries with monuments currently in place. This gives us some target locations with possibly greater potential for placement approval. More planning is needed now to determine the best method for approaching these sites with our placement proposal.

We are also considering ordering and purchasing the Keith Monument design on an "as needed" basis for future needs rather than a bulk order of five at a time. The per unit cost on an individual order basis is more, but we do not buy more than can be placed at one time. Keith Monument has given us a cost for orders on an "as needed" basis and a time frame in which that price would be honored. Other placement strategies being considered include contact at the top level of the National Cemetery Administration to explain our program (and successes) and request an approval go ahead from the top that would apply nationwide.

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

Rock Island Arsenal National Cemetery (Rock Island, IL)

The Americal Division monument was placed at this VA Cemetery location in November 2020. Site coordinator Lyle Peterson plans to have a monument dedication ceremony at the cemetery later this year, possibly in May or June. This is of course contingent on Covid-19 pandemic restrictions being eased. We will reach out to ADVA members and Americal Division veterans who reside nearby with ceremony details and an invite to the ceremony. More information when it is known will be posted on the Americal and Friends FB page and the Americal Legacy Foundation website at americalfoundation.org. The web link will be the Blog tab.

Washington Crossing National Cemetery (Newtown, PA)

In early March I finally received a bid from the concrete contractor in Morton PA, to pour the concrete base that will support the monument, then place the monument once it is delivered. Unfortunately, the bid was extremely high and cost prohibitive for our budget. I advised the contractor we would not be using his services for the work. I contacted the POC at the cemetery to advise him we would not likely submit our placement proposal for that site because concrete work bids were excessively high. I explained we had similar work done at the Long Island National Cemetery for much less. The cemetery POC provided another local contact who has worked with the cemetery that may be able to refer another contractor who can bid at a more reasonable price. Plans are to reach out to this other source for what assistance he may be able to provide in our search for a concrete contractor. More on the concrete bid process in future issues.

Arkansas State Veterans Cemetery (N. Little Rock, AR)

Director Ronald Ellis and I have a trip planned to the cemetery on March 31 to view the placement site and consult with a concrete contractor for a bid to pour the base and place the monument. More on the results of that site visit in a future issue of this publication.

Americal Monument/Memorial Programs – Other Locations

Museum of the U.S. Army

Since the last issue of the Americal Journal – in which I reported on the completion of the Path of Remembrance and the Americal Division Unit Plaque on display there – there are differing reports on the status of the museum. The museum website, www.armyhistory.org, still advises (as of the time this article was written) the museum is temporarily closed. This closure is since mid-December 2020. I received a letter from the Army Historical Foundation dated January 25, 2021 stating the Museum is now open. If any ADVA members live nearby and have visited the museum, I would like your input on the displays on the Path of Remembrance.

Joint Reserve Base Cape Cod (formerly Camp Edwards), MA

The new plaque to replace the existing plaque at this installation was finished in mid February. Our POC on this project, Len Kondratiuk, will be in touch with the vendor, Colonial Brass, to travel to JRBCC for removal of the old plaque and installation of the new one. We hope this can be complete by late spring. A picture of the new plaque will be featured in a future publication.

Fort Polk, LA

There is great news on this project. We received word in late January the placement proposal for the Americal Division monument is approved by the INCOM Deputy Director. The monument to be placed at the post History Center is the same design as used for the VA cemetery program. At the time this article was written for publication, we are awaiting the concrete work to be done before monument delivery is scheduled.

The concrete contractor was "in rotation" on post and expected to remain so until month end March. Our POC on post is maintaining contact with the contractor and will put him in touch with the project advisor once he is freed up from rotation so work can commence. More on this project in a future issue of this publication.

Other Foundation Projects

The Vietnam Center and Archive

As promised during our teleconference earlier this year, Dr. Maxner provided some spreadsheet files documenting their progress for indexing and uploading the data provided by Les Hines for the Americal archive project. At the time this article was written for this issue, Les was completing other member research requests and had not been able to review the spreadsheets provided by Dr. Maxner. Once Les begins his review of the spreadsheets, it may take considerable time to complete reviewing the spreadsheets to determine what has been done and what priorities need to be set for further work. Much of the data and files identified in the spreadsheet files is personal collections submitted to the Vietnam Center Archive. One goal is to be able to have all ADVA Newsletters (old terminology) and Americal Journals accessible for all who wish to view older issue. Many of those older versions are copyrighted, not digitized and not viewable online. Dr. Maxner asked his staff to look at these versions to remove the copyright restrictions and determine what needs to be done to make these viewable. More on progress with the VNCA progress in future issues.

The Legacy Scholarship Program

The 2021 Americal Legacy Foundation scholarship fund raising raffle tickets were mailed to all ADVA members in mid-March. Hopefully, all have received theirs by the time this issue of the Americal Journal reaches you. Many of you have faithfully and generously supported this program in the past and we sincerely hope you will continue to do so. If you have not donated to the Legacy Scholarship program in the past through the raffle ticket donation and drawing, now is your chance to do so and help deserving students continue their higher education.

Your donation could qualify as a Qualified Charitable Deduction if you make it from your IRA Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). A donation under this rule allows that donation to be nontaxable and is a way of reducing your taxable income. I will not get into specifics for the QCD; you should consult with your tax advisor, tax preparer or IRA holder for specific details on how this income tax feature can work for you. The only charities that qualify to accept tax-exempt donations are organizations governed by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Americal Legacy Foundation is recognized by the IRS as a Section 501(c)(3) organization.

There are a few minor changes to the Americal Legacy Foundation Scholarship program for 2021. Foundation Scholarship Chairman Bill Bruinsma had a very good scholarship update article (page 8) in the first quarter issue of this publication. Changes for the coming academic year are noted in the Scholarship application link on the web site. If you have a relative applying for a scholarship and have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

196th LIB Memorial Monument Nears Completion

By Gary L. Noller

The 196th Light Infantry Brigade memorial monument is nearing completion and will be installed at the Walk of Honor in the very near future. The Walk of Honor is located on the grounds of the National Infantry Museum near Fort Benning, Georgia.

The memorial is composed of two parts- a larger-than-life sculpture of two soldiers and a memorial plaque. The bronze sculpture shows a soldier assisting a wounded brother in need of care. The sculptor is Sarah E. Hahn of Columbus, Ohio.

On March 1 Ms. Hahn provided an update of the manufacture and assembly of this major work. She said, "The statue is in cast bronze sections, waiting to be welded together and a patina applied before making its way to Fort Benning. My plan is to visit soon to see their progress and will send pictures then. They have sent some of the process shots."

Dave Eichhorn is the 196th LIB Association representative in charge of the memorial construction and installation. Dave is the treasurer of the 196th LIB Assn as well as the national commander of the Americal Division Veterans Association.

Funding for the memorial was raised by members of the 196th LIB Assn, the 196th LIB Assn treasury, the Americal Legacy Foundation, and other interested parties. Donations are still being accepted and may be sent to Dave Eichhorn at the address below.



Hahn also provide details about the installation of the memorial. She stated, "The foundry is planning on installing the piece in late April early May. The concrete pad is going in as early as next week, depending on the weather. We are squared away with the granite and plaque details and I will forward the final proof of the plaque before it is made for a final review."

The wording on the proposed plaque is shown below.



196th Infantry Brigade

Chargers

Vietnam

August 1966 to May 1967 - Tay Ninh - 196th (Separate)

May 1967 to September 1967 - Chu Lai - 196th (Separate)

September 1967 to November 1971 - Chu Lai - 23d Infantry Division (Americal)

November 1971 to June 1972 - Da Nang- 196th (Separate)

Casualties: 1188 Killed in Action 5591 Wounded in Action

Eichhorn has requested that the description 23rd Infantry Division (Americal) be changed to read Americal Division (23rd Infantry Div.) to comply with the more familiar and used name of the division.

Sarah Hahn seeks to express the intricacy of life and all of its interwoven aspects within her art work. She exhibits this work both regionally and nationally. Her creative pursuits began while studying at Ohio Wesleyan University, where she earned her BFA, and continued at the University of Kentucky to obtain her MFA. Throughout her career she has taught functional and sculptural ceramics and drawing at colleges and universities in Kentucky, Ohio, and New York. She has also taught and worked for the Governor's School for the Arts in Kentucky. In addition to educating, Sarah sculpts life-size and larger figures for bronze monuments. Her signature is bringing detail and life to her sculptures in order to create a dialogue and illicit an emotional response from the viewer.

Smaller maquettes/models of the statue will be for sale via the artists website. The 14 inch tall bronze models will be mounted on a wooden base and retail for \$2,800. Each model will be numbered in a limited edition run of 100 and a certificate of authenticity sent to the purchaser. E-mail the artist at sehahn3@gmail.com or via the website www.sehahnstudio.com.

The Walk of Honor consists of about a hundred memorial monuments dedicated to infantry units. The Americal Legacy Foundation completed a monument honoring Americal Division and 23rd Infantry Division veterans in 2010.

At last report the Walk of Honor was full but additional space for more monuments is being considered. The 196th LIB Assn. secured its memorial location four years ago. Veterans interested in receiving assistance for a future unit memorial on the Walk of Honor may request assistance from the Americal Legacy Foundation.

A formal dedication date for the 196th memorial has tentatively been set for March 29, 2022. One proposal is to hold the dedication in conjunction with a dedication of the recently installed Americal Aviation Monument at Ft. Rucker, Alabama. The two locations are about 100 miles apart.

Donations to help pay the cost of the memorial may be sent to Dave Eichhorn, 196 LIB Assn. Treasurer, [redacted], Fleming, OH, 45729.

161st AHC Member Earns DSC

By Les Hines; ADVA Vietnam Historian

Perry C. Hopkins received a Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) while serving with the 161st Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) in 1966. The 161st AHC was part of the 14th Aviation Battalion which was used to form the new 123rd Aviation Battalion. The 14th Avn. Bn. and 123rd Avn. Bn. were the two helicopter battalions supporting the Americal Division.

There were very few DSCs awarded to the helicopter units. Another DSC was earned by James Bridges, a pilot, from B/123rd Avn., for actions in July 19, 1969. LTC Kettles from the 176th AHC earned a DSC, but it was upgraded to the Medal of Honor before he passed. MG Patrick Brady received the Medal of Honor award while assigned to the 54th Medical Detachment.

**HOPKINS, PERRY C.; Chief Warrant Officer (W-2)
161st Avn. Co., 14th Combat Avn. Bn., 1st Avn Bde.
Date of Action: May 17, 1966**

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Perry C. Hopkins, Chief Warrant Officer (W-2), U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with 161st Aviation Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion. Chief Warrant Officer Hopkins distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 17 May 1966 while leading a flight of two armed helicopters in support of a besieged American convoy near Phu Cat. Arriving over the battle, he immediately dove through the intense ground fire and attacked the well- entrenched Viet Cong. Although both aircraft were hit and damaged, Warrant Officer Hopkins dauntlessly pressed the attack until the ravaged convoy was able to withdraw. With their ambush broken, the insurgents concentrated their devastating fire on the two helicopters. Suddenly, a burst of automatic weapons fire ripped through the aircraft, killing the co-pilot and severing the control cables. Demonstrating composure and exceptional flying skill, Warrant Officer Hopkins successfully crash landed in a rice paddy. Jumping from the wreckage, he boldly fired his rifle into the charging Viet Cong, killing five. As the insurgents made repeated assaults, the crew dauntlessly held its position with devastating effect. Unmindful of the dangers, he courageously exposed himself to direct the fire of his gunners and extract the body of the dead co-pilot. With complete disregard for his safety, Warrant Officer Hopkins then shouldered his stricken comrade and, firing his weapon with one hand, he led his men across 70 meters of bullet-swept terrain to a rescue helicopter. Under his covering fire, they quickly boarded, and the aircraft extracted the beleaguered crew through a hail of bullets. His unimpeachable valor and profound concern for others saved his crew from certain death or capture, as they accounted for 55 dead insurgents. Chief Warrant Officer Hopkins' extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

HQ US Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 475 (January 31, 1967)

Update on Americal Division Documents at TTU Vietnam Center

The Vietnam Center at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas contains thousands of page of documents related to the Americal Division in Vietnam. Many of these records are available due to the work of Les Hines, ADVA Vietnam Historian, and other dedicated Americal Division veterans. The following is a recent report from Les Hines regarding the documents in the archive.

From Les Hines: To me it appears that there is a lot of work to be done on scanning materials that TTU has on site for the ADVA. The materials I have worked in the past two years are significant efforts by me, but it may only take a week or so to index and upload the materials to TTU. I can provide updates for some items. These would be:

1. Operation Plans, Operation Orders, and Frag orders for the 4/3rd Infantry Battalion. I worked over two years to align maps with the map overlays on 263 overlays. These are organized by date within each calendar year. Over 1,200 pages into PDF files that are mostly two to three pages each.
2. Seven months of Task Force Oregon/Americal Division Situation Reports. These are identified as Task Force Oregon and Americal Division by the headquarters. PDF files have been created for each day.
3. Americal Division Daily Newsheets. PDF files have been created for the Americal Division Daily Newsheets. Most of these are two page mimeograph items. Many images are hard to read, so there is a corresponding transcription in word to index the text.
4. Americal Division Veteran's Association "Newsletter" and "Journal". Over 6,000 pages of Americal Division Veteran's Association news dating back to 1947. The archive may already hold many of the missing issues that have either not been scanned or released to view. An indexing spreadsheet has been made to go with these ADVA news items.
5. A compilation of materials collected by unit. The core for this material is the compilation of materials for the eleven infantry battalions assigned to the Americal after February 1968. These are 500-700 page PDF files.
6. Spreadsheets that were made to accompany the 30 plus unit yearbooks. These have the names of men listed in the yearbooks.
7. There was an update to The_Hill document for the 3/1st & D 6/11th Artillery materials.
8. Map Overlay material. I have several map overlay folders that have been worked by unit. But only the previously mentioned 4/3rd unit overlays have been integrated back into the original material.
9. Indexes were made to list everyone who was mentioned in any of the newsletters we obtained from Carlisle Barracks. The listing mainly covers the 11th Bde. infantry battalions.



Dear editor,
My father, Rene Dufresne, was one of the original members of the Americal Division in New Caledonia. He served the entire tour in combat and was one of the first to return home at the end of the war. He was in the 57th Engineers.
In 1968 I served with the Americal Division as well. I served in the 3/18th Artillery. I don't know how many others fit into the same category. But I do know that "my old man" was so proud that I followed him in the Americal Division.
Roger Dufrense
[Editor's note: Rich Merlin (VN, 23 MP Co.) and his father were both in the Americal Division. PNC Reggie Horton (VN, 1/6th Inf.) and his father and his uncle were all in the Americal Division. Let me know of other instances of relatives in the Americal Division.]

Dear editor,
I am the wife of a Vietnam vet and have written a novel about the sixties which will soon be ready for publication. The title of the book is *Hero Can I Be*.
A summary of the book follows: Set in the turbulent 1960s and beyond, *Hero Can I Be* recounts the journey of Jamie Corrigan from the New York streets of his hardscrabble childhood to the battlefields of Vietnam and his return as a troubled young man to a beleaguered America embroiled in antiwar protests, political assassinations, civil rights clashes, and a cultural revolution. He spirals into free-fall of alcohol and self-loathing, until someone from his past enlists his help to locate a boyhood friend who has disappeared in Central America, empowering Corrigan to reclaim his warrior spirit and become the hero he always longed to be.
A few years ago I submitted an essay about my experience being the wife of a vet, which you published in the *Americal Journal*. My husband is Peter E. Lutz. He served in the 198th Lt. Inf. Bde. in 1967-1968.

Maureen Hogan Lutz
Dear editor,
I read an article about Howard Walker in a recent edition of the *Americal Journal*. I thought there may be interest in a file of names that I received from Howard a years ago. The list contains the names of "Regulars", 1st Battalion, 6th

Infantry Brigade, Americal Division 1967-68 who lost their lives while serving their country. This is a list of 103 guys killed in action from December 1967 to September 1968. This list was prepared by: Howard W. Walker. Howard died February 19, 2011.
He gave me a paper copy of the list. I didn't want to lose it, so took the time to type it into an electronic word document. I can share it with others. I was in C/1/6 from February 5, 1968 to the middle of September 1968 when I was offered a job as a radio operator in the 198th brigade TOC. I also have a file of just the KIAs from C Company. I don't know where Howard got all of this information, but he had to have put some time into it. The Microsoft Word file may be requested by contacting me at [redacted] or e-mail: [redacted].
Mark Deam
Dear editor,
I took basic combat training Ft. Ord, California in July-August 1973 with A-4-3, 5th platoon. I have been trying to find my drill sergeant for sometime. I would like to reach out to him and thank him for his leadership. It made a difference in my life. I have checked surrounding areas around Ft. Ord in case he retired there. It was a no go. He was a Staff Sergeant Eugene Chavez. He wore a Americal Combat patch. I had just got out of High School, 17 years old. I appreciate your time and help with my request.
Bobby Wingate; Airborne Infantryman 1973-80
[redacted]
Dear editor,
I served in the second platoon with Co. C, 5/46th Infantry from October 1970 to May 1971. I have written several articles about the Vietnam War. The following paragraph is an example of a short article.
After the Vietnam War, tens of thousands of priests, monks, political figures, artists, writers, police, Special Forces, Rangers, anyone involved in Project Phoenix, journalists, lawyers, and ARVNs were sent to reeducation camps. Western books were destroyed teachers were executed. Chieu hoi's (220,000) were at the top of their list, as they betrayed the revolution. This is one of the worst crimes anyone could commit. Thousands died from torture, starvation, and disease. Many were sent out in mine fields to use their bodies to explode them. They were buried in mass graves. Statistics that were gathered show about 2.5 million South Vietnamese were executed or sent to reeducation camps were done away with between 1975 - 1979. Was there a place where families could pay their respects for their Army dead? Yes and no. ARVN cemeteries' were torn up and desecrated by the Communists. The ARVN's were damned by the victors, and abandoned by their allies. They failed to keep South Vietnam a democracy.
As a side note, I am also interested in finding anyone in my platoon from the above dates and any information on SSG Michael Sharpe.

John Bales; [redacted]

**ADVA Announces
New Life Dues Schedule**

World War II veterans of the Americal Division created the Americal Division Veterans Association in November 1945. They desired an organization that would preserve social contact among its veterans and to collect, archive, and distribute the history of the Americal Division. In 2021 the ADVA had almost 3,000 members and continues to be an active U.S. Army division unit association.
ADVA annual dues are \$15. The ADVA recently revised its life dues structure to make it more affordable to prospective members and to reduce the number of annual pay members. The change in dues was recommended by David Eichhorn, National Commander, and approved by the Executive Committee. The life dues payment is base on the current age of the applicant at the time of life dues payment. The new schedule is as follows:

Age 75 or more	\$50
Age 74	\$60
Age 73	\$70
Age 72	\$80
Age 71	\$90
Age 70 or less	\$100

Members who pay annual dues are encouraged to utilize the new lower life dues rates and convert their annual dues to paid life dues. This will eliminate the need to keep track of current membership status and potentially be dropped from membership due to non-payment of dues. Converting annual dues to paid life dues will also reduce the administrative workload of the National Adjutant.
It is estimated that the youngest Vietnam veteran that served with the Americal Division is now 68 years old or older and was born prior to 1953. Veterans who served in the Americal Division in World War II are age 94 or over and were born in 1927 or before. They have been exempt from ADVA dues for several years. Annual dues may be upgraded now or at any time in the future. Dues are to be sent to Ronald Ellis, [redacted], Henderson, TX 75652.

2021 ADVA Reunion Still Scheduled

The 2021 annual reunion of the Americal Division Veterans Association is still on the schedule as of the beginning of April. The 2020 reunion was not held due to risks associated with the COVID19 pandemic.
Reunion information and a reservation form are available on the following pages. Hotel reservations are to be made directly with the hotel. Reunion event reservations are to be made with Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. Reunion attendees may wish to consider the purchase of travel insurance in case of the need to cancel arrangements.
Hotel Reservation Phone Numbers: When calling in room reservations, ALWAYS indicate you are with the Americal Division Veterans Association and use the code 90621ADVA to avoid any possible complications. Wyndham West Direct: [redacted] or by email to [redacted]
Chuck Holdaway is 2021 ADVA Reunion Chairman. He may be contacted be email at [redacted]
Additiona reunion infromation was provided in the Jan-Feb-Mar 2021 edition of the *Americal Journal* and is on the reunion page of americal.org.

Recent Book Releases

**From Chu Lai to Saigon: The Vietnam War
Journey of Brig. Gen. Wallace L. Clement**

I am a faculty member/military historian at Christopher Newport University in Newport News, VA. I wanted to share with you the release of my latest book, *From Chu Lai to Saigon: The Vietnam War Journey of Brig. Gen. Wallace L. Clement*. As you may recall, General Clement was an assistant division commander with the Americal Division from December 1968 to September 1969. The book (co-edited with a former student of mine who is now a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army) explores General Clement's Vietnam War experiences through his over 300 letters home to his family over the course of his two tours in Vietnam. During his second tour from 1969-1970, he was Director of Training for MACV in Saigon.
Further, the book incorporates the recollections of General Clement's helicopter pilot, Roger Loomis and his aide, Bruce Draudt, who were both with the Americal Division and were actively involved with this project. General Clement passed away in 2000. He was a friend and mentor to me during my childhood. I was also fortunate to have the close support of the Clement family for the duration of this project.
The Americal Division Veterans Association was very helpful in the early stages of this project and got me connected with Roger Loomis. I wanted to let you know that the book is now available. Below is its Amazon link:
https://www.amazon.com/dp/1954163002/ref=sr_1_2?keywords=sean+heuvel&qid=1608230228&sr=8-2
Many thanks and let me know if you have any questions.
Sean Heuval
Long Daze at Long Binh
I thought you'd like to know that two Vietnam medics have recently published *Long Daze at Long Binh*, a humorous memoir about their wartime experiences with the 24th Evacuation Hospital. Somewhat reminiscent of M*A*S*H, the book has been getting excellent reviews, with the Vietnam Veterans of America online magazine calling it "the best book about rear echelon life in South Vietnam during that time period. Nobody will top it any time soon, if ever."
Co-authors Steve Donovan and Fred Borchardt met the day they were inducted in 1965. They struck up a close friendship immediately, never realizing they would be following identical paths for the next two years. During their 16 months with the 24th Evac, they managed to perform the duties of more than a dozen military occupations including hospital orderly, prisoner guard, emergency room assistant, armed sentry, jeep driver, translator, medical records clerk and headquarters clerk.
Historynet.com currently lists *Long Daze* as one of the "Top Five Vietnam Books to Read this Winter" while in the October 2020 issue of Vietnam Magazine, reviewer Jon Guttman says "Imagine M*A*S*H actually set in Vietnam... that's what the authors do with this anecdote-filled story of their time as medics at the 24th Evac."
You can read all about the book at longbinhdaze.com where you'll find reviews, photos and sample chapters.

Dan Markham

AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION REUNION – SEPTEMBER 8-12, 2021

WYNDHAM INDIANAPOLIS WEST – INDIANAPOLIS, IN

HOTEL RESERVATIONS: (DIRECT) OR ONLINE AT [HTTPS://AMERICAL.ORG/CMSAML/INDEX.PHP/REUNIONS.HTML](https://AMERICAL.ORG/CMSAML/INDEX.PHP/REUNIONS.HTML)

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

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

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

8:00am – 11:00am Reunion Registration Open
9:00am – 2:00pm INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY TOUR
2:00pm – 6:00pm Reunion Registration Open

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

8:00am – 11:00am Reunion Registration Open
9:00am – 3:00pm INDIANAPOLIS CITY/MONUMENT TOUR
3:00pm – 6:00pm Reunion Registration Open

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

8:00am – 9:45am Executive Council Meeting
8:00am – 10:00am Reunion Registration Open
10:00am – 11:30pm Association Business Meeting
12:00pm – 3:30pm DALLARA INDYCAR FACTORY (description follows)
5:00pm – 5:45pm First Time Attendee Reception
6:00pm – 7:00pm Reception and Seating
7:00pm Banquet Dinner

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Farewells and Departures

TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY TOUR

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

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.

\$65/person includes bus, escorts, and admission.

9:00am board bus, 2:00pm back at hotel. Lunch on own.

INDIANAPOLIS MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS CITY TOUR

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

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

\$55/person includes bus, guides, and admission.

9:00am board bus, 3:00pm back at hotel. Lunch on own.

DALLARA INDYCAR FACTORY

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

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 decalated! 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.

\$53/Person includes bus, escort, and admission.

\$73/Person includes bus, escort, admission and IndyCar or NASCAR ride.

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

Hotel Reunion Rate: \$115 + tax

AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM 2021

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. You may register online and pay by credit card at on the reunion web site at www.afr-reg.com/americal2021 (3.5% will be added to total). You may also register by completing the form below. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before August 10, 2021. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.

Norfolk, VA 23510

ATTN: AMERICAL

OFFICE USE ONLY

Check # _____ Date Received _____
Inputted _____ Nametag Completed _____

CUT-OFF DATE IS 8/10/21 – reservations by space available after that date	Price Per	# of People	Total
TOURS			
THURSDAY 9/9: Indianapolis Motor Speedway Tour Member/Spouse/Guest	\$65		\$
THURSDAY 9/9: Indianapolis Motor Speedway Tour WWII Americal Vet/Spouse/Escort	\$ 0		\$ 0
FRIDAY 9/10: Monuments & Memorials Tour Member/Spouse/Guest	\$55		\$
FRIDAY 9/10: Monuments & Memorials Tour WWII Vet, Spouse, Escort	\$ 0		\$ 0
SATURDAY 9/11: Dallara IndyCar Factory Member/Spouse/Guest	\$53		\$
SATURDAY 9/11: Dallara IndyCar Factory WWII Americal Vet, Spouse, Escort	\$ 0		\$ 0
SATURDAY 9/11: Dallara IndyCar Ride (must purchase tour above, no WWII discount)	\$20		\$
MEALS			
SATURDAY 9/11: BANQUET - Please select your entrée(s)			
• Chicken Picaata	\$ 51		\$
• Sirloin Steak	\$ 55		\$
• Parmesan Crusted Snapper	\$ 49		\$
• Pasta Primavera (vegetarian)	\$ 41		\$
WWII Vet, Spouse and/or Escort Banquet Dinner at no charge – Please select an entrée: <input type="checkbox"/> Beef <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken <input type="checkbox"/> Fish <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian	\$ 0		\$ 0
REQUIRED PER PERSON REGISTRATION FEE.			
WWII Americal Veteran plus Spouse or escort free	\$ 0		\$ 0
ADVA Member	\$25		\$
Non-member, Fee includes one-year ADVA membership dues & benefits	\$35		\$
Spouse and/or Guests (each)	\$25		\$
Total Amount Payable to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.			\$

PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WANT YOUR NAMETAG TO READ

MAIN ATTENDEE: FIRST _____ LAST _____

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

Please indicate your era - WWII ☐ Panama ☐ Vietnam ☐

SPOUSE/ESCORT NAMES (IF ATTENDING) _____

GUEST NAMES _____

MAIN ATTENDEE STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PH. NUMBER (_____) _____ - _____ EMAIL _____

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

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

ARRIVAL DATE _____ DEPARTURE DATE _____

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

For refunds and cancellations please refer to our policies outlined at the bottom of the reunion program. CANCELLATIONS WILL ONLY BE TAKEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00am-4:00pm EASTERN TIME (excluding holidays). Call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion.

America's National Guardsmen in the South Pacific and Forming the Americal: Globalizing State Militias in a Time of Crisis

Roger R. Thompson ©

Introducing Walter Walt, Dale Friend, and Peggy Hammer

Walter W. Walt, Jr. (1916-2006) served in the Americal Division from the moment it was activated on New Caledonia in May 1942. Selected in October 1941, and inducted into active service on 17 November, Walt was in training in Virginia as Task Force 6814 was forming in mid-January 1942. A Californian, he was assigned to the Massachusetts National Guard's 101st Medical Regiment, Company I. His regiment's commanding officer, Dale Friend (1907-2003) was born in Iowa and graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1935. Peggy Hammer volunteered to serve in the Army Nurse Corps.

Task Force 6814 embarked from New York in late January 1942. Walt, Friend, and Hammer were shipmates on board the convoy's *Santa Elena*. Task Force 6814 reached Australia in late February, and landed at New Caledonia on 12 March 1942. Other National Guard units in the task force included the 182nd Infantry Regiment (Massachusetts), the 132nd Infantry Regiment (Illinois) and, joining Task Force 6814 in April, the 164th Infantry Regiment (North Dakota).

This is the third in a series of *Americal Journal* articles about Task Force 6814 and the Americal Division in the first eighteen months of World War II.

Alone in the South Pacific on the Eve of the Battle of Midway

The American men and women of Task Force 6814 occupying the French colony of New Caledonia in late May 1942 did not know they were almost alone in the South Pacific. With Admiral Halsey's *USS Enterprise* now steaming north to Pearl Harbor to join the *USS Yorktown* and the *USS Hornet*, Admiral Nimitz would soon be able to concentrate three of his aircraft carriers off the island of Midway to thwart an anticipated Japanese invasion. For the first time since February 1942, when the *USS Lexington* protected the Task Force 6814 convoy as it approached Australia after its five-week journey from the Brooklyn Navy Yard, no aircraft carrier patrolled the waters near the Coral Sea that separated New Caledonia from the Japanese forces to the north at Rabaul in New Britain.

Besides losing the protection of naval aviators, who had performed heroically against Japanese fighters and bombers in February, March, and April, the secret protection provided by the Navy's signals intelligence detachments on aircraft carriers was lost as well. These detachments had monitored the communications of Japanese aircraft flying out of Rabaul. And it was the work of their signals intelligence colleagues elsewhere on land in the Pacific that convinced Admiral Nimitz to concentrate most of his forces at Midway, the last major island between Tokyo and Honolulu, in early June.

Creating the Americal in the South Pacific: A Surprise Ending to an American Saga in Peace and War

General Alexander Patch, Task Force 6814's commanding officer, was now under Nimitz's command. Soon after Admiral Robert Ghormley left New Caledonia after his 19 May 1942 inspection and planning meeting with Patch, word came from the War Department that the recommendation of its Operations Division for a combat division on New Caledonia was approved. The three National Guard infantry regiments from Massachusetts, Illinois, and North Dakota--the core fighting elements of Patch's Task Force 6814--would become the Americal

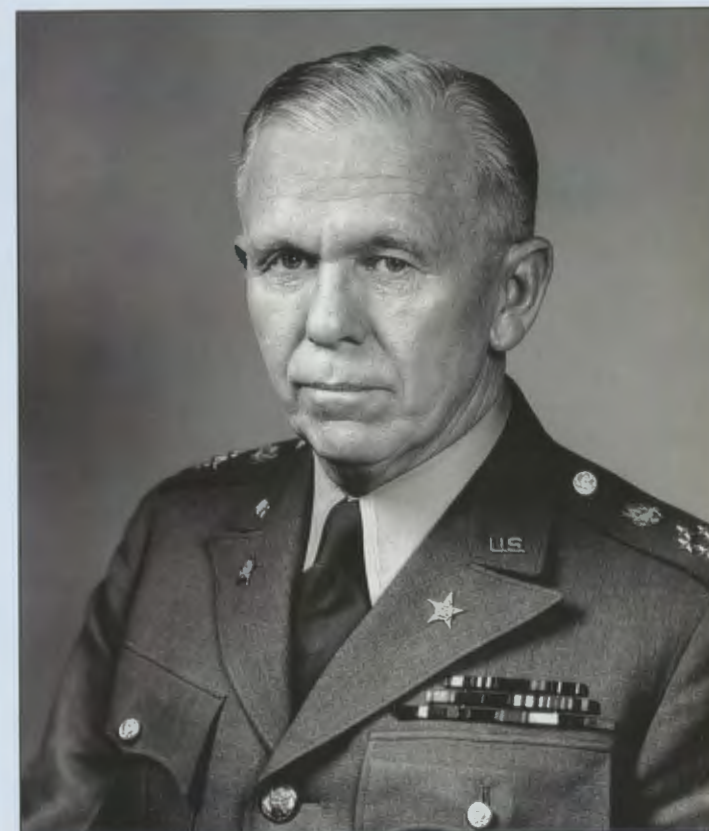
Division (*America-New Caledonia*), the United States Army's first and only named division organized and trained on foreign territory. This was extraordinary, but the times were desperate.

America's National Defense plan, envisioned back in 1920, had called for the mobilization in times of crisis of Regular Army, National Guard units, and Reserve officers as Army-led divisions. Most of the soldiers would be "inducted" Guardsmen, called to national service by the President. No longer commanded by their state governors, National Guard units still retained their regional identity. While selected National Guard units would meet, for the first six months, the immediate threat always envisioned as one to the Western Hemisphere (including the American possessions of Panama, Hawaii, and Alaska), the rest of Regular Army, National Guard, and Reserve officers (and non-commissioned officers) would serve as a cadre to train new volunteers and conscripted troops.

No one imagined trying to train an entire division in the South Pacific; War Department planners in early January 1942 had called for an infantry division to be sent to New Caledonia, but no existing division was ready for embarkation. These dilemmas, ultimately, would be addressed with the activation of the Americal Division on 27 May 1942.



Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, hero of the Battle of Midway.



General George Catlett Marshall, General of the Army.

But this is a complicated story. General Patch, General George Marshall, the Army's Chief of Staff, and the commanding general of the US Army's recently-organized Army Ground Forces (AGF), General Lesley McNair, were ready and practiced in the hard work and art of turning citizens into soldiers in general, and were acquainted with the National Guard units now on New Caledonia in particular. General Marshall, earlier in his career, had worked closely with the Massachusetts National Guard in Boston and the Illinois National Guard in Chicago. And just before his return to Washington, DC, in 1938 he completed a tour of duty (1936-38) at Washington State's Vancouver Barracks, located on the Columbia River across from Portland, Oregon.

From that post he became acquainted with Washington State's National Guard, but Vancouver Barracks also allowed Marshall to supervise another group of young Americans. He was responsible for thousands of young American men from many parts of America, including Boston, working at Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps in the Pacific Northwest. Established in 1933 by the new Roosevelt Administration in the depths of the Great Depression, the US Army was the only government entity capable of managing a program as massive as the CCC.

General Marshall had looked into the eyes of the youth of Depression-era America. He saw the promise of Guardsmen and CCC men alike; he helped them

realize it. In 1939-40, especially after the fall of France in May 1940, Marshall knew there was not enough time to fill out and train the ranks of the US Army with volunteers. He needed hundreds of thousands of young Americans in uniform immediately. Time was short. General Marshall had a powerful and like-minded ally in President Roosevelt. Both men knew, with their CCC experiences, that peacetime selection and training of millions of Americans could be managed. But not until August and September 1940 did Marshall finally get the Congressional approval and funding he needed to induct National Guard units into the Regular Army, and begin registering sixteen million American male citizens and aliens between the ages of 18 and 35 for possible selection and induction into the armed forces.

This mobilization began with a remarkable grass-roots effort. Sixteen million Americans registered at their neighborhood precincts for Selective Training and Service on 16 October 1940. Their registration cards were forwarded to over 6,500 local selective service boards, each made up of three members recommended by their state governor and appointed by the President. Doctors and dentists donated their time and labor for conducting initial physical examinations. And when almost half of the first year's two-million-strong call-up was found unfit for service, doctors and dentists restored 200,000 of them to health and fitness, with their fees covered by the federal government. With guidance and leadership from Washington, America was standing up. As the newly-inducted National Guardsmen from Illinois and North Dakota made their way to the still-unfinished Camp Claiborne in Louisiana for training in early 1941, the first groups of the two million men selected by their local boards began to appear for physicals and possible induction into the armed services. From this growing pool would come the men necessary to fill out the ranks of Army divisions across America. In the first year after "Registration Day," both the Regular Army and National Guard, roughly 500,000 soldiers strong divided about equally, would be joined by over 600,000 selectees.

In President Roosevelt's radio address persuading Americans that this first peacetime mobilization was democratic and very American, he praised the sixteen million men who had registered on 16 October 1940. That evening he told them they were "reviving the three-hundred-year-old custom of the muster" for national defense. The men of Massachusetts' 182nd Infantry Regiment might have thought President Roosevelt was talking about them, for their state militia unit traced its origins to 1636 when the Massachusetts Bay Colony organized a "trained band" (trainband) to defend the colony against the Pequot Indian threat. That local tradition, updated to the twentieth century, underwent another transformation in Roosevelt's mind.



President Roosevelt in his first "Fireside Chat" of the war, December 9, 1941.

Seven months later, on 27 May 1941, when President Roosevelt again addressed the American people by radio, he reminded listeners that in modern war you can't hold your fire until you see the "whites" of their eyes. Reminding his listeners of the apocryphal story from the 1775 Battle of Bunker Hill fought by state militias from all of New England, Roosevelt predicted: "Our Bunker Hill of tomorrow may be several thousand miles from Boston." He was off by several more thousands of miles.

President Roosevelt did not know this in May 1941, but the Bunker Hills for the men of the 182nd Infantry Regiment would be on New Caledonia, Efate and Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides, and for an especially hardy band of five volunteers who faced unknown dangers like their trainband forbears of 1636, even the Santa Cruz Islands to the north. The Japanese were just five hundred miles away, at Tulagi and Guadalcanal in the southern Solomon Islands, from the Santa Cruz volunteers, who were posted to assist the Australian-led network of "coast-watchers" headquartered to the south at Efate keeping track of enemy ships and planes throughout the Coral Sea. Black Americans helped build Efate's airfield; their work continued on Espiritu Santo. Those Black American citizens, too, were part of this three-hundred-year-old American saga, for the inhabitants of the Massachusetts Bay Colony were already using African slave labor in the New World. Now, in the South Pacific, Blacks and whites would fight and labor as citizen-soldiers.

It would be a remarkable global moment in the South Pacific with deep and meaningful connections, however complicated, to the vision and reality of America. Three years after Roosevelt evoked Bunker Hill, one of their earlier battles, the 182nd Infantry Regiment would go on parade in the northern Solomon Islands under the American flag as they commemorated the 169th

anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill. It was a long arc indeed. But as General Marshall would say again and again, the idea of America, however powerful, was rooted, fundamentally, in family and community and their American values; what was true in 1636 was still true in 1941. This is why, he argued, American men would fight and die in defense of home and heart.

As the war continued, this National Guard presence would become a smaller percentage of America's fighting forces. America's National Guardsmen had fulfilled the task outlined in mobilization plans--defend the homeland while the ranks could be filled and trained--but the fundamental importance of family, community, and state would also characterize many of the millions more who continued their national and global missions in 1942-45.

Let us return, for a moment, to the start of this twentieth-century chapter of an American saga. The stories of three young Americans in uniform--three in a million-plus by the end of 1941--help us imagine this moment. Dale Friend, Peggy Hammer, and Walter Walt--all of whom were shipmates on the *Santa Elena* as it traversed the Pacific with six other ships carrying Task Force 6814--were part of this story.

Dr. Friend was already in the Massachusetts National Guard in late 1939 when its commander put out a call in the *New England Journal of Medicine* for fourteen doctors to fill vacant positions in the 101st Medical Regiment. Dr. Friend was then a battalion surgeon in the 182nd Infantry Regiment, but when the Massachusetts National Guard was inducted into national service in early 1941, Dr. Friend was leading Company G of the 101st Medical Regiment. He was soon promoted to major and given command of the 101st's Third Battalion. Peggy Hammer was training to be a civilian nurse in 1939 as the world crisis deepened.

Responding to President Roosevelt's declaration of a National Emergency, Hammer volunteered to become an Army nurse. Eventually she would receive orders to report to Camp Edwards on Cape Cod on 1 March 1941, where Dr. Friend was already training his men. Major Friend and Second Lieutenant Hammer would be waiting at Camp Edwards for Private Walter Walt in the middle of January 1942 as one of the Army's newest soldiers--only seven weeks a private--made his way north from Camp Lee in Virginia. General Marshall, General McNair, and General Patch had been preparing these three, and more than one million more, for this moment.

A Spectacle for the Nation: The Army Maneuvers of 1941

Like National Guard units elsewhere, recent inductees began filling Army ranks too.

By the summer of 1941, America's soldiers numbered more than one million. It was time for the great military



General McNair (left) and General Marshall (right) assess the "Situation Map" of the Louisiana Maneuvers, 26 September 1941, Camp Polk, Louisiana. The Second Army (Red) faced the Third Army (Blue) to the south. The Illinois 132nd Regiment "fought" with General Lear's Second Army; North Dakota's 164th Regiment was on the side of General Krueger's Third Army. Marshall's mantra for the 1940-1941 -- time is of the essence -- framework was clear for all to see.

maneuvers of 1941. By the end of the year, almost 85% of the US Army had participated in Louisiana (including Illinois' 132nd and North Dakota's 164th), the Carolinas (including Massachusetts' 182nd and the 101st Medical Regiment), and in other parts of America; these Divisional, Corps, and Army-level maneuvers included some of the largest concentrations of soldiers that the US had seen since the Civil War.

There were, of course, important military lessons to be learned and General Lesley McNair, the "Educator of the Army," was keen to see how infantry and artillery units and all their supporting services, including medical units, functioned in mock-battle conditions. McNair's Washington headquarters staff planned, observed, and critiqued the Louisiana and Carolina maneuvers in particular. But General Marshall flew across the country to take in all the action; this was also a major public relations and morale operation. He made sure American newspapermen and radio broadcasters had access to the troops and their leaders.

He wanted American voters and taxpayers, who had finally given him the money he needed in the fall of 1940, to see the fruits of their investment.

But he also wanted to foster the tie between the hot, tired, and hungry selectee, National Guardsmen inductee, or volunteer, and his family and community. Marshall was convinced his citizen-soldiers would flourish, as he put it, in this "great experiment in democracy and citizenship." The Army would train, clothe, house, feed, and heal its soldiers, but the soldiers' hometowns, informed through mass media, letters, telegrams, and phone calls, would sustain and inspire.

General Marshall realized his vision in the summer and fall of 1941, but only a razor-thin majority in the House of Representatives in August 1941 extended the service obligations of the first selectees and National Guard inductees from a year to eighteen months as the Army's numbers approached two million. This meant he could not let up on his public-relations blitz.

Training, Training, Training: From Citizens to Soldiers

We do not know if Walter Walt was paying attention to the Congressional debates going on across the country in the summer of 1941, but we know that his Local Board No. 259 in Los Angeles did not wait long after the crucial Congressional votes. The President's "Order to Report for Induction," dated 20 October 1941, notified the twenty-five-year-old Walt that he had "now been selected for training and service in the Army." He was directed to appear at 7:00 AM at the board's headquarters at 1225 West Manchester. His Local Board arranged transportation to the Army's Reception Center at Fort MacArthur in nearby San Pedro.

By the end of that fateful day, 17 November 1941, Walt had passed his Army physical and become one of America's newest inductees. There were twenty-one Replacement Training Centers across America now receiving America's citizen-soldiers for the newly-created thirteen-week "basic training" course. (The Americal's General Patch had commanded the South Carolina Replacement Training Center.) It is unlikely that Walt had even begun training when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. We do know that by December he was stationed at Camp Lee, Virginia, the site of a Medical Replacement Training Center. And soon after President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill agreed at the White House meeting of 12 January 1942 that about 20,000 troops would be sent to the South Pacific, Walter Walt was on his way to join Dr. Friend, Nurse Hammer, and the 101st Medical Regiment.

Out of the vast tapestry of America's stupendous mobilization efforts of 1940-41, a half dozen or so were drawn out and stretched all the way to New Caledonia.



North Dakotas National Guard Company D of the 164th Infantry Regiment marches past the reviewing stand at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, 2 July 1941. Two month later the 164th will "fight" with General Krueger's Third Army (Blue) in the Louisiana Maneuvers.

The infantry regiments of Illinois (132nd) and North Dakota (164th) were ordered from Camp Claiborne where they had been training (including the Louisiana Maneuvers) for a year; the 182nd and the 101st Medical Regiment (both of which had been in the Carolina Maneuvers) were pulled from Massachusetts; these National Guard units were joined by hospital units staffed by doctors from the Officers' Reserve Corps. Hospital units from Cleveland and Philadelphia were hastily activated and soon heading to the New York Port of Embarkation for their journey to the South Pacific. These medical professionals would join the 11,000-plus medical officers already on duty for the US Army.

And yet, when Dr. Friend wrote in his journal on 8 March 1942, awaiting engine repairs to the *Ericsson* before the final passage from Australia to New Caledonia, he knew his men needed more training and more equipment. Dr. Friend, who had been named the commanding officer of the entire 101st Medical Regiment when Task Force 6814 was being formed in January 1942, realized that the new concept of the Regimental Combat Team, which he had practiced with the 101st's 3rd Battalion in the Carolina Maneuvers of 1941, one that required close cooperation between small front-line infantry units and medical teams, needed much work. And he knew the stakes were high.

His colleagues from Cleveland's Western University Hospital had been left behind in Australia, where they were invited to take over the Royal Melbourne Hospital for their planned 1,000-bed 4th General Hospital. On New Caledonia, the 52nd Evacuation Hospital, a planned 750-bed unit brought to the South

Pacific doctors and nurses from Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia. The smaller 109th Station Hospital was slated for 250 beds on New Caledonia. These medical personnel, too, needed training. Other medical personnel, including Dr. Friend's men, would be on or near the front lines, wherever these might be.

As soon as he arrived on New Caledonia in March 1942, Dr. Friend asked for and received permission from General Patch to arm and train all of the soldiers in his medical regiment to handle and fire the World War I-vintage 1903 Springfield rifle. In the second issue of the *Latrinogram*, the 101st Medical Regiment's newsletter first published just after the Americal Division was activated, we learn that Walter Walt, now the twenty-six-year-old inductee from Los Angeles, tied Major Davis (19 of 20) in the marksmanship competition held earlier in May 1942. We also learn in the first issue, in the same "Caledonia Capers" section, that Dr. Friend had been promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel. He would celebrate that achievement with fellow officers of the 182nd Infantry Regiment, the fighting arm of the Regimental Combat Team.

With Japan's devastating losses at Midway in early June, the men and women of the Army's newest division, the Americal, could turn from defense to offense. General Patch and the newly-promoted Lieutenant Colonel Friend, like generals McNair and Marshall in Washington, were committed to the idea that morale, one of the keys to victory on the battlefield, was predicated in part on training and small-unit leadership. General McNair had to delegate to General Patch training responsibilities on New Caledonia, but in the network of Replacement Training Centers across the United States, basic training continued. Advanced training followed. After twelve intense months, fully manned, trained, and equipped divisions would be ready for combat. By the end of the war, General McNair's Army Ground Forces would put into action overseas eighty-nine infantry divisions; only the Americal Division was activated and trained abroad.

Morale and War in the South Pacific: Globalizing General Marshall's Vision for America's Citizen-Soldiers

And yet there was more. General Marshall's focus on morale, and the mosaic that was America, is symbolized by one of the earliest US Army Signal Corps photographs from New Caledonia: the polyglot cadre of censors screening the letters sent by citizens and aliens in the Americal. This photograph was taken on 19 June 1942. The three censors from Massachusetts could handle Italian, French, German, and Portuguese; the three from the Midwest (Chicago, Minneapolis, and St. Paul) censored letters in Russian, Polish, and French. Each of the three National Guard infantry regiments on New Caledonia had detached men for

this detail. Private Albert Knopf, the Jewish censor from Chester, Pennsylvania, was not identified by his unit; like Walter Walt, he was probably a recent Selective Service inductee. This small censors' office on New Caledonia was part of a vast morale-building enterprise that General Marshall gave a high priority.

Half a world away in New York City, at the same time the censors were reading through piles of mail, the first issue of *YANK*, dated 17 June 1942, rolled off the presses. With strong support from General Marshall, this publication by enlisted men for enlisted men would achieve a global success.

President Roosevelt, writing from the White House on 28 May 1942, the day after the Americal Division was activated, rallied his men: "To you fighting men of our armed forces overseas your Commander in Chief sends greetings in this, the first issue of your own newspaper.... You are...delegates of freedom.... [T]his paper will be a link with your families and your friends."

The importance of morale and motivation in the pages of *YANK* is clear in the New Caledonia Special Correspondent's article, probably filed in June 1942, entitled "Caledonia Yanks Want Action." In text and photos, we see Private John Finnegan of Newark, New Jersey, on guard duty with his 1903 Springfield rifle and World War-I era helmet. The *YANK* correspondent writes: "We live on letters from home." And in the main photo, six Army doctors and two Army nurses harmonize around a small keyboard.

A week after this story was published on 22 July 1942, the airfield at Espiritu Santo at the northern edge of the New Hebrides would be completed after a sixteen day-and-night construction effort by Task Force 6814 units, including Company B of the 810th Aviation Engineer Battalion (Negro). General Patch had sent Company B north to Efate in the New Hebrides immediately after Task Force 6814 reached Noumea in March 1942. The Efate field was completed in June, just as the Japanese began burning off vegetation near Lunga Point on Guadalcanal. Four days after the Americans started clearing coconut palms and jungle for the Espiritu Santo field in mid-July, the Japanese and their Korean laborers started building a field five hundred miles to the north at Guadalcanal. The Americans won this race.

In early August, long-range B-17 heavy bombers would take on fuel at the new Espiritu Santo field before the final leg of their Guadalcanal bombing and reconnaissance runs prior to the Marines' landing on 7 August 1942; the worst Guadalcanal casualties, requiring treatment in New Caledonia or Australia, were first flown to Espiritu Santo. The doctors and nurses on New Caledonia would be ready in August 1942. For these men and women, and for the doctors, medics, infantrymen, artillery men, and everyone else needed for a Regimental Combat Team, the training on

New Caledonia continued.

For the Americal, America's newest combat division, its baptisms of fire would come soon.



Foreign-language (French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Hebrew) censors at work at the Americal's Division's Army Post Office, New Caledonia, 19 June 1942. This early Signal Corps photo portrays enlisted men, all privates, detached from each of the Americal's three National Guard Regiments (132nd Illinois, 182nd Massachusetts, 164th North Dakota) for this duty. Left to right: Front row: Maggiore, Swif, Hertz. Second row: Smith, Kitt, Conway; Back Row: Chief Censor Captain Bostick, Knopf.

(Photo credits: George E. Marshall Foundation, Lexington, VA; National Archives; Elwyn B. Robinson Department of Special Collections, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota).

Author Roger Thompson enlisted in the U.S. Air Force (1970-1974) and served a tour of duty in northern Thailand in 1973. He teaches Chinese history and "WWII: The Pacific War" at Western Washington University. He would like to thank Walter Walt's son Christopher and daughter Melissa for permission to use their father's World War II letter-diary, photos, and ephemera in this project. He would also like to thank Dale Friend's daughter Judith for permission to use material from her father's World War II journal.



The Americal in World War II — Never Forgotten!



Selfless In Service: Noel King Americal Division's First Military Police Casualty

By Dale Meisel

[This article was first printed in the 23rd MP Chapter newsletter, The Blotter. Dale Meisel served with the 23rd MP Co. in Vietnam. -Editor]

Noel King, of Holbrook, Massachusetts, was the Americal Division's first Military Police casualty. He was injured by shrapnel from a Japanese bomb on the Pacific island of Guadalcanal on January 15, 1943. A short time later he died of his wounds.

In the fall of 2015, his home town honored their native son and his sacrifice by naming its new selectmen's chamber at Holbrook Town Hall the "Noel C. King Meeting Room." He was remembered with great fondness by many of its citizens at that time.

Noel King's story is both typical and unique of those citizen-soldiers who unselfishly served our country in World War II. He was born in Holbrook, Massachusetts, a small town about 19 miles south of Boston, on December 24, 1905 (hence his first name) to John and Annie King. Noel had an older brother, also named John, born in 1904.

His father worked in a shoe factory and was a newspaper editor. His mother was a homemaker. His father was eventually elected to the Board of Selectmen, the term for the governing body of New England towns.

Noel grew up in the town and attended its schools. He graduated from Sumner High School. He became an insurance investigator for a company called Underwriters Reports, Inc. But Noel King was more than just a working man. He was a popular and contributing member of his community.

Both Noel's parents had been born in what was then called the "Irish Free State," and unsurprisingly, Noel was an active member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Holbrook. A large man at six feet, one inch, with the bulk to match, Noel played Santa Claus for the parish and for the American Legion Christmas parties. Noel directed the town's football team and the St. Joseph team. He was looked on as a mentor by many of the town's youth. Not only was Noel an informal leader, but a formal one as well.

He was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Foxboro State Hospital for six years. He followed his father's footsteps and was elected as one of the Holbrook Selectman, the youngest member to hold the office at the time.

In the late 1930s, when war erupted across the world, U.S. leaders tried to maintain the country's neutrality, while at the same time preparing for what many saw as its inevitable participation. Accordingly, the United States Congress passed the nation's first ever peacetime draft in September 1940. All men from the ages of 21 to 45 were required to register. Many patriotic Americans were anxious to serve. Noel King was one of them and attempted to enlist rather than wait for the draft. But he was 70 pounds overweight, was classified as obese, and was rejected.

Nevertheless, Noel's draft number later came up and he was inducted on April 14, 1941. He was 35 years old, unmarried with no dependents. As a public official, perhaps he could have been deferred under provisions of the law. Or he might have sought a waiver due to his age. But neither option would have been something he wanted.

Noel joined the 182nd Infantry Regiment, then a part of the National Guard's 26th "Yankee" Division, and was assigned to Company A. The 182nd Infantry is the oldest infantry regiment in the United States Army, tracing its lineage back to 1636 as the "North Regiment," a colonial regiment of foot of the British Crown in Massachusetts.

As was common with National Guard units, the regiment was scattered across Massachusetts state armories. With the draft then in force, the regiment began a rapid buildup of manpower, ultimately having 3,366 men assigned just before overseas deployment.

The regiment trained primarily at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts in the western



Noel King Meeting Room sign.
Photo credit: Thomas Benvie

part of Cape Cod. When the structure of Army divisions was modified and reduced its infantry regiments from four to three, the 182nd was detached from the 26th Division and inducted into federal service on January 16, 1941 at Charlestown, Massachusetts.

On September 29, 1941, Noel King accompanied his regiment as it traveled by train to Fort Bragg, North Carolina to take part in the largest ever peacetime maneuvers in Army history. There were now over one million soldiers on active duty. Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall wanted to test doctrine, equipment and organization before war came. That possibility—of being swept up into war—was closer than anyone knew at the time.

The first phase of the maneuvers had already been held in Louisiana and west Texas in September. The 182nd's turn came in the last two weeks of November in western North Carolina. Nearly half the Army's manpower participated in these two exercises.

The regiment returned to its Camp Edwards base on Saturday, December 6, 1941 and, according to one account, "had a night of excitement before their lives changed forever" the following day. In fact, according to the same source, the trip to the Carolinas was expected to be the final military event for many of the soldiers of the 182nd, as their one-year terms of service were scheduled to end around that time.

With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor the next day, the U.S. declaration of war against Japan on December 8, and the German declaration of war against the United States on December 11, the soldiers' world changed forever.

U.S. military and political leaders scrambled to counter the Japanese advances being made all across the Pacific. It was a bleak and chaotic time for America. One of the military moves was quickly to form Task Force 6814.

The Task Force was comprised of all facets of the Army: infantry, armor



Portrait of Noel King.

Photo credit: Thomas Benvie

and artillery combat units as well as engineer, medical, quartermaster, signal, ordnance, finance and other units. Noel King and his 182nd Infantry Regiment were among that number. Also included was a platoon of the 26th Military Police Company—a fact which will later be important to Noel King and to the history of the 23rd MP Company.

It was a hastily formed Task Force 6814 that departed on eight transport ships from New York harbor only 46 days after Pearl Harbor — on January 23, 1942. After passage through the Panama Canal and a total of 35 sailing days, Task Force 6814 landed in Australia.

After only a week, the troops re-boarded their ships and sailed to an unknown destination, but which turned out to be the French possession of New Caledonia, a large island north and a little east of Australia. They arrived on March 12. Their mission was to secure the island from Japanese invasion.

The story of Task Force 6814 on New Caledonia in the midst of French political maneuvering, shifting strategic military priorities, supply shortages, training needs and so forth is a story in and of itself. Part of that story included the activation of the Americal Division on May 27 from the Task Force elements.

Almost simultaneously, on June 5, the 39th Military Police Company was formed at Noumea, New Caledonia. The cadre which formed the core of the company came from Task Force 6814's Third Platoon, 26th MP Company.

To bring the company up to strength, soldiers were transferred from the 132nd and 182nd Infantry Regiments, the 180th Field Artillery Regiment, and the 123rd Field Artillery Battalion—a practice not unknown to Vietnam MP veterans. It is assumed that Noel King was one of those soldiers transferred to the MPs.

As the buildup of Navy, Marine, and other units went forward on New Caledonia, Americal Division leaders turned their eyes towards Guadalcanal, a 90-mile long British protectorate settled by Melanesian people in the Solomon Islands north of their location. The 1st Marine Division had landed on the Japanese-held island in early August. Fighting to secure the island and control the sea lines of communication between the U.S. and Australia was savage and bitter.

By October 1942 it was the Army's time. The first American Army unit to enter combat in World War II was the Americal Division's 164th Infantry Combat Team on October 13. On November 23, 1942, the 39th MP Company, less one platoon, embarked from Noumea for Guadalcanal along with other units of the Americal Division. By December 8, Noel King and the remainder of the Division had arrived.

As the Marines had already discovered, Guadalcanal was not an island paradise. Much of the topography was thick jungles, bottomless ravines and steep mountains, a "pestilential hellhole." No training could have prepared the Americal's soldiers for the terrain and their Japanese adversary.

The division's soldiers, now fully committed, moved into combat, which was entering its final phases. Even then, the combination of a fierce enemy and an unforgiving tropical environment resulted in high casualties. Japanese resistance was tenacious. The mosquito waged its own relentless war.

Americal Military Police pursued their combat roles. In early December 1942 they erected a prisoner of war stockade and operated it to early February 1943. They conducted traffic control and provided convoy security on the unimproved road system. They suppressed pilferage and ran basic security operations such as straggler control. They enforced discipline, law and order for the command.

It is speculation, but it is likely that King was as popular with his fellow soldiers as he had been in Holbrook. He was considerably older and more experienced than the average draftee, who probably referred to him as "Pops," his nickname back home.

Americal Division Commander, Major General Alexander Patch, took command of the island on December 6 when 1st Marine Division Headquarters was withdrawn. The division's mission was clear: "eliminate all Japanese forces" on Guadalcanal. On January 10, 1943, the final offensive began.

During a Japanese air raid on January 13, 1943, Private First Class Noel King was in a tent in his unit area and was seriously injured by shrapnel from a bomb. He suffered a compound comminuted fracture of the left femur, which meant that the bone was broken into several pieces and pierced the skin.

PFC King was evacuated to Field Hospital III (newly established just the month before) at Lunga Point on



Noel King (R) and friend.

Source: Quincy Patriot Ledger



1st Marine Division Cemetery on Guadalcanal.

Source: Naval History and Heritage Command 80-G-43979

the north side of Guadalcanal. But he died shortly after. King had bled out over the course of eight hours.

Holbrook Town Historian Wesly Cote wrote in his biography of King that "medical aid became hopeless." King's last words, as recorded by one of his friends, was "If it had to be somebody in this outfit whose number was up, I'm glad it was the old buck."

Medical treatment of casualties was good by the standards of the day and by the location of the fighting, but generally the clearing stations and field hospitals were overwhelmed. There was always a shortage of beds. Medical policy had been developed during the campaign that mandated casualty evacuation within 72 hours to New Caledonia, Fiji or New Zealand either by returning ships or by cargo planes. Why Noel King was not evacuated is unknown. Perhaps his injuries were too severe to move him or transport was not immediately available.

He was buried on January 16 in the 1st Marine Division cemetery on Guadalcanal. When news of King's death swept through Holbrook, "the whole town cried."

Effective and organized enemy resistance on Guadalcanal ended on February 8, 1943. The Guadalcanal campaign had been exceptionally bloody. One Marine Corps estimate of enemy losses was put at 28,580 of a total 37,680 or 76% of Japanese soldiers. About 1,000 Japanese became prisoners during the campaign.

The 60,000 U.S. Army and Marine ground forces suffered less. Their casualties included 1,702 killed (1,152 Marines and 550 soldiers) and 4,088 wounded (2,799 Marines and 1,289 soldiers). Thousands more U.S. forces were felled by disease, mostly malaria. Of that total number, Americal combat casualties amounted to 72 officers and 1,152 enlisted men. Forty officers and 263 men were killed in action. Three officers and 28 men died of wounds.

The Americal Division was relieved of duty on February 9, 1943. It departed the island for Fiji on March 5 for refitting and retraining. On March 18, 1943 the 39th MP Company gave way to the Military Police Platoon, Americal Division which was activated with a strength of two Officers and 77 Enlisted Men.

Americal Division soldiers continued in combat, fighting on another tropic island, Bougainville, and then conducting combat operations on several islands of the Philippine Archipelago. Four more Americal Military Policemen died during those campaigns.

At the conclusion of hostilities, the Division assumed occupation duties in mainland Japan for a few months. The Americal Division stood down and cased its colors on December 12, 1945.

Noel King was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart. His body was moved from its temporary location on Guadalcanal to its final resting place at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (commonly termed "The Punchbowl") in Honolulu, Hawaii in December 1949. The most common translation of the Hawaiian name of the site is, appropriately enough, "Hill of Sacrifice."

At the time of the dedication of the Noel C. King Meeting Room in 2015, the then Chair of the Holbrook Board of Selectmen stated of Noel King: *He was loyal to his community and respected by those who knew him. He exemplified these traits, and they were displayed in his actions to not take the deferment he was entitled to take. He possessed honor and integrity and was guided by those moral principles in his actions throughout his life. He had the personal courage that is self-evident in so many of our American soldiers who find themselves on the battlefield. He was selfless in his service not only to his community but to his country, not only in life, but in death.*

[Author's Note: Noel King's story is drawn from a variety of sources. I am grateful for the help. The Quincy Patriot Ledger covered the dedication of the Noel C. King Meeting Room in two articles: August 1 and November 4, 2015, and much of the personal information on King is drawn from those sources and from information furnished to the Editor by Holbrook residents, Ellen Walsh and Thomas Benvie. The U.S. Army in World War II historical series was a great help. Ron Sunderland's and Al Feser's prior research were invaluable as were several internet sites, particularly www.ancestry.com, www.182ndinfantry.org and www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/OOB/Americal-history.html. The staff at the US Army MP Regiment and Museum also assisted with primary documents. Finally, I must acknowledge the assistance of Noel King's first cousin once-removed, Rosemary King Lange Sheehan.]



Adapting to Maintain Dignity

By Don Counter

It was never taught to me as a newly drafted basic trainee nor during my follow-on Advanced Infantry Training, both of which were conducted at Fort Ord, California. Even during training at the Americal Division Combat Center in Chu Lai, which was the ultimate jumping off point to our in-country infantry assignment, nothing was ever mentioned about it.

As a newly arrived private I was expediently dispatched into the jungle to join my company and experience the simplicity and raw physicality of infantry life. Curiously, I still wasn't privy to a rather personal in nature wartime reality that would have a lasting effect on me.

After several months in the jungle our infantry company came to the division rear for a brief three-day stand down to refit, rest and decompress. It was during this short reprieve that I became faintly aware of it in the periphery. On the early morning of the fourth day we were promptly flown back to the jungle to resume our endless cycle of grunts and groans in the depths of the tropical vegetation.

A couple months later I was injured by a booby trap explosion and medevaced to the 91st Evacuation hospital in Chu Lai. After several days in the hospital I was awarded a Purple Heart, issued medication, a temporary profile, and sent to the relative safety of the division rear area for follow-on evaluation, treatments, and recuperation. It was during this recuperation period that I became acutely aware of it.

The day following my discharge from the hospital I was placed on a Sanitation Protocol work detail (aka "shit burning detail"); the big "It". My introduction and orientation to this chore was informally guided and supervised by a surly Spec-4.

From the orderly room we walked out across the battalion staging area and there, clearly set apart from other facilities, was the outhouse. There were actually two, two-seater out-houses positioned side by side. Each was made of wood, painted a flat, dull gray with see-through mesh screen across the front, making it a place where everybody knew your business while you were doing your business.



Soldiers perform sanitation duty on FSB Mary Ann, 1970.
Photo courtesy of Jack E. Curtis, Artillery FO.

The generic structures were absent of any building number or sign to identify them, such as an iconic crescent moon or a "Casa de Doo-Doo" placard. Nevertheless, the site could easily be located by the buzzing of flies, the unmistakable malodorous smell, and the distinctive "WHAP!" of the spring-loaded doors that slammed shut with each entry and exit.

The facility was positioned without benefit of a scenic view; as if gazing out at nothing. It was neither a place to casually read an outdated home town newspaper nor to escape for a moment of solitude.

At this point my on-the-job training began: The process started with raising the back flap of the pail closet and getting up close to human waste piled up in open metal containers. It was a nasal and visual attention getter but not a pretty picture.

With the benefit of a lone glove or a rag the sawed in half 55-gallon metal drum, loaded with feces, was pulled out then dragged across the uneven and hard packed ground. Because the contents sloshed and splashed up there was no crowding around our immediate work space and rear echelon onlookers kept their distance.

There was no required measuring of diesel fuel or Mogas to burn the waste as any concoction seemed proficient. Pour then, and with a 2x2 piece of wood, stir the thick mess. No matter how careful you were, it was inevitable that the noxious goo would manage to splatter up and cling to your hands, arms, clothes, even your face.

"Stand back" was the warning issued before the ignition and in your face explosive flash. Whoosh!

Wood matches were preferred because they could be lit and safely tossed from the distance of a foot away whereas the C-ration safety matches required you to virtually put your hand in the drum to ignite the fuel mixture. Even the coveted Zippo lighter was far less effective and could not bring prestige to this messy task.

It was not uncommon of those assigned to this combustible detail to show evidence of skin burns or singed hair i.e. eye brows, mustaches and scalp.

Within a few moments of it being lit a billowing cloud of toxic black smoke hung in the moist tropical air leaving carcinogenic soot on clothing and lungs.

Gosh, how was it that within days of being awarded a Purple Heart, I'm incinerating rear-echelon (permanent party) fecal matter. Putting things into perspective it was far less life threatening than the rigors and risks of life in the jungle.

After a couple hours the fuel burnt out and the poop somewhat minimized. Then, refuel, re-stir and re-ignite. It was a repetitive three stage burn process until it was an ash topped sludge. What remained after the third burn was a residue with a charred top which would be dumped into a shallow sludge pit and eventually covered with dirt.

Mid-day the second day the Spec-4 clamored, "I don't mind the smell, but it burns my eyes, so.. I'm outta here; get'er done, Private!"

I gained a fuller appreciation for the simple entrenching tool method used in the jungle of burying one's own poop.

The passing of the proverbial torch was a slick hand off,

and I realized that the responsibility of such a tasking was conveniently relegated to those at the very bottom of the pecking order... privates.

In a hierarchical world where rank equated to legitimate authority, persuasion, and power, being a private amounted to being outranked by the world. It seemed as though I'd be going solo until another infantry private with a Purple Heart arrived.

The entire procedure was a nasty tasking and the mere mention of having to burn human excrement evoked exaggerated eye rolls and facial contortions. "Gee, I never had that privilege," was the curt remark made by a rear echelon lieutenant, who was an onlooker from a safe distance.

No matter how messy the world offers itself a creative imagination can help improve the situation. After a couple days of inefficient stirring I salvaged a piece of 1x4 board from a nearby scrap pile and with the aid of a machete fashioned a paddle to more efficiently stir the thick goop.

For a bit of visual humor I thought I might dress up the situation by wearing a cook's hat for the full sous-chef effect. Unable to locate anything even closely resembling one, I was confined to secret laughter in my attempt to master the mundane.

"What... There's no paper in here?" Whether day or night it was no place to be empty handed and scrounging for toilet paper. It was a 50-meter walk back to the company barracks. So as not to be caught off guard or taken by surprise the rear-echelon permanent party personnel routinely carried their own roll to the outhouse. Those of us fresh from the bush generally carried the small packets of folded paper found in the C-ration accessory pack, commonly referred to as "butt wipe," as our efficient back-up.

"Smok'em if you got'em" was a familiar expression to describe a brief period of down-time much like killing time. In an attempt to keep the flies at a distance while inside the outhouse, smokers were quick to light up cigarettes, cigars or pipes. Even non-traditional smokers puffed away on wood tipped Swisher Sweets, a flavored cigarillo, because of its pleasant cigar aroma and sweet taste and hoping it would work as a temporary insecticide. Those who did not smoke used a wire handled fly swatter to contend with the pests at their breeding ground.

There were rumors of flames having shot up from one of the metal drums immediately after someone flipped a smoldering cigarette butt down into the drum. It seems that a splash or two of jet propulsion fuel (JP4) had been poured into the drum with the intent that it would mix with the poop and provide an easily ignitable base. It seems the vapor of the flammable liquid was volatile and had a high flash point. That's life in the rear... a charred ass.

At one point a small group of indigenous Montagnard tribesmen were temporarily staying at the division rear area. These short in stature forest inhabitants were highly respected for their hunting proficiency and jungle warfare skills and now awaiting relocation to a remote Special Forces project in the rural mountains. These men were as fit and rugged as the images I had seen in

National Geographic magazine.

While unquestionably skilled at primitive living it seems they were not as adept to our base environmental standards. On several occasions they were observed to be defecating wherever and whenever the urge moved them. The issue/matter caught the attention of higher-ups and a military linguist was dispatched to intervene and direct the tribesmen to utilize the outhouses.

Inside, these barefooted jungle men stepped up on the platform, squatted directly over the toilet seat and released, frequently leaving a fecal mess on or dangling from the toilet seat. With all things considered relative to taking aim and sight alignment it became vividly evident that these jungle navigators were, in no way, bombardiers.

"Damn it all!" was shouted at the top of someone's lungs, and could be heard all across the staging area, immediately followed by "PRIVATE!!" Private was the Latin word for get this hygienic mess cleaned-up.

Whether resentment or comic relief somebody booby trapped one of the toilet seats with a smoke grenade... which resulted in a 90-second "Up in Smoke" attention getter. There were no footprints and the tribesmen were gone.

Despite it being a critical and essential task, there was no certification or skill identifier for this on-the-job training (OJT), and no one ever said that this humbling experience would look good on a resume. Let it be known that resilience and strength of character are traits of those who adapted to this very memorable detail and maintained dignity.

Honorable Mention

Staff Sergeant George Barry, believed in the Golden Rule of Leadership... never ask a subordinate to perform a task that you wouldn't do yourself. This platoon sergeant, held strongly to the core principal of leading by example and voluntarily partook of the infamously noxious Sanitation Protocol to demonstrate first hand to his soldiers that it was not beneath him to oxidize fecal matter.

Many weeks later, SSG Barry returned to the battalion rear for an operations briefing. Into the late evening hours he walked the area to gather his thoughts and focus on the intricacies of the upcoming combat mission. During this contemplative walk he inadvertently stepped onto the wavy crust of a sludge pit.

Both feet sunk beneath the thin surface layer with the slow sensation of submerging in quicksand. Now engulfed in the decayed muck he realized that the pit had only been partially covered with a thin layer of soil as opposed to being thoroughly buried.

His only gripe was "the foul smell lingered on my boots for a week."

A salute goes out to Master Sergeant (Ret) George D. Barry of Altoona, Pennsylvania, who not only burned feces... he stepped into it.

To this day, with a spirited glimmer in his eye, he proudly cites the Infantry motto "Follow Me!"

Brothers Forever,

By Chuck Wanko, Joe Emma,
and Bill Stoneman



Given the horrors of war, this writing is an effort to capture some of the humor in the midst of war. It tells of three young soldiers who found themselves together fighting a very unpopular war in Vietnam. Are these three soldiers typical of those who served? You be the judge.

The three young soldiers were: LT Chuck Wanko, Fire Direction Officer (FDO); SGT Joe Emma, Section Chief, 8" Howitzer Section; and SGT William (Bill) M. Stoneman Jr, Section Chief, 8" Howitzer Section. All three were assigned to Battery D, 1st Battalion 82nd Field Artillery (D/1/82nd FA), 8" Self Propelled (SP).

The 1/82nd FA was a composite battalion comprised of four firing batteries (A, B, C and D) which were towed 155mm howitzers. The fourth battery was D Battery. It was the 8" SP battery. It is important to detail each of these three soldiers background



L to R: LT Chuck Wanko, SGT Bill Stoneman, SGT Joe Emma, and LT Steve Anderson at LZ Dottie, 1968.

leading up to being assigned to D/1/82 FA. The soldiers in this collage (then and now) were young Americans who answered the call to serve their county.

LT Chuck Wanko — Chuck is from Schaghticoke, New York, a small village about 25 miles northeast of Albany, the state capital. After high school he attended Siena College with a major in accounting. He was commissioned a 2LT through the college Reserve Officer Training Corp (ROTC) and was branched Field Artillery (FA). He completed the FA Officer Basic Course (FAOBC) at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Following FAOBC he found himself on the way to Vietnam. He expected to be a Forward Observer (FO) or a Fire Direction Officer (FDO). Upon arrival in Vietnam he was assigned to the Americal Division. He (like all new arrivals to the division) spent a week, or so, at the Division Combat Center. Upon completion at the Combat Center he received orders to the 1/82 FA.

The 1/82 FA was a general support (GS) artillery battalion responsible for providing longer range fires than direct support (DS) artillery units. LT Wanko served as the battalion ammunition officer before finally finding himself assigned as a FDO in Delta Battery. It was here that he was assigned with LT Steve Anderson as one of two FDOs. Wanko worked the night shift.

Wanko met the four howitzer section chiefs that he, and his Fire Direction Control (FDC), would compute firing data for. Out of those four howitzer section chiefs were two that he would come to know better than others - LT Chuck Wanko, SGT Joe Emma and SGT Bill Stoneman would create a friendship that would span over 50 years.

SGT Joe Emma — Joe is from Somerdale, New Jersey, and graduated from Triton High School. Joe went to work after high school but his draft status was 1A. He was drafted into the Army in 1967. He attended Field Artillery Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. After AIT he completed the Non-Commissioned Officer Candidate Course (more commonly called Instant NCO Course). He was promoted to Sergeant E-5.

Upon graduation he shipped out to Fort Lewis and was assigned to the 1/82 FA as a Section Chief of an 8" self-propelled howitzer. The 1/82 FA was activated and trained to deploy to Vietnam. He traveled from Ft Lewis to Vietnam with the battalion. Once there he moved out of Chu Lai to LZ Dottie which would be his home base LZ for the next year.

SGT Bill Stoneman — Bill is from Fayetteville, North Carolina. Bill graduated from 71st High School. Bill was a army brat. He attended college after high school but dropped out. After dropping out of college he was facing the draft as his Selective Service status had changed to 1A. He joined the Regular Army (RA) to have a choice in assignment and went Field Artillery.

He went through Basic Combat Training (BCT) at Fort Bragg. He received Advanced Individual Training (AIT) and the Non-Commissioned Officer Candidate Course at Fort Sill. He left Fort Sill as a new sergeant (SGT/E-5). His next assignment was Battery A, 1/29 FA (105mm Self Propelled (SP)) at Fort Carson.. He completed six months of "experience training" prior to shipment to Vietnam.

He arrived in Vietnam and was assigned to Battery A, 3/18th FA, as the Section Chief of a 8" SP howitzer. This was located on Hill 54, north of Chu Lai. After a short time there Bill was reassigned to Battery D, 1/82 FA, as the Section Chief of a 8" SP howitzer. This was located at LZ Dottie. This assignment was to support the infusion of personnel with different Date Expected Return from Overseas (DEROS) to prevent everyone in the 1/82 FA from departing at the same time. All of the 1/82 FA had arrived in-country in the previous few months.

Now some stories from Chuck, Joe and Bill about their tours in Vietnam. We are quite sure everyone had experiences that made them laugh and some that they get teary eyed over. These stories originated from each of the named individuals and we hope these are entertaining to say the least.

LT Chuck Wanko:

Story #1: Arrival in Country, 1968. Good-bye Fort Lewis, Washington, Hello Cam Ranh Bay Vietnam. The welcome center didn't look anything like I saw on the nightly news back home. There was an air-conditioned officers club with cold



L to R: Chuck and Bill at 2019 ADVA reunion, Rhode Island.

beer and anything else I could want. As soon as I stepped back outside the heat and humidity felt like a punch in the face. They had a boat dock with a ski boat and water skis. My first day in Vietnam and I go water skiing!

The fun ended a few hours later when I was on a C-130 headed to Chu Lai and the Americal Division. My first week was spent at the Americal Combat Center for orientation and training. There were no quarters available at the Combat Center. I was part of a group of young LTs that found quarters in an empty building in the division HQ area. One of the guys found an old ¾ T truck to commute back and forth for the week. Once training was complete we left for our assignments.

Story #2: First Job, 1968. My first duty assignment was as the Ammunition Officer for the 1/82 FA. Early October brought heavy rains and thunderstorms every afternoon. The rain turned the main Highway 1 into an impassable mud pit. At times resupply to Battery D on LZ Dottie was not possible by ground vehicles. The only way we were able to accomplish the mission was arrange sling loads on the bed of five-ton cargo trucks. Then we stood on top of the loads and attached them to a hovering Chinook helicopter.

While I had soldiers experienced in doing this. But I had to actually experience doing this myself. It was quite a rush to stand on top of the ammo, on top of the loaded bed of the five-ton, and under the prop wash of a Chinook. As soon as the load was hooked I had to scramble to jump to the ground.

After the roads dried I went north to visit A/1/82 FA at LZ Fat City. I had my own Jeep and an assigned driver. On the

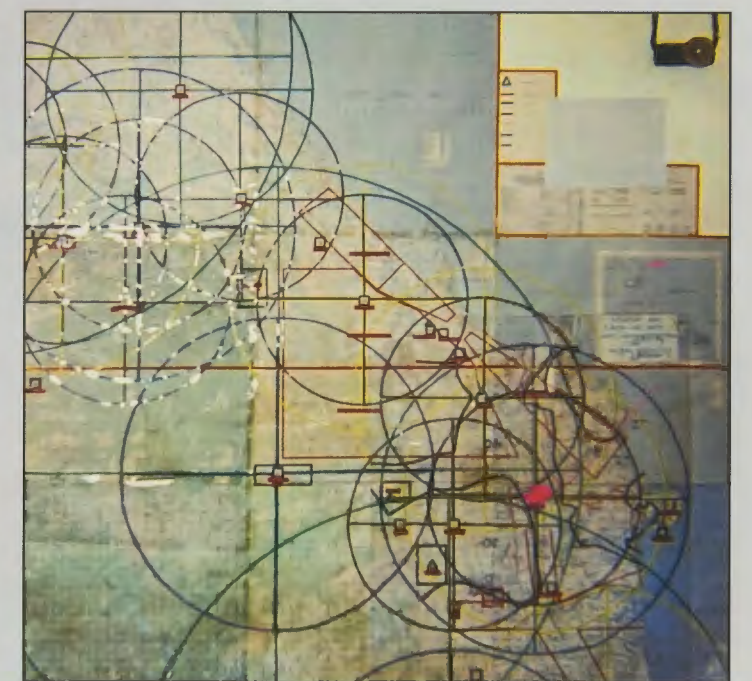


LT Wanko admiring one of our 8 howitzers.

way back to Chu Lai I told my driver (Jack) that I wanted to drive. He told me I could not drive because that was his job. After some discussion Jack told me he could not ride in the passenger seat because the enemy VC shot at that side of the vehicle. What a warm feeling or did I just wet my pants?

Story #3: General Support Battalion (I knew they did not have FOs), 1968. When I finally arrived at my new home on LZ Dottie I was assigned as a Fire Direction Officer (FDO). LT Steve Anderson was also an FDO. We split the 24 hr a day duty with Steve working 0700-1900 and I worked the night shift, 1900 -0700. The night shift did not bother me but it also made me available for many additional duties that could only be performed during the day (Class A Agent (Pay Officer) and many others). Needless to say, sleep was whenever I could catch a nap. When I arrived on Dottie I met two young NCOs who were just as green as I was. That meeting would become a life long friendship. SGT Joe Emma and SGT Bill Stoneman were two of the best gun chiefs in Delta Battery. They were just great soldiers.

[To be continued in a future edition of the *Americal Journal*.]



Artillery Area of Operations (AO) for D/1/82 FA

My Tour Of Duty With H Troop, 17th Cavalry,

By Anthony Lupporelli

I graduated from college in June 1967. Shortly after I received a new draft classification from 2S to 1A. Then I went to Albany, New York, for a physical exam and some testing. After that I was ordered to report for induction into the U.S. Army. From there we went to Ft. Dix, New Jersey, for basic training.

After the training at Ft. Dix I was assigned to a military school at Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland. The school was eight weeks. We learned about wheeled vehicles. The top five who graduated were assigned to another advance school at Ft. Knox, Kentucky. At Ft. Knox we learned about track vehicles. After eight weeks we graduated and got orders for Vietnam.

My orders were to report on August 13, 1968 to Ft. Lewis, Washington for more training and for getting jungle uniforms. After one week we flew to Vietnam. I arrived at Chu Lai, Americal Division headquarters, I Corps. After one week of in-country training I was assigned to H Troop, 17th Cavalry. My assignment was to be the PLL clerk. I ordered, stocked, and issued all the parts and equipment for all the vehicles. I also had many other assignments.

At H Troop we had APCs (armored personnel carriers) tanks, trucks, and jeeps. Most of the platoons were out on missions. We kept two APCs back at our base camp at LZ Bayonet. Bayonet was located about 15 miles from Chu Lai and was the home of the 198th Light Infantry Brigade.

Our commanding officer (CO) was very good because he said there will be no Vietnamese civilians allowed in our compound. The lower ranked soldiers would have to do the chores. One time the enemy attacked the Bayonet base camp and everyone got hit except us. Why? There were no Vietnamese spies at our compound.

I had to learn how to drive all the vehicles, both wheeled and track, while at schools. I also had to qualify for all the weapons that were carried on vehicles. No matter what one's MOS (military occupational specialty), everyone is still a fighting soldier.

A few months before my tour of duty was over we had an Inspector General (IG) come in and review all my work. After a few days of going through my books and papers the said they were finished. The officer in charge told me that I did a good job and that everything was okay except one thing. There was something I did not follow according to the Army manual.

This officer started to get on me about this one little thing. So I told him, "Sir, I did everything to the best of my ability and everything worked for the best of the troop." Then I asked, "What are you going to do? Send me to Vietnam?" The officer got red in the face and picked up his books and stormed out.

My CO said to me, "You sure have some pair of balls." I told my CO that I could be killed any day and this officer is telling me about some minor thing about not

following the Army manual. My CO told me that I did an excellent job and that I did everything that he asked me to do. He told me that I went above and beyond whatever he asked of me. I was doing this job alone. It was normal to have one or two others to help do this job.

My CO then told me that he was going to put me in for the Army Commendation Medal. He told me that the Army would mail the medal to me when I get home. I was home a short time when I received the medal. I was very proud to receive it.

My job kept me busy, seven days a week. At night I was usually in charge of the guard around our perimeter. There was also other night missions such as standing guard with an APC at the brigade radio headquarters. On another mission we used a jeep to patrol Highway 1 in front of our LZ. I thought this was crazy, but orders came from division headquarters. Luckily, nothing bad happened.

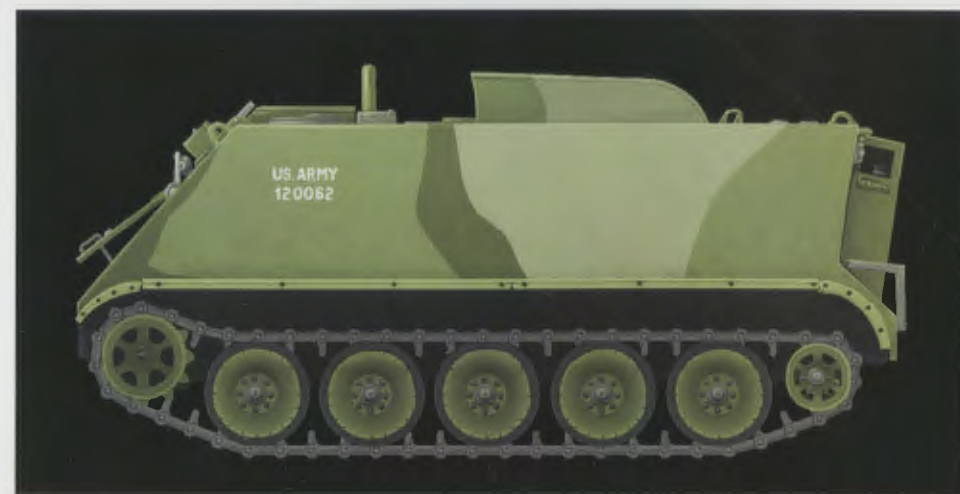
Another time our commanding officer, a captain, told me to take one APC with crew and go to a Special Forces camp near the Laotian border. When we arrived I checked in with the officer in charge. He told me the South Vietnamese Army was dug in at the perimeter trenches.

Before sunset I went to check them and found them all asleep. I came back and told my troopers to be on full alert. I got a lot of coffee to keep me awake. After a couple of weeks I was taken off this duty because I was getting short. After I got home I read an article in the newspaper that stated that a Special Forces camp was over-run and took casualties. Army intelligence was good, but could not tell when things were going to happen.

In August 1969 and at the end of one year in Vietnam I flew home. I arrived at Ft. Lewis and processed all night. I left the next day.

While in Vietnam I made some good friends and I also lost some. Every year H Troop, 17th Cavalry gets together for a reunion.

Everyone should remember the saying I read on a sign at that Special Forces camp. It read, "You've never lived until you almost died, for those who fight for it. Life has a flavor the protected will never know."



M113 Armored Personnel Carrier (APC)

Helicopters and Static Electricity

By David Weaver

I served as a Specialist 4 in the ammo section of B Battery, 3rd Battalion, 18th Artillery, between August 1967 and August 1968. We had two eight inch howitzers and two 175mm artillery guns. Somewhere around the Tet Offensive of 1968 they moved our guns to a secondary firebase and split the ammo section up into two groups. I was left at the rear section delegated to providing replacement ammo.

For a couple of weeks we had to transfer our ammo from Chu Lai to the new firebase by helicopter. We did this by hooking several pallets of ammo or powder together with webbing straps. These were hooked to a web doughnut using a steel "D" ring. A CH-47 Chinook helicopter came in and hovered over the load. One guy would stand on top of the load and place the doughnut over the belly hook of the Chinook.

We learned very fast that helicopters in flight built up a lot of static electricity. When that doughnut touched the belly hook one received a nasty shock. It would take a while to hook up the load while trying to avoid getting shocked. When it rained the static electricity was much worse.

One chopper pilot landed and showed us how to take a couple of metal rods connected with about thirty feet of communication wire, insulating the rod we held while driving the other rod into the ground. That device would be used to ground the Chinook and drain the static electricity before we touched the Chinook. That was a God sent relief.

A couple of weeks later we had to forward a replacement barrel for one of the 175mm guns. That barrel weighs several tons and had to be sent by helicopter because of muddy roads. There was a new guy in the rear ammo section that was really eager to hook the barrel up. The helicopter that was used was a Sikorsky C-54 Tarhe (Flying Crane).

When the helicopter came in for its load, the new guy ran down to hook it up. We tried to get him to wait. The hook was lowered, it was raining, his boots were wet, and he was standing on a steel barrel that was sitting on the wet ground. When he went to hook up the doughnut the resulting static electricity spark from the Chinook was blue. And it was very large. It knocked him off of the barrel and a few feet backwards to the ground. It did not kill him, but he was useless the rest of that day!



Stock photo of Sikorsky CH-54 Tarhe (Sky Crane) helicopter in service with 1st Cavalry Division, Vietnam.

Ask A Question . . .

By Ron Brown

There I was, sitting on the helipad at LZ Stinson (the Hill) waiting for a slick to take me and a couple of other new guys out to Delta Company. Like most people thrown together for the first time, we asked each other our names, where we were from, married or single, US (draftee) or RA (enlistee), 11-Bush or 11-Charlie.

As we sat next to a small CONEX, using our rucksacks as make-shift lawn chairs, the guy next to me asked the guy on the other side of me the standard list of questions. The guy answering the questions, even with his heavy southern accent, seemed to be responding with the usual phrases of small talk. Then the question of "where are you from" and the response of "plum-nearly." At that, I turned and said, "Ernie, where are you from?" A sly smile appeared on Ernie's face, one that I got familiar with in the following months, as he said, "plum-nearly, plum outta Georgia and nearly in ta Florida!" It was a long year.

[Ron Brown served with D Company, 1/52nd INF, 198th LIB, AMERICAL Division, 1969 – 1970]

Logger, Lager, or Laager

By Gary L. Noller

All three of the words in the title above are pronounced the same but they have very different meanings.

A logger is a person who fells trees for lumber. Another name for this is lumberjack. An example is Paul Bunyan.

A lager is a beer and is one of the two major styles of beer. The other style is ale. A lager is fermented at lower temperatures than an ale. Most American major brand beers are lagers.

A laager is a defensive position and as such is used in military terminology. It has roots with Boers in South Africa and described a circle of wagons surrounding a camp.

I first heard the word laager at Ft. Knox during tank training. Instructors told us to form a laager with our tanks. They went on to say that we needed to form a circle with the guns pointing outward.

In the bush in Vietnam we formed day laagers and night laagers and established a perimeter for our safety. A more formal term was defensive position and at night we had to note the location of all night defensive positions (NDPs) or our elements.

In closing, I wish to note that I have felled trees so perhaps I was a logger. I also enjoy a lager beer but I also enjoy an ale. But I no longer participate in forming a laager- day or night.

Command at Dawn

By Mel Carney — (Book Review by Dave Taylor)

Mel Carney was a platoon leader with Bravo Company, 1st/6th Infantry of the 198th Light Infantry Brigade in 1968. They had numerous operations in the Que Son Valley. The thick jungle, heavy fighting with the NVA, extracting the dead and wounded, Shark gunships, it's all there.

The title of his book comes from an incident when his inept company commander chose a poor position at night and the company command group was practically wiped out from an NVA mortar attack. The start of sunlight at dawn saw Carney being placed in command of the company.

The places familiar to many Americal grunts, LZ Baldy, LZ Center, and heavy fighting on Hill 352, are all there for the reader to relive. Using pseudonym's in the book (Carney is Lt. Scott Ledbetter, and his commander is CPT Reeds), one exchange between the two is instructive:

Scott was amazed and whispered, "Why are you moving about in the night?" Reeds said, "We are going to pull out of this night laager and attack that mountain across the valley."

"When are you planning on attacking the mountain?" Scott asked. Reeds leaned towards Scott and said, "Before dawn." Scott shook his head in disbelief as one stupidity was stacking up on top of the other. All the stupid was coming from one man. Scott whispered, "Why didn't we talk about this during our meeting this afternoon?" Reeds cut him off and said "Get your men ready to move out, Lieutenant!"

Nestled in the book are Carney's reflections about his post high school adventures, hitchhiking across America to get where he needed to be, and his visits across California when getting weekends off from AIT. He had a front row seat at the beginnings of the "hippie" movement. It's a great portrait of America the way it used to be in the early 1960's.

Carney was commissioned through OCS before heading to Vietnam. As an OCS graduate myself, and a Tactical Officer in the OCS program, and currently Vice-President of Operations for the US Army OCS Alumni Association, I enjoyed reading about his OCS experience. It brought back many memories.

This is a book about "the way we were" in the 1960s. The combat descriptions can be handled. I recommend getting the book.



Phoenix

By Darryl James — (Book Review by Gary L. Noller)

Artillery played a large role in the ground war in Vietnam. Hundreds of artillery firebases were located across the country to support infantry and other troops fight the enemy.

Artillery brings up images of howitzers firing high explosive ordnance on targets several kilometers away. But how did they know where to fire? Often times fire missions were called in by forward observers flying in Americal Division Artillery Air Section helicopters.

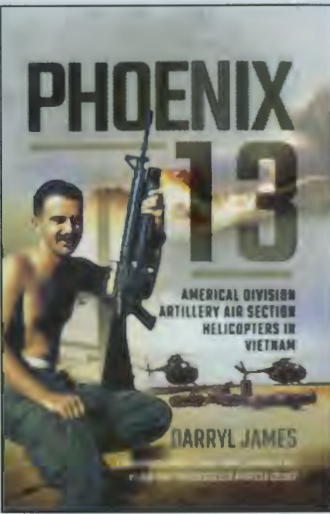
In 1968-1969 Darryl James piloted a small observation helicopter with the radio call sign of Phoenix 13. From the book cover jacket, "Flying over rugged, mountainous jungle bordering a narrow coastal plain of farmlands and rice paddies in the I Corps area, the scout pilots' missions varied from aerial observation, transporting POWs, carrying critical small cargo, convoy cover, providing support to Military Assistance Command (Vietnam), aerial scouting for the U.S. Marines in Da Nang, and inserting Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRPs) and SEALs into small landing zones. James often flew solo in Hughes OH-6A Cayuse "Loaches".

An Introduction by General Tommy Franks, author of the New York Times Best Seller, American Soldier: "A compelling collection of Vietnam helicopter true stories about the aviators in Americal Division's Artillery Aviation Section in '68 and '69. Flying alone, the scout pilots told their exploits to each other daily to learn and to survive from their collective experiences. Hazardous missions are intermixed with occasional humorous details of their off duty shenanigans. The stories describe the brotherhood that develops between soldiers during combat. From these stories, the author, a decorated former Army aviator, describes his journey through Armor school, flight school and Vietnam." General Tommy Franks, Retired, Former Commander In Chief, United States Central Command. [General Franks served as a 1LT in Americal DIVARTY in 1967-1968.]

James' journey to Vietnam begins as a Rutgers University ROTC cadet at Ft. Devens, Massachusetts in July 1964. He arrived at Ft. Wolters, Texas, for pilot training in November 1967 and then on to Vietnam in September 1968. The combat narrative begins there and is a concise chronology of events, sometimes minute by minute, of his harrowing experiences in an extremely hostile environment. Chapter 4 of the book comes with the title, "Flying in Vietnam: 90 percent boredom, 10 percent stark terror."

James performed his final mission in Vietnam on September 2, 1969. In 1970 he separated from the Army and returned home to West Texas. He enjoyed a long career in the oil and gas industry as a petroleum geologist and oil executive.

Additional information and purchasing instructions for the book may be found at www.darryljames.us.



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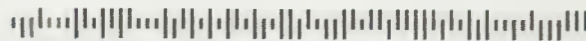


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 United States Government, and its flag, and to
 perpetuate the traditions and history of the
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