



AMERICAL JOURNAL

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

Americal headquarters ETS's

By MSG Bill Pickets

CHU LAI (Special) — "Four years ago the Americal Division was born in battle ... in one of the most violently contested areas of Vietnam. Today we look back with satisfaction at the complete accomplishment of our mission,"

With these words Major General Frederick J. Kroesen, 23d Infantry Division (Americal) commander, set the stage for the dedication of division headquarters, the last of the division to receive its colors.

The division awards ceremony Nov. 11 at Chu Lai climaxed four years of battles for the Americal Division at one time the largest division in the Army with the largest tactical area of influence in Vietnam. More than 100,000 men served with the division in the southern portion of Military Region I during that time, helping to drive the enemy out of the populated coastal plain and assassin settlements and training Regional and Popular Forces.

"Those who have served honorably with this division have earned a self-satisfaction and pride that comes from serving with the best, and attaining the most difficult goals," the general noted.

He did not sidestep the fact that members of the division share collectively an unfortunate reputation, "...

caused by the few in our numbers who make mistakes, some tragic, some careless, some notorious."

"But," he added, "we share also the credit for an unexcelled record and uncounted thousands of acts of valor, acts of compassion and a significant contribution to the attainment of the objectives of the United States

Participating in the ceremony were infantrymen from all three brigades of the division: the 19th, 198th and 199th, artillerymen from the Americal Division Artillery; aviation personnel of the 16th Combat Aviation Group; and many skills from the Division Support Command. Also represented was the 1st Separate Cavalry; 26th Engineer Battalion

General Cogwright W. Abrams, CG, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, was the reviewing general. Also in attendance were General Abrams and General Kroesen; Lieutenant General William J. McCaffery, Deputy CG, Americal Division; Lieutenant General William G. Doherty, CG, XXIV Corps; and Major General Nguyen Van Toan, CG, 2d ARVN Infantry Division.

Brigadier General Bertram K. Gorwitz, assistant

division commander, was Commander of Troops. During the ceremony Americal soldiers were presented U.S. and Vietnamese decorations. They were representative of the many members of the division who have been cited for gallantry during their tours with the Americal.

Since the unit was activated in 1967, nine Americal soldiers have earned the Medal of Honor, and the division is credited with its second Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palms.

Capping the colorful ceremony witnessed by several hundred spectators, General Kroesen, assisted by General Abrams, presented a bronze plaque to soldiers of the Americal Division "... who joined forces with soldiers of the 2d ARVN Infantry Division to battle a common enemy during the years 1967 to 1971."

A part of the inscription on the bronze plaque reads: "In memory of the Americal Division ... This monument stands as a memorial to the sacrifices made by members of the Americal Division during this struggle, and it endures as a symbol of hope for the ultimate realization of the right of self-determination for all the people of Vietnam."

With the dedication of the memorial, the standdown ceremony for the Americal Division was ended.



Vol. 4, No. 45

Da Nang, Vietnam

November 26, 1971

Final division standdown scheduled at Ft. Lewis

By MSG Bill Pickets

CHU LAI (Special) — The final standdown of the 23d Infantry Division will not be accomplished until the last days of this month when the division command group will accompany the colors to Ft. Lewis, Wash., for the official disactivation of the unit and the return of its members to the United States.

That action will bring to a close an enormous redeployment task which began in earnest with the announcement of the standdown of the 3d Battalion, 18th Artillery and the 71st Assault Helicopter Company on Sept. 8.

Planning for the entire who personnel were responsible for the coordination under the supervision of the

and scheduling of all standdown activities.

A personnel out-processing center was established adjacent to the 18th Artillery and this operation, although delayed one day when Typhoon Hester leveled the center, averaged 200 personnel per day through its doors, depending for recruitment in-country or return to CONUS for further assignment or ETS. On Sept. 1, 1971, units of the 23d Infantry Battalion and engineer companies began standdown, many utilizing the facilities of the former Divisional Command Center, the former 27th Surgical Hospital area through which most of the division members would pass during their standdown period. These locations were provided exchange and club facilities to accommodate soldiers during their standdown.

On Sept. 17, II Troop, 17th Cavalry, began its standdown, and during October, more maneuver elements of the division also began their standdown operations.

It was during October that Task Force Americal began to take shape under the command of Colonel Robert J. Malley, former Divisional Commander. Mission of Task Force Americal (TFA) was to prevent the enemy from establishing bases from

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MOVING SYMBOL — Stacks and stacks of crates and crates are piled high with the equipment and supplies of the 23d Infantry Division (Americal) ready to be moved. Crates such as these have become an international familiar sight to men of the Americal, many of whom have been packing their bags in recent weeks to be transferred to other units or to go home. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)



\$1400 collected for Carson Scout

DA NANG (196th Inf. Bde.) — Nguyen Quan, a Kit Carson Scout, was "devoted to his job, a Scout," said Captain James A. Davis, First Class, Charlie Company, F Troop, 196th Infantry Division. The mission of Task Force Americal (TFA) was to prevent the enemy from establishing bases from

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This is the last issue of the *Southern Cross* newspaper, however, a *Charger* newspaper will be published by the 10th Public Information Detachment of the 196th Infantry Brigade beginning Dec. 1971.

He helped the guys in the Charlie Platoon with work details and participated in shorts, but he didn't have to.

He lived with the members of the Charlie Platoon, rarely taking a day

off, according to Sergeant Thomas Hopper (Stayton, Ore.).

On Aug. 14, Quan was badly injured by the explosion of an anti-personnel mine while he and his platoon were on their way to a PZ (pickup zone) after an insertion. He lost both his legs.

Quan's American friends felt a great sense of loss, and they soon decided to do something for Quan.

The members of the platoon decided to present Quan with a gift of money raised by members of F Troop. The campaign was soon successful, raising the entire 123d Aviation Battalion.

The efforts of the platoon gained \$1400 for Quan. The money was presented by Captain Thomas M. Hayes (Anchorage, Ala.) on behalf of the platoon.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAL DIVISION DEPARTING VIETNAM

UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

Coming Home: 50 Years Past

By Gary L. Noller

Approximately nine million Americans served in the military during the ten years of the Vietnam War era. This included all three of my mother's sons.

I did not want to go into the Army, go to Vietnam, be an infantryman, and fight in a war. I did want to come home. I got what I wanted.

On April 30, 1971, I left Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam. A day later I separated from the Army at Ft. Lewis, Washington.

My plane landed at Wichita, Kansas about noon on Saturday, May 2. As I exited the plane the flight attendant noted my Army uniform, tanned skin, and sun-bleached hair. She asked, "Are you home now?" I replied, Yes." That was my 'Welcome Home'. And that was enough.

In September 1969 I wanted to begin a masters degree program in computer science at Kansas State University. I received substantial financial assistance from the university and I was excited to get in on the ground floor of a fast advancing technology. Conscription into the Army changed those plans forever.

My ten months, three weeks, in two days and Vietnam were extremely difficult. Nothing in my upbringing or military training fully prepared me for what I would experience during my tour. Not all days were bad days. But many were. A few were worse.

There are times when I ask myself if it really did happen. Perhaps it did not. It may be that I just read all this in a book and that book is what is in my memory. But it really did happen.

I really did go three weeks in the same clothes and without a shower. I really did have to make three days food last for ten days. I really did have to go two days without sleep. I really did have to sleep on the smelly jungle ground for weeks at a time.

My buddies and I sometimes talked about what could happen to us. I always thought I would be a casualty but I did not think I would be killed. But I was never wounded by the enemy.

At six feet, two inches tall I was a hard target to miss. I carried the radio for the company commander which made me stand out even more. Some of my buddies constantly scoured the ground for a booby trap trip wire. Others kept their focus at eye level in case of a face-to-face encounter with an enemy soldier. I, on the other hand, kept close watch overhead for a sniper waiting in the trees.

Coming home was not the joy that I thought I would be. The plane going to Vietnam was packed full. But the plane coming home had empty seats. I could not miss the

fact that those empty seats were not filled because their occupants were casualties. The attendant came by and said, "We have some extra meals. Do you want another one?" "No, thank you," I answered.

After a short stop to refuel the airplane in Japan, I arrived back in the World at Ft. Lewis, Washington. It was about 3:00 PM and we had our promised steak dinner. It was cooked about 10:00 AM. We did some paperwork processing and then headed to the supply room to get our sheets and blankets for the night.

A very telling incident occurred as our group of about a dozen Vietnam returnees arrived at the supply room.

We found the door locked so we politely knocked to gain entrance. The door was opened by a largely overweight staff sergeant who had a scowl on his face. It was nearing 5:00 PM and he was ready to go home. Our arrival proved to be a pain in the ass for him.

He ordered us off the loading dock and told us to form a proper military formation in the parking lot. He spent the next ten minutes telling us that no one cared who were were, were we had been, and what we had done. As if this in not enough he went on to tell us that the public hated veterans and we had better get used to shabby treatment.

One of the guys in the group called out to him, "Just give us some sheets and blankets and we will get out of your hair." The supply sergeant responded with a scowl and hollered back, "You will get your sheets and blankets when it damn well pleases me to let you have them."

At that point our tempers began to rise. Another veteran shouted back, "If you would have treated us like this just a few days ago we would have shot you." Then, as a group, we all turned and quietly walked back to our barracks. I do not think we would have really shot the guy-or perhaps, if we did, just in the foot.

That night I opened up my duffel bag and pulled out my Army issue G. I. over coat. I climbed up on the bare mattress of a top bunk in our World War II era barracks, covered up with the coat, and went to sleep. Sheets? Blankets? I don't need your stinking sheets and blankets.

I left Vietnam but many of my close buddies remained. We were very close and we took care of each other. Would they be okay? Would I be okay. It is fortunate that the ones I left behind all made it home and all continue to be okay.

I have always thought that Vietnam was either the hardest thing I would ever do or it was good preparation for the hardest thing I would ever do. Over the past 50 years it has remained the hardest thing I have ever done. I hope it always is.

To all who served, "Welcome Home." I am glad you made it.

From the editor:

This edition of the *America Journal* marks the 50th anniversary of the departure of the division from Vietnam. This issue contains a reprint of two articles that were published in the last edition of the Southern Cross newspaper. This was dated November 26, 1971. All the stories in the history section of the magazine are from the Vietnam War. World War II stories will resume in the next issue.

The image below is the Distinctive Unit Insignia of the America Division. A description of the America Division coat of arms is provided below the image. The information is taken from a publication prepared by W. Mark Durley. Mark was a WWII veteran and held the post of ADVA Historian. Upon his retirement the position was split into the World War II Historian and Vietnam Historian. These posts are currently held by Dave Taylor and Les Hines.

I am happy to say that the *America Journal* has received many submissions from members and we are going to use them in future editions of the magazine. If you have sent something and want to check on its status please send a message to gnoller@aol.com. If you have items but have not sent them yet please do so. It is very possible that with sufficient content the magazine will expand to include more pages. This issue is 32 pages but in the past we have published up to 40 pages in one issue. Thank you for your interest in preserving the true history of the America Division.

Coat of Arms of the America Division

Cross of St. Andrew azure charged with five-pointed mullets four argent charged azure. Unsheathed sword vertical argent Crusader guard and grip or charged per pale on Cross. Sunburst indented gules over Arrowhead gules. All charged upon anchor proper per fess ring dexter.

Explanation: The Cross of St. Andrew alludes to the Scottish origin of New Caledonia's name and is Blue for Infantry. At the tips of the Cross are the four white stars signifying both the Southern Cross (under which skies the Division's initial battles were fought) and the four campaigns (Guadalcanal, Northern Solomons, Leyte, and the Southern Philippines) during World War II. The Sunbursts resting upon the Sinister and Dexter upper Tips of the Cross denotes the Division's participation in the liberation of the



Cover: First page of the final Southern Cross newspaper published by the America Division

Philippine Islands. The arrowhead below the Sunburst is for the assault landing on Cebu Island and for the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation. The golden Anchor represents the Presidential Unit Citation (Navy) awarded for participation in the initial stage of Guadalcanal as a part of the 1st Marine Amphibious Corps. The unsheathed sword refers to the America Division's service in Vietnam.

Definitions in heraldry: Azure-blue. Charge(d)-emblem. Mullets- stars. Argent- silver or white. Or- gold. Pale- vertical or vertical band. Gules- red. Proper- natural color. Indented- zig zag features. Fess- horizontal or horizontal band. Dexter- right hand.

The Cross of St. Andrew is blue and has four five-pointed white or silver stars upon it. The unsheathed sword vertical is a silver blade with a gold guard and grip. Crusader is a type of one-handed sword and it is vertical on top of the cross. The sunburst follows a zig zag pattern. Sunburst and arrowhead are red. The anchor is horizontal with its ring on the right had side and is its normal color. The sword and stars are placed over the cross which is placed over the arrowhead and sunburst which are placed over the anchor. The word AMERICAL is the name of the division.

The illustration is that of a depiction of the Distinctive Unit Insignia (DUI) of the America Division and is very similar to the coat of arms. It differs in the color scheme but has identical design elements. A DUI usually is not as detailed as the associated coat of arms. Army divisions may have a coat of arms, a distinctive unit insignia, and a shoulder patch. In many cases the distinctive unit insignia preserves elements of the coat of arms but shoulder patches do not. The Army allows subordinate units down to the regiment and battalion level to have a coat of arms and DUI. The DUI is typically worn upon the epaulet of the uniform but can also be worn differently on other pieces of clothing.



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

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- Contributing Editor: David W. Taylor
- Creative Director: Lisa Anderson
- Contributing Author: Roger Gilmore

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Adjutant's Notes

By Roger Gilmore, National Adjutant

Our country is slowly opening back up with more individuals receiving the Covid-19 vaccination and new infections on the decrease. I hope to see many of you at the annual ADVA reunion in Indianapolis this September.

ADVA membership numbers continued a steady climb over the past three months. We added twenty-four new members to the Association membership roster. This is an increase of eight over the previous period. Of those twenty-four, ten joined as life members. Twenty-four members paid dues under the recently changed life dues structure to upgrade their membership to Paid Life. This is an increase of eighteen over the previous reporting period. A tip of the hat to members Bill Shepard, Don Counter, Chuck Grimm, John Worrel, NC David Eichhorn and PNC Gary L. Noller for sponsoring new members. A new member recruiting initiative by Editor-in-Chief Gary Noller, using contact information from Facebook posts, has helped increase interest in the ADVA and prompted Americal Division veterans to join the Association. All new members noted with an asterisk (*) and PNC Gary L. Noller are those who joined from this initiative. This line is used to denote the sponsor for the new member. If listed as * Self, no sponsor is listed on the application form.

I feel like the increase in annual pay members upgrading their ADVA membership to life status is primarily due to the new life dues structure put in place earlier this year. A highly informative article in the Apr-May-Jun edition (page 11) explained the new Paid Life rate structure based on age. With these new lowered dues rates, I expect more annual pay members to take advantage of this value offer. Since the start of this fiscal year (July 1, 2020) we have had 78 annual pay members upgrade to life. Of those 78, 58 paid the new life dues rate since January 2021. Many paid the lowest rate available, \$50.00, based on age. I suppose this means we have a lot of members over the age of 75. If you recently paid your \$15.00 annual dues (May 2021 renewals) and want to upgrade, you can apply your annual dues amount to the new life member rate for your age. If you want to do this, please let me know you are sending an additional check (email or text). Our recent gains in membership are an indicator that there are still many Americal Division veterans around the nation who do not belong to ADVA. Individual recruiting by all of us is the key to building our membership base. If you have the name and mailing address of a fellow Americal Division veteran, contact me and I will mail him a membership application and a recent issue of the Americal Journal.

Annual pay renewals for May 2021 were mailed the last week of April 2021. If your renewal date is May 2021 and you have not received a dues renewal notice, contact me and I will mail another. Your annual pay due date is on the back cover (beside your name). If your dues renewal date is noted May21 or earlier, please mail your payment if you have not already done so.

The Taps listing for this issue of the Americal Journal is not quite as extensive as the last issue, but still lists many more Vietnam veterans than WWII veterans. Although not listed in the Taps section, I want to note the passing of Ellen Gause in late March. Ellen was the wife of ADVA member Jessie Gause. Ellen was very involved with Jessie's unit reunions. She also helped the Legacy Foundation fund raising at reunions with the Americal themed Christmas ornaments she made for our silent auctions. Ellen will be missed by all whose lives she touched.

I've received quite a few address changes lately and I appreciate everyone's notice of move when relocating. There are many details to take care of when one moves and letting us know is not at the top of the list. But it's important to get done so your mailing of the Americal Journal does not get interrupted. This is especially important for seasonal moves (i.e., Snowbirds). My contact information is on the back cover of this issue.

New Annual Pay Members

Jefferson D. Baker
1/6th Inf
Vidor, TX
★ Self

David Bohman
D/1/52nd Inf
Greensburg, IN
★ Bill Shepard

Chuck Cape
C/4/31st Inf
Woodstock, GA
★ Self

Dennis L. Cote
A/4/3rd Inf
Akron, OH
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

David Dunn
A/1/6th Inf
Bronson, MI
★ Don Counter

James Henegar
3/16th Arty Btry B
Glade Spring, VA
★ Chuck Grimm

Henry Medelin
B/1/20th Inf
La Coste, TX
★ Self

James W. O'Brien
1/20th Inf
Beverly, MA
★ Self

Bill Pfau
A/1/46th Inf
Cartersville, GA
★ Don Counter

Henry Reuscher
3/21st Inf
Excelsior Springs, MO
★ John Worrel

David Tarnay
A/1/46th Inf
Hawthorne, CA
★ Don Counter

Gary Thain
A/4/3rd Inf
Deer Park, WA
★ Self

James Wideman
1/46th Inf
Pittsford, NY
★ PNC David Eichhorn

New Paid Life Members

Verlin Belcher
27th Chem Det
Scherville, NY
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Joseph A. Brenes
138th Cmbt Engrs
Wolcott, Ct
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Thomas A. Bush
A/1/6th Inf
Philadelphia, PA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

James E. House
1/20th Inf
Flowood, MS
★ Self

Thomas J. Jokerst
198th LIB
Ste Genevieve, MO
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Joseph A. Laudicina
1/52nd Inf
Oakland Park, FL
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

James P. Spencer
6/11th Arty Btry C
Woodbridge, VA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Bill Theiss
3/16th Arty
Canton, OH
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Elmer E. Hall
D/1/20th Inf
Orlando, FL
★ Kenneth Sabatin

John Wilson
C/D/1/20th Inf
Sun City West, AZ
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Eclemus Wright, Jr.
B/1/46th Inf
Harrisburg, PA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Allen Auxier
C/1/6th Inf
Kenai, AK
★ Self

David Bushey
A/1/20th Inf
N Baltimore, OH
★ PNC Richard Scales

Barry Carol
1/14th Arty HH Btry
Aberdeen, NJ
★ Ed Den Braven

Albert R. Minton
196th LIB
Moore, OK
★ Ed Den Braven

Robert G. Moles
A/1/6th Inf
Adrian, MO
★ Don Ballou

Paul E. Cullinane, Jr.
C/1/6th Inf
Chambersburg, PA
★ Mark Deam

Gary Rapley
C/4/3rd Inf
Lynn, MI
★ Self

Gerald L Everett
328th RR Co
Annapolis, MD
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Leonard W. Frye
C/5/46th Inf
Richland Center, WI
★ Earl Carlson

Conrad C. Geibel
B/1/52nd Inf
Butler, PA
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Ronald C. Hadley
D/1/6th Inf
Hudsonville, MI
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Bob Van Tholen
11th LIB
Glenview, OH
★ Les Hines

Elmer E. Hall
D/1/20th Inf
Orlando, FL
★ Kenneth Sabatin

Jack Vater
A/5/46th Inf
Owen, WI
★ PNC David W. Taylor

Nolan G. Bingham
B/1/46th Inf
Columbus, IN
May 31, 2021

William E. Vickery
C/3/21st Inf
Indian Springs, AL
★ PNC David Eichhorn

Richard G. Waggoner
1/52nd Inf
Newell, IA
★ John Mackey

John T. Young
23rd Admin Co
Myrtle Beach, SC
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

Reinstated Members

Carl Landwehr
1/6th Inf
De Pere, WI
★ Ron Green

**TAPS LISTING;
MAY THEY REST IN
PEACE**

**World War II
Veterans**

Robert Finger *
A/1/6th Inf
New London, WI
November 2020

Claude D. Folds
198th LIB
Hartwick, NY
May 11, 2021

Kurt Hoy *
Div Arty
Raleigh, NC
September 2001

**William D.
Prince, Jr. ***
D/4/21st Inf
Hiram, GA
Date Unknown

**George Rogers
(CSM, Ret.)**
HHC, 2/1 Infantry
Lawton, OK
April 25, 2021

Donald H. Thomas *
3/82nd Arty
Millersville, MD
February 2021

Ken Widstrom
D/4/31st Inf
Champlin, MN
March 5, 2021

Harry Wilmoth *
C/1/52nd Inf
Fresno, CA
March 8, 2021

Monte Wolff
E/1/46th Inf
Gold Canyon, AZ
April 23, 2021

*** ADVA Member**

**ADVA MEMBERSHIP
31 May 2021**

World War II	238
Vietnam	243
Cold War	4
Associate Members	183
Total Members	2,858

Americal Legacy Foundation Report

By Roger Gilmore, Chairman, Board of Directors

Foundation Web Site

We received word that the legacy store ordering link had an error message when an individual tried to place an order through the legacy store. This information was forwarded to our web site technical administrator, and that error message has been rectified. If you encounter any type of error code or message when trying to order Legacy merchandise through the store, please let us know asap.

I encourage any members wanting to order merchandise from the website www.americalfoundation.org, to visit the store. It is convenient and easy to use. I know it is late in the year to be ordering a 2021 calendar, but we have plenty on hand, and it would make a great gift for a fellow Americal Division veteran who is not a member of ADVA.

The Blog link on the web site was updated in May. The updated text and accompanying pictures give a chronological history of our recent achievements for Americal Division monuments placements throughout the country.

Americal Legacy Calendar – 2021 Edition

The fundraising campaign for the 2021 Legacy calendar is a fantastic success. We continue to get donations mailed in for this calendar edition. I know I repeat these comments in each issue of the Journal, but good news bears repeating. Your support for the programs administered by the Legacy Foundation directors is remarkable. Many veterans' organizations solicit donations these days, and for many of your donations to charitable organizations may be limited.

The greatest slight the Americal Division, as well as any other U.S. Army unit or related service branch can suffer, is to be completely forgotten by future generations. The goal of the Americal Legacy Foundation is to place permanent memorials for those future generations to know the service and sacrifice of the Americal Division. And we can do this through your continued financial support.

Donations made to the Americal Legacy Foundation through the calendar program are earmarked as "unrestricted" donations. This means these funds can be directed to projects deemed worthy of the legacy mission of the Foundation. Currently this is primarily the national and state veterans cemetery monument placement program. We have allocated funds in the past to other projects which honor the history of the Americal Division through permanent memorials. ALF director Gary Noller reported 2021 donations of just over \$26,300.00. Most of these donations are from the Foundation's 2021 calendar edition. Some of the bank deposits included monies received from the sales of merchandise.

Americal Monument Programs – National VA Cemeteries

In the last issue of the American Journal, I wrote about the new approach for the VA Cemetery monuments program the ALF directors have been considering. Our inventory of completed monuments at the Vermont quarry is down to three. One of these will be placed at the Fort Polk History Museum by the end of summer. We have two other VA Cemetery sites that we expect to

approve placement later this year and that will complete the movement of the second order of five monuments from Keith Monument Company.

Currently, two different strategies are under discussion. One is to purchase, under one contract, five more monuments of the same design and materials as the first two orders. The second approach is more of a "wait and see" strategy. This plan is to purchase a monument on an "as needed" basis. There are advantages to both approaches. Buying five monuments under one contract gives us a better per unit price. Ordering and buying one monument at a time when we get approval to place costs more per unit, but we do not end up five to ten years into the future with an inventory of monuments we cannot place.

There is a possibility one of the VA cemeteries agrees to our placement proposal but has a different monument design that the current Standardized Memorial Monument specifications listed in NCA Handbook. This would require a new design drawing and approval by the cemetery. Currently, the options are still under discussion among the directors.

We are reaching out to more VA and state veterans cemeteries with an overview of our program to gauge interest in placing the monument. Director and First Vice President Gary Noller is in contact with four other cemeteries (some are state cemeteries) about our program. Some have expressed interest in placing the Americal Monument. I sent an introductory letter to Riverside National Cemetery in California and requested a response regarding any interest the director might have in our program. Other sites are candidates for our proposal based on input from ADVA members. We will contact the directors at these cemeteries to determine whether these locations have an interest in our monument program.

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

Washington Crossing National Cemetery (Newtown, PA)

This project has become one of "reconnecting the dots". The lag in progress and delays in action here can pretty much be laid at the feet of the Covid-19 restrictions and our not being able to locate a local concrete contractor to do the base. Now that pandemic restrictions are easing and we have been able to work with a local memorial company for a reasonable price on installation. Additionally, the cemetery maintenance foreman who was the POC for the project retired earlier this year, so the cemetery director is now taking the lead for our project. In late May, he advised he is reviewing the proposal package and will be in contact for any additional requirements. On June 1, I received an acknowledgement that the proposal is submitted to the district office in Philadelphia for review and a decision. Telephone follow-up with the concrete vendor in late May confirms our price is still good and he is waiting on the monument delivery once approval is given at the district level. More on the placement approval process in future issues.

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

Director Ronald Ellis and I made the trip to the cemetery on March 31 to meet with the cemetery director and her staff to view the placement site. When this project started, we

advised the placement would be in a roundabout near the administrative office and cemetery entrance. Plans changed and the placement site is on a circular walkway just outside the administrative building. This is a very visible location for visitors as other monuments are now in place along the walkway. A representative for the concrete contractor met with us to go over placement specifics and requirements for soil compaction and concrete base alignment. The monument shipment arrived at the cemetery in mid-April and placement was complete by April 30th. The photo shows the monument along with the cemetery director and staff members.



**Fort Snelling National Cemetery
(Minneapolis, MN)**

Discussions are proceeding with staff at Ft. Snelling National Cemetery. We recently sent the a cost estimate and architectural drawing of the proposed monument. Ft. Snelling uses a monument design that is slightly different from the standard monument design that has been used in other national and state veterans cemeteries. If steady progress can be maintained a monument installation may take place by end of 2021.

Americal Monument/Memorial Programs - Other Locations

Museum of the U.S. Army

I wish to thank two ADVA members who responded to my request for input on the Army museum opening and the displays along the Path of Remembrance. Members Bill Shugarts and John S. Tomko, Jr. advise the new U.S. Army Museum will open by appointment on June 14, the birthday of the Army. Both furnished some nice pictures that have a great view of the Unit Tribute Wall along the Path of Remembrance. The photo shows the wall and the Americal Division Unit Tribute Plaque. Bill will be a docent at the museum. Those who make the 2022 ADVA reunion and tour to the museum may see him at work.

Fort Polk, LA

Attempts to contact our POC on post in late May went unanswered. Most likely she is on temporary duty at another installation as has been the case over the past couple months. At this article was written, I had not heard whether



our concrete contractor is ready to pour the support base for the Americal monument. The placement is approved and awaiting the concrete work. More on this project in a future issue of this publication.

JRB Cape Cod (formerly Camp Edwards), MA

Per communication from the plaque manufacturer, plans were to install the new plaque the week of May 24. I have not heard back as to whether the installation is done. Our POC on this project, Len Kondratuk, is working with the 1st Battalion, 182nd Regiment, on a plaque dedication ceremony. Ceremony date is July 22, with soldiers from the 182nd Regiment attending. I will be traveling to Boston for the ceremony to represent the Foundation. A picture of the new plaque and ceremony will be featured in a future publication.

Fort Rucker, AL

The monument to honor Americal Division aviation units was placed here in 2020. We plan to have a monument dedication ceremony at the monument site in March 2022. This event will be held in conjunction with other Americal Division related ceremonies conducted in the area. We expect the date to be the end of March. If you live in the area, mark your calendars for this event.

The Legacy Scholarship Program

The 2021 Americal Legacy Foundation scholarship fund raising raffle ticket contributions have really bolstered the scholarship grant money available this coming academic year for the applicants. Chairman Bill Bruinsma has received donations amounting to just over \$40,000.00. This amount, as well as our annual drawdown amount from the Vanguard investment should give a total of nearly \$53,000.00 available for distribution. Bill reports 64 applications were submitted for this coming academic year, the largest number in the long history of the scholarship program. Bill expects the awards decisions to be made during the period from end of June until mid-July. Checks should go out to the recipients' institutions of choice by the end of July.

Again, we sincerely appreciate the tremendous support for this very worthy program carried on by the Foundation. The generosity from all you donors has enabled many hundreds of children and grandchildren to pursue their dream of a better education. The Americal Legacy Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) public charity under the Internal Revenue Code, so your donation is fully deductible, depending on your personal income tax situation.

Vietnam Historian Report

By Les Hines, ADVA Vietnam Historian

Perry C. Hopkins, DSC

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

There were very few Distinguished Service Crosses awarded to the helicopter units. We had one other one for pilot, James Bridges, from B/123rd Avn for actions in July 19, 1969. LTC Kettles from the 176th AHC received one, but it was upgraded to the MOH before he passed. MG Patrick Brady, 54th Medical Detachment (helicopter ambulance), received the MOH award.

The citation reads: HOPKINS, PERRY C.; Chief Warrant Officer (W-2), U.S. Army; 161st Aviation Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Brigade. Date of Action: May 17, 1966. Citation:

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)

Perry C. Hopkins passed away on May 30, 2019.

196th Light Infantry Brigade Memorial Installed At National Infantry Museum

By Gary L. Noller

The 196th Light Infantry Brigade memorial statue was installed on the Walk of Honor at the National Infantry Museum at Ft. Benning in time for Memorial Day 2021. The memorial consists of a larger than life statue of two soldiers exiting a battlefield. A bronze plaque with information about the unit is placed near the statue.

The work was the creation of Sarah Hahn of Columbus, Ohio. She received a commission from the 196th Light Infantry Brigade Association to design and produce the bronze statue and supervise its installation on the Walk of Honor. The Americal Legacy Foundation contributed \$10,000 towards the estimated \$90,000 cost of the finished and installed work. The Foundation also provided consultation assistance with certain aspects of the project.

Dave Eichhorn, past president of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade Association and current National Commander of the Americal Division Veterans Association, is the project manager. Funding came from the 196th Association and its members and friends.

A potential dedication date in late March 2022 is under consideration. The 196th memorial is one of scores of memorial located along the Walk of Honor. The Americal Division and 23rd Infantry Division memorial monument, the first project of the Americal Legacy Foundation, was dedicated in 2010. The Walk of Honor is connected to the National Infantry Museum is just outside the main gate of Ft. Benning in Columbus, Georgia.



Photos courtesy of Sarah Hahn.

Scouts Honor

By Peter E. Lutz

In November 2019, at the request of my grandson Oliver, I spoke about my Army experience at his Cub Scout troop's Veterans Day commemoration. At first, I struggled with how to explain to boys so young what it was like being a soldier, until I realized that it was not what I would say but what I could show them. I unearthed my dress uniform hat, trimmed with a matching blue infantry braid, a canteen, web belt, two cans of K-rations (why the hell did I save them), photos of Army buddies tucked inside my soldiers' handbook, and my Boonie hat, its wide brim, which shielded my face from the sun, is creased from being folded under my uniform.

I'm surprised to find the Zippo lighter I haven't seen in years — a gift from my father, a World War II veteran, that was inscribed: *When I die, bury me face down so the whole world can kiss my ass*. As I hold it in the palm of my hand, I imagine that if it could talk, it might describe what it was like being stuck in my pocket while I waited out a twelve-hour downpour, dying for a smoke, just thinking, thinking, knowing there was nothing I could do but wait it out.

I arrived at Duffy Elementary School a half hour before the Cub Scout meeting scheduled for six o'clock. Just as I finished setting up, the door crashed open.

"Grandpa, Grandpa!" my grandson cried out as he jumped into my arms, all decked out in his blue uniform, cap, and yellow neckerchief. More scouts trickle in along with a few dads and one mom. As always when a group of young boys gather, there's a lot of running around until the scout leader corralled the boys to recite the scout pledge and then turned the meeting over to me.

"Hello, scouts," I began. "In the Army, I was called Sergeant Lutz. To be in the Army, you had to take a pledge, just like you just did. I had to raise my right hand and promise to be a good soldier. In the Army I had a lot of friends, just



like you are all friends. You learn things together and have adventures together and everybody knows you are from the same group. How do they know? Well, you have a uniform. I had a uniform, too, and here it is."

They strained off their chairs and I waved them over to the table where they could lean on their elbows to hold up their faces and get close enough to touch not only the uniform but all the other stuff I had brought, except for the Zippo, which was in my pocket; I did not want to explain the inscription to eight-year-olds.

"My uniform is green, and green is the Army color," I held up my dress jacket. "This blue braid on the shoulder of my jacket and on my fancy hat says that I was in the infantry, and that means I was a soldier who fought on foot and didn't ride around in a tank."

From their silence and wide-eyed expressions, I know I had their attention.

"Three stripes mean sergeant. Every patch, just like yours, tells a story. Now, I did some traveling while I was in the army to a place called Vietnam, which is far away from here—and it's a very hot place." I added a dramatic swipe of my forehead which made them laugh.

"I learned to shoot a rifle and earned a sharpshooter medal for doing such a good job," I continued. "This blue patch under my name tag means I was a Jungle Expert because of my special training in a country called Panama, where there were monkeys and snakes and lizards."

One of the boys makes monkey sounds and the others join in, scratching under their arms.

"I wore a helmet when I was in Vietnam, but they wouldn't let me take it home. When we didn't have our helmets on, we wore a hat like this one that we called a Boonie hat. My fancy hat was kept in a special place in case we had to get dressed up."

Then I showed off my Bronze Star. "This is my very favorite and most special medal, which I was given because I was a really good soldier."

As the scouts eagerly touched all my stuff and posed for pictures with my army hats, one of the dads approached, bronze star presentation box in-hand.

"I've never seen one before," he said. "This is an incredible honor. You should be proud."

"Medals don't really tell the story of my life," I manage to say, despite the lump in my throat. "If I've been a good husband, father and grandfather, that's all that matters."

Perhaps for all the times we Vietnam veterans felt that our return home lacked cheers and gratitude, that night with my grandson and his friends I was especially proud to have served our country.

[Peter Lutz served with HHC, 198th Lt. Inf. Bde. In 1967-68.]



Dear editor,

On 23 September 1971, C Co., 1-20, 11LIB, 2nd Platoon, is OPCON to C Troop, 1-1 Cav. At BT038392 they hit a pressure type mine; results is two US WHA. C Co. reports the wounded were SP4 James M. Costabile and other was a photographer from the 523 Signal BN. Looking for the photographer and anyone else present that day. I found Costabile.

Wm. Gruendler; [REDACTED]



Dear editor,

The state of West Virginia has recognized and honored the Caldwell Brothers because all six brothers served in the military, and all returned home to Burlington, West Virginia. They were the sons of Richard and Helen Caldwell. Their

sisters were Joan Caldwell Brown and Helen Jean Caldwell Brown. A road sign has been installed in their honor. Below is a brief overview of their military contributions. The full narrative was prepared by Wendy Jordan.

James A. Caldwell enlisted in 1946 and served with Co. A., 21st Infantry, U.S. Army. Richard C. Caldwell served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War. John C. Caldwell served in the Army between July 1963 and July 1965. William R. Caldwell served in the U.S. Army between January 1964 and January 1966. He served in Vietnam with the 1st Inf. Div. Douglas L. Caldwell Served in the U.S. Navy from December 1946 through December 1968. He had three tours in Vietnam waters.

Thomas N. Caldwell served in the U.S. Army from October 1966 through September 1968. He attained the rank of Sergeant E-5. In Vietnam he was assigned to Co. B, 1/6th Inf., 198th Lt. Inf. Bde. He received the Combat Infantryman Badge, Purple Heart medal, and Valorous Unit Award among many other awards and decorations.

Doug Giffin; [REDACTED]

Dear editor,

From the members of D Company, 1st BN 6th Inf, 198th LIB, we want to thank you for publishing our efforts to find members of the company and invite them to our reunion in Chattanooga, TN. This will be our 10th reunion under my wife and my supervision and we will be turning those honors over to Gary Salpini.

Lynn D. Baker; LTC, USA (Ret)
[REDACTED]

Dear editor,

I read the article by Don Counter in the last issue of the Americal Journal. I thought it was really funny and brought back pungent memories. To this day I still have dreams where I can actually smell the aroma of diesel and human waste burning. It wakes me up.

Joe Altomari; [REDACTED]
132d ASHC, 6/69-5/70

Dear editor,

I wish to announce the reunion for those who served in Co. D, 3/21 (Gimlets), 196 Lt. Inf. Bde, from: 1/1970 to 11/1971. Contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] com for details. Deadline for responding: August 15, 2021.

Dennis Whittaker (LT)

Americal Legacy Foundation Scholarship Update

By William Bruinsma, Scholarship Chairman

The number of scholarship applications has been increasing for the last few years from forty-eight in 2018 to sixty-four this year. It is a tribute to the membership that it is possible to support a scholarship fund that is able to help the increasing number of students. Members have been very generous in making contributions to make this happen.

Again this year, as in years past, there are a number of applications that could be improved. The application forms for approximately twenty-three applicants were hard to read or had parts that were hard to read. This is actually a better percentage and an improvement over past years. The essays are better than in the past but many could still be improved. Some of the essays received were in the form of a letter, had no name, or were extremely short. The essay part of the application is very important and is a substantial part of application scoring.

I did receive several applications that were sent by overnight mail or other costly ways. The application only needs a POST MARK of May 1 to be accepted. I prefer that they be sent in a flat envelope but an application folded into a business envelope is satisfactory.

It is planned to have the check made out to the students school and sent out sometime before the end of July. If there are any questions concerning scholarships please, email me at [REDACTED] or call me at [REDACTED]

2021 National Reunion Update

By Chuck Holdaway, Reunion Chairman, and Jack Head

The 2021 Americal Division Veterans Association annual reunion will be held in Indianapolis on September 8-12, 2021. We have some great tours lined up and our usual dinner banquet on Saturday evening. See page 12 for a description of reunion events and activities. A reunion registration form is on page 13. Reunion registration and activities is being handled through Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.

If you haven't checked out the ADVA web site <https://www.americal.org> please do so. Also, the 2/1 chapter web site <http://www.2-1-196th.com> has reunion information and forms available on it. All reunion, tour, hotel and RV camping information is on both of these sites. Hospitality rooms for several units will be available throughout the reunion plus the usual main ADVA hospitality room.

We will be raffling off a Kel-Tec KS7 shotgun at the reunion. This highly sought after shotgun has many reasons for its popularity. As always, the owner of the winning ticket will have to produce the winning ticket at Saturday's reunion dinner to receive the certificate from Kel-Tec and instructions on how to receive their prize. A description is on the internet at www.keltecweapons.com/firearms/shotguns/ks7. Kel-Tec is manufacturing a mock up of the shotgun for us to display during our time in Indianapolis.

I hope we will have a great turnout and give all of you a

chance to see your old buddies and meet some new ones. I'm personally looking forward to this reunion since we weren't able to have one last year because of the COVID problem.

ADVA has an agreement with American Legion Post 500 to provide RV spaces with some 30 and 50 Amp hookups and water. Contact the post for price. American Legion Post 500 is located at 1925 Georgetown Rd, Speedway, Indiana. The post is approximately 15 minutes from the host hotel and across the street from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum. RV camping reservations may be made immediately by accessing the post's web site which at <http://www.speedwaylegionpost500.com>. Contact American Legion Post 500 by email at speedwaypost500parking@gmail.com.

The ADVA lost several members this last year due to their passing and we will greatly miss seeing them. Please try to make this reunion if at all possible. We are losing our Vietnam comrades to the tune of 146,000 each year so we owe it to ourselves to keep in contact and not miss any opportunity to get with each other.

If there are any questions or problems, please contact Chuck Holdaway at either of these email addresses: [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Also, the 2/1 chapter web site has a printable reunion flyer available and I would appreciate it if you would print it and post copies in your local VFW and/or American Legion posts.

So far, we are having a very good response on registrations and hotel reservations. There are plenty of rooms available at the reunion hotel so there is no problem with getting reservations there. Also, there is plenty of availability on the tours. The hotel has added a toll free number for us to use [REDACTED]. Just tell them you are with the ADVA group; what type of room you want and your dates of arrival and departure. The two other hotel reservation numbers to the hotel are [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

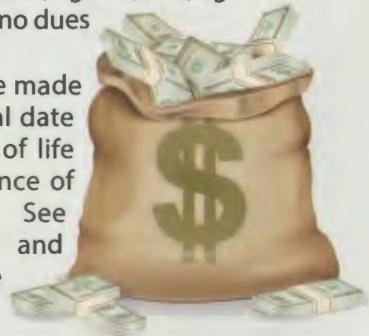
New Life Dues Payment Structure Update

By Roger Gilmore, National Adjutant

Effective the 2021 dues year, the ADVA has modified the life dues payment structure. The new dues amounts are at a reduced rate from the previous life dues of \$125 for members under 75 years old and \$50 for members 75 years old and older.

The new dues amounts are based on the member's age at time of payment. It is as follows: Age 75 or older, \$50; age 74, \$60; age 73, \$70; age 72, \$80; age 71, \$90; age 70 or younger, \$100. There are no dues for World War II veterans.

Payment of dues may be made on the next annual renewal date or if desired the payment of life dues can be done in advance of the annual renewal date. See the membership form and mailing instructions on the back cover of this issue for further instruction.



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

WYNDHAM INDIANAPOLIS WEST – INDIANAPOLIS, IN

HOTEL RESERVATIONS: [REDACTED] (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
 INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY TOUR
 9:00am – 2:00pm
 2:00pm – 6:00pm Reunion Registration Open

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

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

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

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

9:00am board bus, 3:00pm back at hotel. Lunch on own.
 \$55/person includes bus, guides, and admission.

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

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 decaled! After learning the elements of building an Indy car test your driving skills in a racing simulator, equipped with iRacing – the software real drivers use at home. For those who want the extra thrill of a real open cockpit (and for those who can squeeze into one and figure out how to get OUT of it), pay an extra \$20 to take a ride around Speedway in a 2-Seater Street-legal IndyCar or NASCAR. The tour departure and return times may vary depending on the number of folks who register.
 \$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.

[REDACTED]

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		
TOURS	Price Per	# of People
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 [REDACTED] to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion.

50th Anniversary of the Americal Division departure from Vietnam

By Gary L. Noller

The Americal Division ended its service in the Vietnam War on November 29, 1971. It is credited with 1,526 days of service in the war.

The final edition of the division's newspaper, the Southern Cross, was published on November 26. The following two stories tell of the deactivation and departure of the division. They are from the Southern Cross; Vol. 4. No. 45; Da Nang, Vietnam; November 26, 1971.

Americal headquarters ETS's

By MSG Bill Pickett

Chu Lai (Special) - "Four years ago the Americal Division was born in battle in one of the most violently contested areas of Vietnam. Today we look back with satisfaction at the complete accomplishment of our mission."

With these words Major General Frederick I. Kroesen, 23d Infantry Division (Americal) commander, set the stage for the standdown of the division headquarters. The last in the division to case its colors.

The division awards ceremony Nov. 11 at Chu Lai climaxed four years of battle for the Americal Division, at one time the largest division in the Army, with the largest Tactical Area of Interest in Vietnam. More than 100,000 men served with the division in the southern portion of Military Region I during that time, helping to drive the enemy out of the populated coastal plain and mountain settlements and training Regional and Popular Forces.

"Those who have served honorably with this division have earned a self-satisfaction and pride that comes from serving with the best, and attaining the most difficult goals," the general noted.



Standdown Press Conference. Some 25 newsmen interview Major General Frederick J. Kroesen, CG 23rd Infantry Division (Americal), following standdown ceremonies for Headquarters of the Americal Nov. 11. (U.S. Army Photo)

He did not sidestep the fact that members of the division share collectively an unfortunate reputation, "... caused by the few in our numbers who make mistakes, some tragic, some careless, some notorious." "But," he added, "we share also the credit for an unexcelled record and uncounted thousands of acts of valor, acts of compassion and a significant contribution to the attainment of the objectives of the United States in this war."

Participating in the ceremony were infantrymen from the three brigades of the division: the 11th, 196th and 198th; artillerymen representing the Americal Division Artillery; aviation personnel of the 16th Combat Aviation Group; and men of many skills from the Division Support Command. Also represented was the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry; 26th Engineer Battalion and the 523d Signal Battalion.

General Creighton W. Abrams, CG, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, was the reviewing officer. Sharing the reviewing stand with General Abrams and General Kroesen were Lieutenant General Hoang Xuan Lam, CG, I Corps and Military Region I; Lieutenant General William J. McCaffery, deputy CG, U.S. Army, Vietnam; Lieutenant General Welborn G. Dolvin, CG, XIV Corps; and Major General Nguyen Van Toan, CG, 2d ARVN Infantry Division.

Brigadier General Bertram K. Gorwitz, assistant division commander, was commander of troops.

During the ceremony Americal soldiers were presented U.S. and Vietnamese decorations. They were representative of the many members of the division who have been cited for gallantry during their tours with the Americal.

Since the unit was activated in 1967, nine Americal soldiers have earned the Medal of Honor, and the Division was decorated with its second Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm.

Capping the colorful ceremony witnessed by several hundred spectators, General Kroesen, assisted by General Toan, unveiled a monument dedicated to soldiers of the Americal Division "... who joined forces with soldiers of the 2d ARVN Infantry Division to battle a common enemy during the years 1967 to 1971."

A part of the inscription on the bronze plaque mounted on the cement monument read: --This monument stands as a memorial to the sacrifices made by members of the Americal Division during this struggle, and it endures as a symbol of hope for the ultimate achievement of self-determination for all the people of Vietnam."

With the dedication of the memorial, the standdown ceremony for the Americal Division was ended.

Final division standdown scheduled at Ft. Lewis

By MSG Bill Pickett

CHU LAI (Special) -- The actual standdown of the 23d Infantry Division will not be accomplished until the last days of this month when the division command group will accompany the colors to Ft. Lewis, Wash. for the official deactivation of the unit and the retirement of the colors.

That action will bring to a close an enormous redeployment task which began in earnest with the announcement of the standdown of the 3d Battalion, 18th Artillery and the 71st Assault Helicopter Company on Sept. 8.

Planning for the entire operation began much earlier under the supervision of the Keystone Operations Center, whose personnel were responsible for the coordination and scheduling of all standdown activities.

A personnel out-processing center was established adjacent to the Chu Lai Airfield, and this operation, although deferred one day when Typhoon Hester leveled the center, averaged 200 persons per day through its doors, destined for reassignment in-country or return to CONUS for further assignment or ETS.

Also in September, units of the 23d Medical Battalion, and maintenance and engineer companies began standdown, many utilizing the facilities of the Division Combat Center or the former 27th Surgical Hospital area through which most of the division members would pass during their standdown period. These locations were provided exchange and club facilities to serve Americal soldiers during their standdown.

On Sept. 17, H Troop, 17th Cavalry began its standdown, and during October most maneuver elements of the division also began their standdown operations. It was during this period that Task Force Americal began to take shape under the command of Colonel Robert J. Malloy, former DISCOM commander. Mission of Task Force Americal (TFA) was to prevent the enemy from establishing bases from which to rocket Chu Lai Combat Base and to keep the enemy from massing troops for attack.

Major units standing down during October included 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry and 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry on Oct. 5, and 3d Battalion, 1st Infantry and the 123d Assault Support Helicopter Company Oct. 7.

The 11th Brigade and its 1st Battalion, 52d Infantry began standdown on Oct. 10. Two aviation battalions, the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion and 123d Aviation Battalion, went into standdown on Oct. 14.

Between Oct. 15 and 18, the 4th Battalion, 3d Infantry; 174th Assault Helicopter Company and 23d Medical Battalion, minus, commenced standdown.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, of the 198th Infantry Brigade began standdown Oct. 19, followed on

Oct. 22 by 23d Administrative Company and on Oct. 23 by the 16th Combat Aviation Group.

Between Oct. 24 and 30, those units of Division Artillery which had not begun standdown were returned to rear areas to begin processing, and on Oct. 30, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery of Division Artillery closed out its mission as it received standdown instructions.

The 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry--which had been replaced in the mountains west of Chu Lai by the 3d Battalion, 21st Infantry--became the last infantry maneuver element to commence standdown. When it was ordered to the rear on the last day of October.

Division support units, including the 23d Supply and Transportation Battalion, 26th Engineer Battalion, 723d Maintenance Battalion and Division Support Command began standdown during the first week in November.

Division Headquarters and Headquarters Company was the final unit to conduct standdown activities, and as the colors are escorted to CONUS late this month, only the 196th Infantry Brigade, under the command of Brigadier General Joseph C. McDonough, remains.

Americal Division Notes

Additional Medal of Honor awards for Americal veterans were announced after the departure of the Americal Division from Vietnam.

Selected facts and myths related to the Americal Division are shown below.

Americal Division Commanders

MG Samuel W. Koster; October 1967

MG Charles M. Gettys; June 1968

MG Lloyd B. Ramsey; June 1969

MG Albert E. Milloy; March 1970

MG James L. Baldwin; November 1970

MG Frederick J. Kroesen, July 1971

Area of Operations (AO)

The Americal Division operated in Southern I Corps. Division headquarters was located at Chu Lai, a former U.S. Marine base.

The AO covered the provinces of Quang Tin and Quang Ngai. Quang Tin was to the north and stretched from the South China Sea to the Laotian border. Quang Ngai was also a coastal province but bordered Kontum province on the west boundary. After the Vietnam War, Quang Tin was absorbed into Quang Nam province. Provincial capitals were at Tam Ky and Quang Ngai City.

Task Force Oregon

The Americal Division was formed from the assets of Task Force Oregon. Task Force Oregon began on April 12, 1967 as a response to the recently ordered rapid buildup of U.S. ground forces in South Vietnam. Southern I Corps was a hotbed of enemy activity and an immediate response by United States military was deemed necessary.

Southern I Corps was previously in the AO of the U.S. Marine Corps. Upon the arrival of Task Force Oregon troops the Marines shifted forces to Northern I Corps. The dividing line between the Army and Marines was roughly the Que Son Mountain range.

In its early formation stages, Task Force Oregon consisted of three infantry brigades already in Vietnam. They were: 3d Bde., 25th Inf. Div.; 1st Bde., 101st Abn. Div.; and the 196th Lt. Inf. Bde. On August 1, 1967 the 3d Bde., 25th Inf. Div. was re-designated as the 3rd Bde., 4th Inf. Div.

The original brigades were later joined by the arrival of the 11th Lt. Inf. Bde. and the 198th Lt. Inf. Bde. The three light infantry brigades remained as division assets when Task Force Oregon became the Americal Division on September 25, 1967.

Task Force Oregon was commanded by MG William B. Rosson. Rosson named the task force after his home state of Oregon.

Through My Eyes: A Story of Hope

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

Continued from Jan-Feb-Mar 2021 *American Journal*

Chapter 16 No Fun

For the next few weeks, we worked through the villages and rice paddies nearest LZ Bronco. During the day it was monotonous, dangerous work patrolling the area. It was boring to keep patrolling the villages and searching the hooches in the heat and humidity. There were mosquitoes buzzing around us day and night, looking for blood.

The rice paddies were breeding grounds for hordes of them and they didn't have any trouble finding us. We were warm blooded, hot, and sweaty, with shirt sleeves rolled up and open collars. Someone in our company was always coming down with malaria. We were given little pink pills to take every day, but they gave some guys the runs, so they wouldn't take them. Even if you took your pills, and I did, there was no guarantee you wouldn't get sick. The mosquitoes never let up. We needed insect repellent as badly as bullets and reeked of its smell. I kept it handy with three or four small plastic squirt-bottles, hidden away in the endless pockets on my jungle fatigues.

We didn't get baths or clean clothes but every 45 to 50 days. Once, at night, I put my head on my arm to go to sleep and it stunk so badly I had to move my head to keep from choking. When we took a bath, it was in a small creek or pond, with heavily armed men standing guard while we nervously soaped off in our birthday suits. And there were insects even worse than mosquitoes. If we went barefoot to let our feet dry out, screwworms came up through our feet and ended up in our stomachs. The remedy for that was no fun. If you got them, and were lucky enough to convince the lieutenant that you were really sick, you would go to the rear. There they would try to put you on KP or bunker guard while you waited to see the medic. It was a lose/lose situation.

When you finally got to see him, the doc would give you a large pill. I mean that sucker was huge. After you choked it down, you were instructed to eat no food for two days so the worms would eat the pill, and then you were sent back to the field. When the worms were ready to come out, the "no fun" got worse. Most times, when you had the urge to take a crap, it was already too late; and we had no clean clothes to change into.

Eddie, a Southern California boy, had his own way of viewing our harsh situations. Not only did he make us laugh, but sometimes gave us pause. Frank related Eddie's insight while pulling late-night guard with him after our company had lost a couple of our guys.

Frank: "Eddie, it sure is getting rough here."

Eddie: "Hell, man, this ain't nothin'. Now, growin' up in

Watts during the riots was some screwed-up bad shit."

Eddie was a real stand-up guy who could be counted on in tough situations. He had a way of putting things into perspective.

Eddie and Joe were different as night and day, yet were best of friends and hung together. I didn't know Joe well, but he had kept his cool while we were lost, and I had a high regard for that.

One morning, we broke into platoons and went out searching the area. We started drawing machine-gun fire from a hooch a little over 500 yards away. The captain was nearby and called in some artillery rounds on the enemy's position.

We were given orders to send a rifle squad into the area to check it out. There was some discussion about whether this was a trap set up to get us to send men over there, but the order stood. Eddie, Joe, Bruce, and some others were sent to check out the area.

The squad had a ways to go and the guys were walking on a grassy slope next to the rice paddies. I was behind a small dirt rise and couldn't see them. When they had gone about 200 yards, there was a loud explosion followed by a terrible scream that none of us will ever forget.

Eddie had been toward the front of the patrol and stepped on a Bouncing Betty, right after a couple of guys had unknowingly walked past it.

Bruce was one of them. When he heard the scream, he turned and ran back to where Eddie lay in the wet rice paddy.

Eddie was conscious, but in really bad shape. Both of his legs and an arm were almost blown off, and he had other injuries. Bruce did his best to hold him out of the water, trying hard to help and encourage him.

A medevac chopper was called in, and the guys did what they could to patch Eddie up while they waited. He was soon on his way to the rear. The rest of the day was a blur. We changed course and never made it to the enemy's position.

In the evening, we returned to base. Late that night the word spread that Eddie had died. We were sure going to miss him. Joe was crushed and I doubt if he ever got over the loss. This had been another brutal lesson that came at a deadly price.

Chapter 17 Error's Loss

Shortly after Eddie was killed, our company was sent north to a place called Tam Ky where there was always trouble. The enemy had a lot of support in this area, and we had to keep our eyes open. We patrolled the area daily, going through rice paddies, hedgerows, and trees. We stayed in the field and set out ambushes every night, waiting for Charlie. We all hated ambush duty for a lot of reasons. It was always dangerous because we could just as easily end up the ones being ambushed.

Usually six to eight of us would get together at dusk with grenades, Claymores, M16s, a couple hundred rounds of ammo each, and maybe an M60 machine gun. No overnight pack. We moved out to find our pre-determined site and lay hidden in bushes or anything that would give us cover. We had to maintain complete silence during the long night. Besides being scared, it was hard to keep yourself awake the whole time. We had been humping all day and were tired. Some nights, rain would pour down on us.

Night or day we had concerns. This was a dangerous area and we needed to be on our toes. On one of our patrols, the company was strung out in a long line, walking on a narrow dirt path through some trees. It was my day to carry the machine gun and I held it in front of me with its strap over my shoulder and across my back as I walked along.

The area looked pleasant and the green leafy branches of the trees hung over the path covering us with shade. It was mid-morning and not very hot. We hadn't seen anyone or been through any villages yet. We got off to a good start through the area and it almost seemed peaceful. We kept traveling along the trail for another half mile or so, and then stopped for a short break. I leaned back against a tree to take some of the weight off the heavy rucksack on my back.

I noticed movement about 130 yards away, across the rice paddies, where brush was growing high. Someone looked out from behind one of the trees growing out of the brush and then ducked back behind it. He did this several times and that nervous feeling began in the pit of my stomach. It was hard to make out who it was or what he was up to.

Concerned that someone was going to detonate a land mine on us again, I sent a message up the line saying I thought I should fire into the area to ward off any trouble. Word came back to fire. I set the M60 on the path with the front bi-pods holding the barrel off the ground. Dropping my pack, I lay down behind the gun, pulled the stock into my shoulder, and fired four bursts of six rounds into the direction of the movement. Jumping up, I grabbed the gun and moved out with Jerry and a squad of men, running across the watery paddies to check out the area.

When we arrived behind the trees, we found a level area covered with large flat stones. It looked similar to a patio without any cover. I looked about ten feet away to one side and saw a small boy who looked to be about eight, wearing only a pair of shorts, lying flat on his back, his arms spread out.

One of our guys was already kneeling next to him, as blood flowed into a large puddle on the stones underneath his body. The soldier was on the radio, giving information about the boy, who had been killed by a bullet that went through his heart.

Away from the boy, standing beside some trees, was an older woman wearing a worn pale orange dress. She was holding her hand to her face, with five or six children standing

close around her. All of them were sobbing.

My mind would not let me see the horror on their faces. Time froze—it was all so wrong. But there it was, right there in front of me: blood and sorrow. My soul was now tainted and it wasn't well. All logic failed, just as these words fail now. The brutality of what had happened forced itself on me and I couldn't think about it. The boy was gone. Only tragedy was left, and I was a big part of it.

Ode to the Woman in the Orange Dress

Still I see her standing there

with that lost and painful stare!

Error's loss has bestowed a guilty wound
that logic cannot heal.

Hidden away on the heart never to be removed.

Love has taken a bitter blow.

Oh, what can heal?

Yet it is only Love which can heal unforeseen sorrows
at its risk.

The reason to step through Love's gate?

It sees pain and cares.

'Tis the salve that heals hidden wounds.

Chapter 18 Repatriation

Numerous villages were scattered throughout the flat rice paddy area where we were working. The villages were made up of five to ten hooches made from tree limbs covered with dried rice stalks. Most hooches were small, with door-less entries and no windows.

The only furnishings were a low table the family squatted around to eat, and a small wood-burning stove made from mud or clay along an inside wall. Rarely, there would be a small cane or bamboo bed.

The mama-san of the family spent hours working around the little stove, keeping it heated just right with wood she had stacked in the corner. She might have a pot and pan with black burnt bottoms stacked next to the stove or hanging above it.

The dirt floor appeared to be swept clean. The mama-san usually held a small child as she worked, and there were always plenty of children around playing some kind of game.

Most villages had a hand-dug well for drinking water. There were trees growing throughout the village and around the outside edge, providing lots of shade. The villages were built up a couple of feet higher than the surrounding rice paddies, with small bushes making hedgerows around the outside edge. When it rained, the water would drain from the higher ground down into the paddies.

The VC controlled many of the villages in the area. Some villagers were willing participants, but others were coerced and mistreated so the VC could take the rice and other supplies they needed.

In order to deprive the VC of this support, there was a plan called Repatriation which came with orders to go into the villages to relocate the occupants and their belongings.

During this operation, when we found a store of rice, we loaded it onto choppers and sent it to a storage area for the villagers. Then we gathered up the people, caught what animals we could, and loaded them all on choppers to go to a new place where they would live and farm. When they were gone, the village was set on fire and we shot the pigs and chickens we were unable to round up.

Of course, the people feared this for many reasons and didn't want to leave, but that didn't matter. The plan moved forward regardless of their feelings. It was easy for the villagers to see us coming across the open fields long before we arrived, and we would often hear a warning gong being sounded when we were spotted from afar. Many times, while headed to the villages, we were met with sniper fire. When we arrived, we usually only found old folks and mama-sans with children. Anyone we found between the ages of 12 and 60 were considered suspect.

Most mornings we made the long, hot trek out of Bronco's perimeter, through the rice paddies, into a village, then started the relocation. After spending a long, hot day loading rice, crying women, and children to be relocated, we didn't always return to the firebase at night. Instead we set up some kind of ambush. We would then go back to the firebase the following morning.

Our ambushes were seldom set off because the enemy didn't show up. Yet we had to keep at it for months at a time before the higher-ups decided we were getting worn out. Sometimes we would

set one man to watch the trail and the rest would sleep lightly. I couldn't sleep while I was on ambush. I felt that too many things could go wrong, and I really wanted to see the bad guys if they came.

Repatriation was a miserable job—but then, all of our jobs were miserable. No matter the assignment, there was always a catch. We didn't get to guard sandy beaches with pretty girls lying around on them. We didn't get to guard the freezers containing ice cream. I don't think there were any good jobs in the infantry.

Chapter 19

The Little Messenger

There was a sense of urgency in her childish voice as she tried hard to communicate with us.

"Baby-san, dee-dee-mao! Baby-san, dee-dee-mao!"

We were sitting beside a village close to the sea when a little girl, who looked no older than six, walked up to a small group of us and repeated the words to us over and over again. She really wanted us to understand. We figured out that she was saying all the children were leaving the village. We looked at each other.

Uh-oh.

If the children were leaving, we knew something we wouldn't enjoy was about to take place.

We had arrived earlier in the evening after we left a different village area where we had been looking for hidden VC supplies all day. It was dusk, and Gary, the Third Squad leader, was sitting with us. Tall and savvy, he was a preacher's kid from the Midwest. He and Jerry were cutting up and exchanging smart remarks as the platoon waited in our pre-ambush site. We always went to a pre-site first to lead the enemy to believe that was where we were setting up. As darkness fell, we would move to the actual ambush site.

We looked around and saw that the whole village was, in fact, leaving. It was obvious something was about to go down. Gary grasped the seriousness of what was about to happen. He moved over to Papa and informed him of the situation. It was almost dark as Papa gave orders to move out quickly. We were to stay low and head down the beach to a patch of trees about 500 yards away. Most of the men had no idea why we were moving out in such an urgent manner.

We had just arrived at the clump of trees and begun spreading out when the location where we had been sitting minutes earlier erupted with multiple explosions. Automatic weapons fire completely raked the area and seemed to go on forever. If we had still been there, our entire platoon could have been wiped out.

I didn't realize it then, but we had just missed the "big one" we had always heard about and dreaded. It was unbelievable we had escaped, but we weren't out of trouble.

The clump of trees we were hiding in was about 25 yards in diameter. We had recently been assigned a forward artillery observer, or "FO," with no experience. These guys were trained to call in coordinates for locations needing artillery, and were sent out to the field as needed. Papa was standing with him on the other side of the trees. They had a map and a red-lens flashlight, trying to figure out where we were so they could call in artillery.

I really wanted that flashlight off. The VC must have realized we had gotten away by now, and I was sure they were furious they had missed us. Charlie opened up with recon fire, shooting in all directions, in an effort to get us to return fire so they could see our muzzle flash in the dark and locate us.

I was lying on the sand, getting a Claymore ready to put out in front of me, when the recon fire came snapping in rapid succession through the trees. One of

the soldiers standing nearby called down to me.

"Hey Bob, what's that snapping sound?"

I couldn't believe my ears. We had drawn plenty of gunfire since we had been in-country, and he didn't know what that snapping sound was? Where had he been? I looked up at him.

"If you don't get down, Fruitcake, you're going to find out what that snapping sound is."

He could tell I wasn't joking and fell to the sand immediately.

We were in big trouble if they found us. The water was only about 50 yards behind us; I could hear the waves washing in on the sand. We couldn't escape that way if we were discovered. We could easily be out-numbered, surrounded, mortared, and overrun with an assault. By this time, the FO was trying to call in artillery on the site where we had been. We could hear it coming but it was off target and hit around 1,500 yards in the opposite direction. One thing for sure, our FO needed more practice.

We set up three-man positions all around inside the trees where we were hiding. Papa sent the new FO over to my position for the night, and I already had the guy that didn't know what the snapping sound was. I didn't trust either one of them. It was going to be a long night, so after a while I told them I would pull an hour of watch and then the two of them could pull a half-hour together. They were okay with that and asleep in no time. I was pretty shaken up by what was going on and didn't see how they could just pass out like that.

We were still getting a little recon fire. I believed Charlie really wanted a piece of us that night, if he could just find us. Our defensive position was poor at best. The moon was out so we could see, but so could Charlie. We had to keep our movement down. After an hour, I woke the two of them to pull the next half-hour's watch together.

I kept my eye on them for about 15 minutes and they both fell asleep. That was all I needed. I let them sleep and stayed awake through the night. Around 0200 hours, a dog from one of the nearby villages came to our small perimeter and began to bark at us. It stayed just out of reach and barked most of the night. We tried to grab it, but it managed to stay out of our grasp. If we could have caught it, I have no doubt it would have been pulled apart in seconds without a sound.

Lying there, pulling guard that night, I felt that our odds in this country weren't good, and seemed to be getting worse every day. On our first night in the field, one of our own had been killed with friendly fire; on my first a ambush, I had a grenade go off in front of me, cutting my face; I was in the hospital when it was mortared, killing many inside and out; one of our own had become lost and was found, dead, the next day, his body splayed out on a bridge; David had died in a tunnel; Ben was killed on point; Lt. John had been blown up; Eddie died after stepping on a mine; and we had just missed being killed in an ambush.

What if more of our guys got killed?

The fear of the unknown was heavy on me, a young, inexperienced soldier. Whether in broad daylight or the darkness of night, there were the constant dangers of stepping on mines, tripping booby traps, or being shot by snipers. I was exhausted from a continuous lack of sleep and the heavy pressure of the terrible dangers of war. I felt very inadequate for the tasks that lay before me. I knew I wasn't the only one feeling the pressure of adjusting to these fears. We were all trying to stand tall despite the danger, but the weight of it was showing on our countenances. Sometimes the weariness from shouldering the load showed up in carelessness, which, in doing dumb things just to relieve the pressure, might result in getting you wounded or killed.

The Bible says "Without a vision, the people perish." I was losing the vision for my future. I began to feel a great distance from the future I had always taken for granted. Going home, getting married, and having a life away from the war might not happen. Right here and now—this was my future.

At dawn we started moving out right away. We had made it through the night, but that didn't mean this was over yet. We were still miles from our firebase.

We worked our way through villages and hedgerows until we came to the rice paddies. Out in front of us I could see as much as 4,000 yards of open rice paddies flooded with six inches of water. This would be the best place for Charlie to try to get a piece of us if he was ready and had a mind to do it.

We had moved out early enough that morning, and made good time getting to this location, so Charlie would have to be "Johnny on the spot" if he wanted to get much of a shot at us. He would also have to guess where we would be heading out into the open. We split into two groups and spread apart with about 40 yards between us. We headed out into the paddies, and with every step in the water, our boots sank right down into five inches of mud. When we had gone so far that we couldn't run back for cover, the VC opened up with two automatic weapons.

The group I was with started firing back into the hedgerow as we dropped down into the muddy paddy. We had to put enough fire on Charlie so he would have to keep his head down. The other group of guys ran like crazy until our rifles were empty. Then they started firing as they dropped down.

We did this back and forth until we worked ourselves out of range and Charlie stopped shooting at us. The tactic worked. Running in wet paddies is a real chore, but if bullets are chasing you, you're highly motivated. We were a tired, muddy mess, but none of us had been hit.

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

Typhoon Hester Wrecks 635 MI Facilities

The 635th Military Intelligence Company supported the Americal Division during the entire activation period of the division. The 635 MI operated from a facility located at the Chu Lai Army base. In late 1971, Typhoon Hester hit the Chu Lai area and caused much damage to buildings and equipment.

The photos and captions were originally published in Agent Report 128. This is the publication of the Army Counter-intelligence Corps Veterans, Inc. The ACICV granted permission to the Americal Journal to reprint the photos and captions.

Thanks to Harry Kreger, 635 MI Co., for assisting with the publication of these photos. He served in the unit in 1968.



635th MI Co, Chu Lai



Agent hooches at the 635th were primitive. Typhoon Hester struck in October 1971, and these photos show before and after. We were hunkered down inside as the corrugated aluminum roofs flew off and debris flew in. No 635th personnel were injured, but three Americans in other units were killed.



Guard shack above POW pen.
By 1971 things were slowing down.



Interrogation of POWs. You bring 'em, we break 'em. Social distancing frowned upon. We gladly make outcalls.

One of the first repairs we tackled after Hester was righting our company two-holer. It was not a pretty sight inside.



Tim and Willie's Day at the Beach

By Nanette Hall

Based on the writings of Bill Hall

[Editor's note: Nanette Hall compiled the information below from writings of her late husband, William Lester Hall. William Hall was a high school friend of Lester Timothy Walker from Des Moines, IA. William Lester Hall was an infantryman who served with A Company 4/31st Inf. Bn. and Lester Timothy Walker served in B Company 4/3rd Inf. Bn. Both units were in the Americal Division, but were in different brigades. In this story "Willie" refers to William Lester Hall. The references to "Tim" is to Lester Timothy Walker. Thanks to Les Hines for obtaining the manuscript and photos.]

This story starts out with "Willie coming down sick" with a 104-degree temperature around March 15, 1968. You had to have that high of a temperature for at least four days before they would even consider letting you be evaced to the rear. Well, they finally did that but the helicopter they put him on took him to the Navy rear area. When Willie presented himself to the officer in charge he said, "We don't treat Army here" and cut him travel orders to the correct rear area.

Willie trudged back to the hangar waiting for his correct bird. His temperature was rising and he started to hallucinate and having an out of body experience of looking down at himself. Willie knew he was in trouble and took off down the dirt trail looking for help. He saw a Red Cross sign on a tent and stumbled into it. The Navy corpsman immediately said, "You're Army, we only treat Navy". However, he took a second look at Willie stuck a thermometer in his mouth and when he pulled it out it read 106 degrees.

They immediately told him to strip and get in a cold shower. They then had then had a gurney filled with ice and put him on that. They continued this while debating what to do with him. Now, Willie will say, "I hadn't had a cold drink in months and well, as for ice you could forget that!" They ended up shipping him down country to a field hospital.

They still could not figure out what was wrong with him and he was scheduled to be flown to the hospital ship, HOPE. He got bumped off the flight because more serious cases of wounded soldiers came in. Well, by that point they figured out that he had Scrub Typhus which is similar to Rocky Mountain Tick Fever and they were able to give him the right antibiotic (Tetracycline). Willie recovered but was very weak and even so he was ordered back to his company. The doctor told him that if it was up to him, he would have sent him home.

So, Willie was given travel orders back to his rear area of Chu Lai and when he got there all his mail and packages had caught up with him. Now I like to think that the next

part of this saga was a "God Thing". In the mail was a letter from his buddy Tim Walker from Des Moines. The letter said, "Hey, I am in this place called Chu Lai for a couple of days of refresher training before being sent to the field, come find me if you can". Now, the Chu Lai rear area is about 10 square miles where over 10,000 military support men and women are bustling about. Well, not to be deterred, Willie takes off walking around the airfield to the road on the beach side, about four miles. Willie is walking down the road towards Tim's location. And then it happens!

As Willie is walking down the beach road a deuce-and-a-half truck comes towards him and he hears a big war hoop and four soldiers jump off and pile onto him. Well, you guessed it, it was Tim and three of his buddies. What a reunion it was, of all places and of all time. They stripped and went swimming in the South China Sea that afternoon. They frolicked in the surf, riding on each other's shoulders, and were able to forget for a short time that they were in a war zone and death was in the wings.

Willie and Tim talked and talked. Willie had just been promoted to sergeant on his birthday, March 2, 1968, and Tim had come to Viet Nam as a sergeant. However, Tim was a little uneasy with all the responsibility that came with that rank because stateside is a lot different than where he was going. Willie knew where Tim was going because he had been there in the fall of 1967. It was a place of ambush and booby traps and he tried to give Tim pointers on that.

That was one thing Willie had learned, how to identify markers that the Viet Cong would leave so that the villagers would not run into them. Willie's DROS date (Date Expected Return Over Seas) was coming up around the first part of May and they talked about what they would do when Tim got home to Des Moines. The days was coming to a close and Tim and his friends had to get back to their area and Willie to his. They said their goodbyes and hugs and went their separate ways. Little did Willie know that he would be the last one from home to see Tim. Willie went back to his rear area and caught a chopper back to his unit.

In one of Willie's last letters home to his folks dated April 7, 1968. He says, "I am back in the mountains again with my unit, the weather is unbearably hot again but I won't have to stand it very long. Today I got 37 left in country and 27 days left out here and is time going slow. The foxhole gets a little deeper every night now, I sure don't want to miss that plane for nothing. "Hey I got a letter from Walker while in the rear and he said he was in Chu Lai too. So the next day I found him, boy he sure was a good sight! Fessler (another Iowan) wrote him too and said maybe they would take that same bird home".

Little did Willie know that Tim would beat him home. Tim was killed April 24, 1968 northeast of Quang Ngai City. Willie always thought it might have been around the

area of "Purple Heart Hill" ("Purple Heart Hill" was where Willie's battalion had been stationed before moving north about 60 miles, the site where Tim had been killed was about one city block west of (Purple Heart Hill). When Willie's folks met him at the airport around the 5th of May 1968, they told Willie and he could not believe it. They also mentioned that Tim's folks had asked the Red Cross to find Willie to accompany the body home but the Army could not locate him in time.

What a connection these two young men had, their names, Lester Timothy Walker and William Lester Hall. Their units: Tim, B Co, 4th Bn, 3rd Inf., 11th Infantry Brigade, Americal Division. Born April 19, 1947. Willie, A Co, 4th Bn, 31st Inf., 196th Infantry Brigade, Americal Division. Born March 2, 1948. Both men attended East High School in Des Moines, IA.

It always bothered Willie that Tim even went to Vietnam. He was an only child (son). In the years after we moved back from Cheyenne, Wyoming, Willie always included Tim's grave in his regular patrols and he always noted that they were decorated, which pleased him.

He would share stories of his and Tim's escapades with his boys, Ira and Alan, till it seemed as if we knew him too.

One more story that I can recall is this. Tim had his dad's car (I think it was a Buick) and he picked up Willie one night and they went driving and drinking. Well, they got down on the river road and somehow Tim drove the car into the soft ground and it was stuck. Tim hiked out of there to get a tow and Willie sat with his feet on the dash waiting. Of course, the good old Des Moines police showed up and took Willie off to jail for being underage and drunk. Tim came back and got the car up and running and wondered what happened to Willie! Tim's dad always wondered how come there was so much mud under that front bumper!

Now if you have read all of this, you cannot tell me that God did not orchestrate this friendship of these two young men, even with all their escapades. You cannot tell me that their meeting up on the beach road at Chu Lai was just a "fluke". We won't know why Tim was taken too soon and his folks had to suffer such a loss. I won't know why my Willie was taken on September 5, 2020. However, I do know that Bill won't have to remember Viet Nam every day like he had for 53 years, so that is a blessing. I am so glad that we were able to connect with Tim's cousin, Bucky Wheeler last year and I think that too is a God thing.

God is good all the time, All the time God is good.

Here is the "rest of the story" as Paul Harvey would say.

24 April 68 0837

Bravo Company requests a dust off at grid coordinate BS 775842 for 9 US; 3 litter & 6 ambulatory patients. Injuries were caused by detonation of a booby trapped Anti-Personal mine. Dust off was completed at 0915 hrs. C&C ship medevaced 4 personnel.

- 1Lt Thomas K. Willingham WHA shrapnel in chest
- Sp/4 Marvin B. Jones WHA shrapnel in both legs
- Sp/4 Crecencio C. Garcia DOW shrapnel in both legs
- Sp/4 Amos Williams WHA shrapnel in back & legs
- Sp/4 Leo J. Stracham WHA shrapnel in arms & legs
- Sp/4 Richard F. Silva HHC WHA shrapnel in face
- PFC William C. Pierce WHA shrapnel in legs & arms
- PFC Richard H. Gerdel WHA - shrapnel in arms & legs
- SGT Lester E. Walker: "DOW | shrapnel wounds



Sgt Lester Timothy Walker

24 April 68 0930

At 0837 hrs. Bravo Company at grid coordinate BS 775842, detonated a booby trap and inflicting 5 US WHA. 2-3 minutes later and approximately 15 meters from the first booby trap, another one was tripped; inflicting 4 US WHA. The 2nd booby trap was hanging from a stalk in a sugar cane field. Booby trapped mines were believed to be either M2A4 or MIGA. These were American made mines that had been positioned around Purple Heart Hill the previous year by a contingent of Korean soldiers. Willie said they were always referred to by the slang word "Roks". The Viet Cong would dig them up and repurpose them as Booby Traps in the area.

Purple Heart Hill (AKA LZ Ann, AKA Hill 30 was less than a block from where Walker was killed on 24 April 1968. This was also the place where Willie, 4/31st had been based for a time in 1967... This correlates to what Willie had shared with Tim on what he should expect to experience at Purple Heart Hill that day on the beach, the first part of April.

A veteran of the 4/3rd infantry has prepared flags that have been flown by the Old Guard over the Capital for survivors of the soldiers lost in Vietnam while serving with

the 4/3rd Infantry Battalion, (Tim's). Mr. Flaherty has had a flag prepared to be given to the family of Tim Walker. He has been looking to find a surviving relative of Lester Timothy Walker for over 15 years.

Ever since we moved back to Des Moines, Iowa in 1985, part of Willie's "patrols" would always include visiting Tim's final resting place at Laurel Hill Cemetery. He would always remark that someone in the *family* was taking good care of it but we did not know who. Every Veterans Day since 1985, I would take our two sons out of school for the memorial service at the Vietnam Memorial and then take them to see Tim's headstone and tell them the story. Willie worked at the Bulk Mail of the USPS then and it was not a holiday for him. I would explain the significance to the boys and that their school should be closed on Veterans day not just MLK Day. Because if there were not veterans to defend our Constitution, we might never have had the opportunity to have an MLK Day. The turnout for the service was always dismal, maybe 25 people including the speaker and Honor Guard. However, I always felt, no compelled to be there. I had seen and lived with my veteran, experiencing the residual effects of what war does to 19 and 20 years old young men.

Finally, Memorial Day 2019, I decided after we had visited Tim's grave and had never crossed paths with any of Tim's family that I would leave a note card, in a zip lock bag attached to one of the memorials on his grave. Well, Bucky Wheeler and Beverly who are Tim's cousins reached out to me. We had a good conversation and I told them the "day at the beach story".

This past spring doing some "Covid" cleaning I happened upon the last letter Willie had written his folks



Sgt. William Lester Hall & wife

on April 7, 1968. In it he told of meeting Tim and the good time they had had. I asked Bucky if he would like a copy of it and he said, "yes"? Bucky had a letter that Tim had written his folks detailing the same event and would we like a copy of that? Of course, we said yes but with Covid intervening we did not make a date to meet till September 3, which we had to cancel because Willie's condition had fast tracked and we were doing hospice at our eldest son and wife's house.

Willie passed on Saturday, September 5, 2020, of small cell lung cancer compliments of "Agent Orange". In looking at the timeline of Willie's time in Vietnam, He lost three squad mates, Sgt Ralph Max Knight on August 30, 1967; PFC Franklin David Willett on September 15, 1967; and Sp/4 Ray Collins on September 19, 1967. On and around September 15, 1967, Willie accompanied Lt. Chester Larson to identify the body of Frankie Willett, which Willie did do and it was not a pleasant experience. He also saw Ray Collins in the hospital tent and he would say, "Ray was already dead, it was just the machine breathing for him and his color was chalky white."

So, it does not surprise me that the one of the most traumatic times in Vietnam for Willie, would be August 30 to September 15 and he too would pass from this life. I did not think of this timeline when planning a short military committal at the Iowa Veteran Cemetery, Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 11AM. It all came together with a synchronicity that I really did not realize. I picked that date and time so that if any of his fellow Vietnam Veterans group that met at that time, would have an opportunity to come. Well, eleven of them did come with Mike Brown, their facilitator. I had NO idea that there were eleven in Willie's group, what an honor that was for our family! We then went out to Veedawoo, Wyoming and Pikes Peak, Colorado to leave a little bit of him at places he loved.

January 5, 1968, was the other date that was seared in Willie's and Delbert Higginson's memory. They found an underground bull pen and took refuge in it and set up Willie's machine gun in preparation of being overrun by the Viet Cong. The horror of being surrounded by a pile of dead and wounded Company C soldiers and following thru on your training to survive. However, that doesn't translate to the "real world" does it?

All in all, Willie doesn't have to remember Vietnam everyday like he has for the past 53 years, he was able to reconnect with Delbert Higginson, Wayne Joas and Lt, Chester Larson. We were able to go to Frankie's grave in Hereford, AZ and with God's timing meet his sister from AR, who just happened to be there in October 2017. We were never able to make it to Ray Collins' grave but I have connected with Max Knight's widow, Vida, in Boaz, AL.

So again, God is good all the time, All the time God is good!

3-16 Field Artillery Regiment Update

By Captain Daniel McBain

To 23rd ID Americal, and 3-16 FAR Veterans:



Greetings, and welcome home. I will provide a brief backstory on the purpose of this piece, and look forward to hearing from "Rolling Thunder" alumni.

Since roughly November, 2020, we have been working to rebuild our Unit History Program, both at the Battalion and Regimental level. Unfortunately, all of our unit history records were lost sometime between 3-16 FA being inactivated in 1987 and now. I have been working diligently to completely re-write the histories of both 3rd Battalion and its parent regiment, the 16th Field Artillery Regiment (FAR).

Currently 3rd Battalion, 16th FAR, is the only battalion of the 16th FAR still in active service. I am looking for 3-16 FAR Vietnam Veterans to interview so that I may record the proud legacy of the Rolling Thunder Battalion and preserve it for our current and future Redlegs. Our Battalion Commander's end state is to re-establish the 16th FAR Regimental Association, establishing a lasting Unit History Program that encourages and preserves its legacy.

I am also interested in any information on prior iterations of the Regimental or Battalion Association. If anyone happens to also know Veterans of our sister battalions, please share this message so that I can record the histories of our sister battalions (1-16, 2-16, 4-16, 5-16, 6-16/ BTRY F, and 7-16) as well in order to preserve the Regimental Legacy.

I also wish to give all 3-16 FAR Veterans an update on our Battalion in the years since the Vietnam War. For your gallant service in Vietnam, 3-16 FAR is credited with 11 campaigns and awarded: two Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palms, as well as Battery A being awarded a Valorous Unit Award for actions at Quang Tin Province.

On November 1, 1971, 3-16 FAR was inactivated at Fort Lewis in order to be transferred to the 8th Infantry Division in Germany. On September 13, 1972, 3rd Battalion was re-flagged from our sister battalion the 7th Battalion, 16th Field Artillery (which was concurrently inactivated) with 3rd Battalion taking its place in the 8th Infantry Division in Germany. 3-16 FAR would spend the next 15 years stationed in Germany with the 8th Infantry.

During this time, 3-16 FAR participated in numerous Re-Forger multi-national exercises and was fielded with the M110 8-inch self-propelled howitzer. During this time,

the Battalion also changed its nickname from "Rolling Thunder" to "Convincers" in honor to its prior life as Battery C, 16th Armored Field Artillery Battalion during World War II. In 1987, 3-16 FAR was inactivated in Germany and relieved from the 8th Infantry Division.

In 1995, 3-16 FAR was again called to active service, assigned to the 4th Infantry Division, and activated at Fort Hood, TX. At that time, the 4th Infantry Division was the Army's test division for modernization. Being equipped with the Army's newest and most advanced Artillery piece, the M109A6 Paladin. Over the next decade, 3-16 FAR would become the most technologically advanced Field Artillery Battalion in the world. Sometime during this period 3-16's nickname was changed back to "Rolling Thunder".

During Operation Iraqi Freedom, 4th ID was a follow-on force and did not see initial combat during the invasion of Iraq. Battery B was the first element of 3-16 FAR to cross the Kuwait-Iraq border. It was not until assuming occupation duty that 3-16 FAR was called on to provide lethal and accurate fires. During its time on occupation duty, 3-16 FAR was ordered to reorganize under the Army's Concept of Modularity. 3-16 FAR became the first Modular Fires Battalion and was assigned to 2ABCT, 4ID as the first modular Brigade Combat Team. During the War on Terror, 3-16 FAR deployed to Iraq three times, Afghanistan once, and once to Kuwait. [2ABCT denotes 2d Armored Brigade Combat Team. -ed]

In 2015, having been relocated to Fort Carson, CO, 3-16 FAR was transferred to 2ABCT, 1st Cavalry Division "Blackjack" and re-flagged from 3-82 FAR at Fort Hood, TX. Shortly after the re-flagging as part of the Blackjack Brigade, 3-16 FAR deployed to the Republic of Korea as the first rotational brigade to the Korean Peninsula. In 2017, 3-16 FAR once again found itself on rotation to Korea, returning in February 2018. In 2019, 3-16 once again found itself deploying the formation overseas. This time to the European theater as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve.

While in Europe, 3-16 FAR participated in the multinational exercise, Combined Resolve as well as multiple other partnership operations throughout Europe. The Rolling Thunder Battalion returned to Fort Hood in July of 2020 and is currently training for a return to the National Training Center in the spring of next year and a subsequent rotation back to Europe in the future. Our Troopers remain prepared to deliver lethal and accurate Fires, on time and on target! MACTE NOVA VIRTUTE!

[Point of contact for this article is Captain Daniel McBain, the Battalion Historian for 3rd Battalion, 16th Field Artillery Regiment and 16th Field Artillery Regimental Historian. He can be contacted at [REDACTED]]

Nightmare Ambush

By William Bowman

It has been over 50 years, but I can still vividly remember June 14, 1969.

Bravo Company, 5/46th Infantry, 198th Lt. Inf. Bde., 1st platoon, was assigned to LZ Gator. Due to intelligence of increased enemy activity around LZ Dottie and Quang Ngai City, we were extracted from the field and flown to the Dottie firebase to re-enforce their defenses.

When we arrived everyone on the hill was glad to see us since they knew we were all grunts.

Later that evening Captain Schopp contacted our platoon sergeant, SFC Pacheco-Toro, and instructed him to put together a squad for an ambush. This was due to intelligence regarding the increased enemy activity in the region.

Since I was the platoon sergeant's RTO, I sat in on the briefing. I knew that I would be joining the remaining squad members on the ambush.

The squad included Pacheco, a medic, an artillery recon member, a M60 machine gunner, a grenadier, and approximately three or four riflemen, and me as RTO. The actual makeup of the hunter killer team is still a little sketchy in my mind.

We finished dinner and then assembled for deployment. We left Dottie in a deuce-and-a-half that transported us north on Highway 1 for about two to three miles. We were dropped off there.

We headed in a westerly direction across the rice paddies and brush. We intended to set up the ambush at the location assigned by command. It was at the base of a hill. On the way to our target location, our pointman spotted four NVA in the distance. It was just getting dark about this time. Our squad members engaged the four and they disappeared into the tree line.

We notified the rear headquarters that we had activated an unexpected ambush. We were told to change locations from our original orders and find an alternate spot for the rest of the night. As was normal after an engaging the enemy, artillery was called in to target the direction where we assumed the enemy soldiers were heading. We also set up our defensive perimeter for harassment and interdiction (H&I) during the night.

Shortly after the call was made for artillery, the 105 mm and 155 mm high explosive rounds were dropped in from LZ Dottie. They were followed up by several flare rounds. Due to the initial report that there was a large enemy presence suspected in the area, Pacheco must not have felt the need to search for any wounded or killed enemy from those we engaged earlier. It was now dark. I thought that was a good call. We set up our defensive perimeter and put out several claymore mines and dug in for the night.

The night was overcast until around 2:00 a.m. As luck would have it the clouds cleared out and we were left exposed in the open with a nearly full moon.

Once we were at our most vulnerable exposure from the moon's natural light, movement was detected coming our way.

To all our horror, we watched motionless, for what seemed like an eternity, nearly two hundred NVA soldiers walking in a single file within approximately 50-75 feet of our position. The NVA wore khaki uniforms and carried AK and SKS rifles, recoilless rifles, and several 82 mm mortars.

I knew we were all going to die that night.

One of our members was spotted by the NVA. He was kneeling with his Starlight Scope observing the enemy. He stayed that way throughout the enemy procession. As they walked by we could hear them chatter and point in our direction. I can only guess that they had no idea of our number and strength and maybe decided to avoid contact with us because of their potential separation from their command structure and mission.

Almost immediately after the NVA moved through our location, another contingent of approximately fifty VC in black pajamas and straw hats passed by us. They used the same path. Later on, I wondered if Ho Chi Minh was coming next. The VC group also looked at us and moved on quickly. Only this time one of LZ Dottie's flare rounds burst about the time the last VC was vacating the area.

We called in as much artillery support that we could get and told Dottie to keep firing the flare rounds.

At this time, the ambush members opened fire and sprayed the area with as much fire power that we had available. Eventually, several Cobra gunships showed up and helped by laying down a blistering barrage with their M60 machine guns and rockets. We had no idea how many enemy soldiers, if any, were killed by the collective efforts of the squad's weapons, artillery barrage, and the gunships. The NVA were notorious for carrying their wounded and dead from the battlefield.

At daylight we started to recon the area for bodies and blood trails. We found an abandoned RPD machine gun that was pointed at our perimeter location. The enemy placed it about 100 feet away. I am sure it was placed there to protect their rear and take us out if we pursued them.

That morning I heard that the battalion commander and some of the battalion staff were enraged that we did not take the opportunity to kill the NVA.

The lieutenant colonel and his staff members must have had bigger balls than we had to make a statement like that. Anyone of them could have taken my place that night. There probably would have been no objections from the other members of our squad that lived through that nightmare.

Personally, I think when you are outnumbered 25 to 1, you have very slim odds of surviving. At least we could live to fight another day, which we all did.

Our company commander, Capt. Schopp, supported the decisions made that night by SFC Pacheco. He stated that if we had initially opened fire that we would all have all been "quickly annihilated".

Later in my tour I had the pleasure of carrying the radio for Capt. Schopp.

My Vietnam Service Memories

By Ron Nereson

I served with 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, 196th Light Infantry Brigade, Americal Division, U.S. Army, in the Republic of Vietnam. I have many memories of my time in the Army.

I graduated from Hayden High School in 1967 and I had heard of Viet Nam, But I gave it little mind because it was a new place. I had not departed from Routt County very many times, so, I figured I'd never get to go anyway. It simply was not on my planned travel list.

However, I did enroll in an apprenticeship program to become a tool and die maker (a precision machinist). While I was off at school I got a letter on my 19th birthday informing me of an invitation to take a bus ride to Devers Federal building where I could join the Marines or the Army. The technical term for this process was DRAFTED.

I got a very short haircut and traded my deer rifle for a machine gun and applied myself to the learning at hand-Basic Training, and then AIT-Advanced Infantry Training. By January 1969 I had a stack of military orders half an inch thick. They showed the special rank (Private) I had already achieved, and the recognition for the best shot of a thousand men, and one of the highest physical fitness scores of the battalion.

I was traveling to Vietnam, and not as a helicopter pilot as the rumor mill suggested. We were transported by the Air Force from McCord Air force base near Seattle to Travis Air force base in California. It took about a week to finally get on the right airplane. We went to McClelland Air force base in Alaska to Yokota Air force base in Japan. Mount Fuji was gorgeous from 36,000 feet altitude. Then on to Guam and a day or so later onto a runway in a swamp with a steel surface called landing mats. This was at Bien Hoa, Vietnam, not far from Saigon.

I spent the first night in the rain. I would do this many of the nights for the next year. Within a few more days, we (I mean me-not knowing any of the other soldiers traveling to the same destination) caught another plane ride to Cam Ranh Bay. We completed more processing and then to proceeded to Da Nang where we traded planes again and got on one that looked "too fat to fly" (maybe a C-130). It was painted many shades of ugly green. The tailgate was lowered to the ground and fifty of us ran up the ramp with our ruck sacks. They held all the provisions we could possibly need.

We landed on a dirt runway south of the DMZ. The DMZ was the dividing line between South Vietnam and North Vietnam. I was wishing I had joined the Marines by now because they were already there. They occupied Da Nang! But I was now on LZ Baldy.

We were ordered to conduct a S/D (search and destroy) mission. We did and I hated every minute. I was attached

to the 1/52nd Infantry, 198th Lt. Inf. Bde., for a few months. Then I took another shaky airplane ride to Chu Lai.

There we became part of the 1/46th Infantry, 196th Lt. Inf. Bde. We spent a week there learning what many of us had just learned a little further north.

Then one day I followed orders and set off to the helicopter pad where a Huey was waiting for me. The turbine spooled up and rotors beat the air. I rushed in through the dust and gravel storm and sat on the floor with my feet dangling out. We flew over the rice paddies, skimming them just high enough not to knock over the water buffalo or the mama-sans tending the plants in the knee deep water of the rice paddy terrace.

I spent the next nine months or so sleeping in the jungle with the leeches, snakes, monkeys, elephants and tigers, but no bears, HA HA. The leeches were the most numerous and caused me most of the blood loss.

I made rank quickly, and was soon promoted to sergeant. The triple canopy jungle vegetation was thick and required someone to hack, chop, and slice through the vines and briars so that a company of soldiers could march along in single file. This job belonged to the point man, and I routinely walked point. I had a map calibrated in the metric system, and a compass and would navigate to the next night laager or other coordinate that I had been given.

The time in the 'field' or 'bush' was brutal beyond belief. The constant mortar attacks on our sleeping position night laager, the ever preset booby traps along foot trails- no road where we were, the hazard of bringing in helicopters with supplies, cutting or blowing a landing zone in the jungle, sending out our buddies on a Huey helicopter with a Red Cross painted on the side, some living, many already gone, were enough to callous any farm boy emotions. Nothing became a surprise anymore and no hope shown through the eyes of most of the teenagers who were the front line soldiers of getting out alive or without disabling wounds.

The First Battalion, 46th Infantry, 196th Light Infantry Brigade, Americal Division, United States Army, and LZ Professional, Chu Lai, Viet Nam, became part of my past on March 31, 1970. I had DEROSED and within three days I would ETS. I was on a commercial airline flight from Cam Ranh Bay, back to the World.

I did not do any state side duty. I knew it would be some ridiculous game of shining boots, and ironing uniforms, So end of time in service for me.

There were no parades welcoming veterans home. Not all schools flew the Stars and Stripes. But I had mine. The very flag that was flown daily over our fire support base in the jungle west of Chu Lai, in the highlands, the northern part of South Viet Nam, was taken down and presented to me when I left.

Although I have received many invitations to attend a reunion, I have not done so yet, but maybe someday.

Man's Inhumanity to Man

By Jon Bales

Somewhere in time, in a distant country known as South Vietnam, I discovered my "significant other". That "other" was my "dark side". Tucked away, deep in my cerebrum, was this cocoon which had laid dormant. What circumstances would it take for the "other" to break out of its shell? After years of contemplating this question, through self-discovery, I have come up with the answer. "Man's Inhumanity to Man". This was all brought about by an experience in the Central Highlands of "Nam", which changed my life forever.

Co. C, 3/8th Infantry, 4th Infantry Division, second platoon, had been designated to escort two wounded GIs to an area where they were shot in a firefight the day before. They had run across a platoon of NVA regulars held up in caves. They were out gunned and had to pull back. Unfortunately, their lieutenant was wounded and captured. The enemy soldiers pulled him into a cave. Our mission was to get the lieutenant. This was my third week in country and I was still adapting to the humidity, heat, bugs, and a 90 pound rucksack on my back. You see, the Central Highlands are very similar to the terrain in Yosemite, except for some minor differences; mines, punji pits, NVA, bamboo vipers, cobras, black panthers, tigers, wild boar, and extensive tunnel complexes.

Up to this point, we had had limited engagement with the enemy: Snipers and four firefights.

Our group of 14 prepared to move out in very steep and slippery terrain. Walking "point" was a soldier who reminded me of Sgt. Rock from the Comic Book "Sgt. Rock." We were descending down a 6,000 foot mountain. We had gone maybe 20 feet when "Sgt. Rock," as I will call him, found a World War II pineapple grenade booby trap. A trip wire was attached to it. He put a pin in the spoon and took it with him.

On our descent we ran across at least a dozen punji pits. Our two guides stopped at an outcrop of rocks. A rope was tied off and we went down the rope about 30 feet. Now this is where my nerves got shattered. We had to cross an open area of about 20 feet by moving on a large tree branch stretching across a ravine. The drop off was about 200 feet. This alone would have been bad, but with rucks, it was a real "mother fucker". The log was about three feet in diameter. We decided to scoot across. Minutes seemed like hours but we all made it across without incident.

Upon reaching the other side, the two wounded informed us that this was where they had lost their lieutenant. We carefully branched out in teams to search the caves for whatever.

We said, "Yes sir!", and he was gone.

[Jon Bales served with Co. C, 5/46th Inf., 198th Lt. Inf. Bde.]

There was a certain "stillness" in the air that I can only describe as "DEATH". I just knew someone had me in their sights. I felt it. Call it my sixth sense.

Just as we were about to enter a cave, Sgt. Rock said "we found the L.T." We cautiously surrounded the perimeter of the cave. He said the lieutenant was dead. I felt a deep pain strike like lightning in my stomach.

I carried an extra rope. He wanted it. We were curious about this. He said the NVA booby trap bodies. He and another sergeant took the rope in the cave and tied it around the L.T.'s legs. They got back and pulled. Luckily he was not booby-trapped.

When we finally pulled him out of the cave, I felt an emotion I had never experienced before. Such an emotion, can't be described on paper. As we gathered around his body, I felt "the other" breaking out of his cocoon. I felt a coldness run through my veins that only death could experience. This 21-year-old lieutenant had been hogtied, his eyes had been gouged out, and he had been disemboweled, and executed with gunshots to both of his temples. Driven through his chest was a bamboo stake. There was a sign attached to this stake that said "American Pig".

Sgt. Rock radioed HQ of our find. We were told not to move, set a defensive perimeter, and wait. About an hour went by and we were informed that a Huey was near. There was a slight clearing on the side of the hill. We secured the perimeter and popped smoke. The chopper landed. Four Cobra gunships circled the perimeter and let their mini guns rip all around us.

To our surprise, the general from the 4th I.D. got off the chopper and walked over to us. When he saw the mutilated body of the lieutenant and saw the expressions on our faces, he knew he had to say something. He asked us to put the lieutenant in a body bag and put him on the chopper.

I gingerly lifted his head. Others picked him up at the same time. We put him in the bag. It felt like it took an hour to zip the bag up. When I zipped the last inch, I felt that "cocoon" explode within me. It was at this point that I considered myself "reborn." "The Iceman Cometh!"

Six of us carried his limp body to the general's Huey. The green bag lay on the red-carpeted floor of the Huey. The general, up to this point, had said very little. He simply looked at us, and said "I will be taking my officer home now. Thank you for finding him. If you find these NVA, take no prisoners!"

We said, "Yes sir!", and he was gone.

Americal Division – Vietnam War – Order of Battle

[The Americal Division order of battle information shown below is taken from Operational Reports/Lessons Learned (ORLL) documents. An ORLL document was prepared approximately every three months and contained a Troop List with details of assigned, attached, detached, and otherwise related subordinate units that formed the division. The listing may or may not be fully complete and may or may not be fully correct. Some units were stable for the entirety of the duration of the division while other units moved in and out from time to time. Some units not listed on these troop lists may be shown on troop lists in ORLLs at other times. The lists are presented as they were found. -Editor]

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY Headquarters Americal Division

APO San Francisco 96374

AVDF-GC November 1968

Subject: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 October 1968

(RSC-CSFOR-65) (RI) (U)

AMERICAL DIVISION TROOP LIST (as of 1 November 1968)

1. HQ AMERICAL DIVISION

HHC, Americal Division

1st Sqdn, 1st Cav

F Troop, 8th Cav

415th Sig Det

570th TC Det

26th Engr Bn

123d Avn Bn

449th Sig Det

406 TC Det

523rd Sig Bn

23 MP Co

3d Mil Hist Det

2. AMERICAL DIVISION ARTILLERY

HHC, Div Arty

3rd Bn, 16th Arty

3rd Bn, 18th Arty
1st Bn, 82nd Arty
3d Plt, Btry, 29th Arty, Searchlight (OPCON)
G Btry, 55th Arty (.50)
251st Radar Det
6th Bn, 56th Arty

3. AMERICAL DIVISION SUPPORT COMMAND

HHC and Band
23d S&T Bn
HQ & A Co, 23d Med Bn
HQ & A Co, 723d Maint Bn
23d Admin Co
Co E, 51st Inf (LRP)
63d Inf Plt (CTT)
Americal Combat Center (PROV)

4. 11TH INFANTRY BRIGADE

HHC, 11th Inf Bde

3d Bn, 1st Inf

4th Bn, 3d Inf

1st Bn, 20th Inf

4th Bn, 21st Inf

6th Bn, 11th Arty

6th Spt Bn

E Trp, 1st Cav

11th Sig Plt

59th Inf Plt (Scout Dog)

52d Chem Det

31st Public Information Det

5. 196TH INFANTRY BRIGADE

HHC, 196th Inf Bde

2d Bn, 1st Inf

3d Bn, 21st Inf

4th Bn, 31st Inf

3d Bn, 82d Arty

8th Spt Bn

F Trp, 17th Cav

48th Inf Plt (Scout Dog)

156th Sig Plt

10th Public Information Det

27th CML Det

569th MI Det

636th MI Det, OB

6. 198th INFANTRY BRIGADE

HHC, 198th Inf Bde

1st Bn, 6th Inf

1st Bn, 46th Inf

5th Bn, 46th Inf

1st Bn, 52d Inf

1st Bn, 14th Arty

9th Spt Bn

H Trp, 17th Cav

57th Inf Plt (Scout Dog)

635th MI Det
87th Chem Det
49th Sig Det

7. NON-DIVISIONAL UNITS

14th Combat Avn Bn

71st Aslt Spt Hel Co

132d Aslt Spt Hel Co

174th Aslt Hel Co

176th Aslt Hel Co

178th Aslt Hel Co

16th TC Det

94th Sign Det

151st TC Det

348th A.S. Det

400th TC Det

39th Engr Bn

4th CA Plt

6th CA Plt

51st CA Plt

America RR Co (PROV)

408th RR Det

415th RR Det

601st RR Det

O/16, Det 31, 5th Weather Sqdn, USAF

USASSG, ACSI, DA

160th Engr Det

506th Engr Det

548th Engr Det

600th Engr Det

603d Engr Det

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY Headquarters Americal Division

APO San Francisco 96374

AVDF-HL 10 May 1969

Subject: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 30 April 1969

(RSC-CSFOR-65) (RI) (U)

AMERICAL DIVISION

TROOP LIST

(as of 30 April 1969)

HEADQUARTERS AMERICAL DIVISION

HHC, Americal Division

1st Sqdn, 1st Cav

F Troop, 8th Cav

415th Sig Det

570th TC Det

26th Engr Bn

123d Avn Bn

449th Sig Det

406 TC Det

523rd Sig Bn

23 MP Co

3d Mil Hist Det

USAMID (PROV)
52d MI Det
569th MI Det
635th MI Det

636th MI Det
328th RR Det

AMERICAL DIVISION ARTILLERY

HHB, Div Arty

6th Bn, 11th Arty

1st Bn, 14th Arty

3rd Bn, 82d Arty

3rd Bn, 16th Arty

3rd Bn, 18th Arty

1st Bn, 82nd Arty

6th Bn, 56th Arty

(LESS OPCON)

G Btry, 55th Arty (.50 Cal)

B Btry, 2d Bn, 11th Arty, (FO Party and Metro Section)

251st Radar Det

59th Inf Plt (Scout Dog)
90th Chem Det
31st Public Information Det
327th Avn Det
Combat Weather Team 2

196TH INFANTRY BRIGADE

HHC, 196th Inf Bde
2d Bn, 1st Inf
3d Bn, 21st Inf
4th Bn, 31st Inf
F Trp, 17th Cav
48th Inf Plt (Scout Dog)
27th Chem Det

10th Public Information Det
Combat Weather Team 1

198th INFANTRY BRIGADE

HHC, 198th Inf Bde
1st Bn, 6th Inf
1st Bn, 46th Inf
5th Bn, 46th Inf
1st Bn, 52d Inf
H Trp, 17th Cav
57th Inf Plt (Scout Dog)
87th Chem Det

NON-DIVISIONAL UNITS

3d Plt, G Btry, 29th Arty,
Searchlight (OPCON)
4th CA Plt
6th CA Plt
51st CA Plt
Det 3, 7th Psyop Bn
(DS of Div)
USASSG, ACSI, DA
46th Engr Det
OL7, 5th Weather Sqdn, USAF

23RD (AMERICAL) DIVISION
25 Sep 67 to 29 Nov 71
(Edited by W. Mark Durley)**Division Headquarters and Headquarters Company**

23rd Infantry Division
Support Command
23rd Supply &
Transportation Battalion
523rd Signal Battalion
723rd Maintenance Battalion
26th Engineer
Battalion (Note 1)
23rd Medical Battalion
23rd Administration Company
23rd Military Police Company
328th Army Security
Agency Company

635th Military
Intelligence Company
3rd Military
History Detachment
American Combat
Center (Provisional)
Chu Lai Defense Command

**Division Artillery
Headquarters and
Headquarters Battery**

6th Battalion, 11th Artillery
Regiment (to 11th
Infantry Brigade)
1st Battalion, 14th Artillery
Regiment (to 198th
Infantry Brigade)
3rd Battalion, 16th Artillery
Regiment (155 mm.)
1st Battalion, 82d Artillery
Regiment (155 mm.)
3rd Battalion, 82d Artillery
Regiment (to 196th
Infantry Brigade)
3rd Battalion, 18th Artillery
Regiment (175 mm.)
Battery G, 55th Artillery
Regiment (.50 Cal. M. G.)

Division Infantry

11th Infantry Brigade (Light)
196th Infantry Brigade (Light)
198th Infantry Brigade (Light)

Division Reconnaissance:

Troop E, 1st Cavalry Regiment
(Armored) Atch.
Troop F, 8th Cavalry
Regiment (Armored)
327th Aviation Detachment
Company E, 51st Infantry
Regiment (L.R.P.)

Company G, 75th Infantry
Regiment (Rangers)
Americal Scout Infantry
Company (Provisional)

Brigade Artillery:

6th Battalion, 11th Artillery
Regiment (105 m.)

Brigade Aviation:
14th Aviation
Battalion (Note 2)
123rd Aviation
Battalion (Note 3)

Attached Units:

6th Battalion, 56th Artillery
Regiment (Hawk)
16th Aviation Group
212 Aviation
Battalion (Combat)

27th Surgical Hospital
(Mobile)
566th Medical
Company (Ambulance)
(Note 1)

Co. A (ex-175 Engr. Co.)
Co. B (ex-555 Engr. Co.)
Co. C (ex-6th Engr. Co.)
Co. D (ex-Co. B, 39th Engrs.)
Co. E (ex-554 Engr. -
Floating Bridge — Co.)

(Note 2)
282nd Aviation Co.
196th Aviation Co.
71st Assault Helicopter Co.
178th Assault Support
Helicopter Co.,

132nd Assault Support
Helicopter Co.
(Note 3)
161st Aviation Co.
406th Transportation Co.

449th Signal Detachment
Co. B 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry
Co. D 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry
F Troop 8th Cavalry

**196th Infantry
Brigade (Light)**
26 Aug 66 to 29 June 72
**Brigade Headquarters and
Headquarters Company**

8th Support Battalion
175th Engineer
Company (Combat)
587th Signal Company
27th Chemical Detachment
10th Public
Information Detachment

Brigade Artillery:
3rd Battalion, 82d Artillery
Regiment (105 mm)

Brigade Infantry:
2d Battalion,
1st Infantry Regiment
1st Battalion, 6th Infantry
Regiment (Nov 71 only)
3rd Battalion,
21st Infantry Regiment
4th Battalion,
31st Infantry Regiment

Brigade Reconnaissance:
Troop F,
8th Cavalry Regiment (Air)

Troop F, 17th Cavalry
Regiment (Armored)

**198th Infantry
Brigade (Light)**
31 Oct 67 to 13 Nov 71**Brigade Headquarters and
Headquarters Company**

9th Support Battalion
555th Engineer
Company (Combat)
87th Chemical Detachment

Brigade Artillery:
1st Battalion, 14th Artillery
Regiment (105 mm)**Brigade Infantry:**
1st Battalion,
6th Infantry Regiment

3rd Battalion,
1st Battalion,
20th Infantry Regiment
4th Battalion,
21st Infantry Regiment

Brigade Reconnaissance:
Troop E, 1st Cavalry
Regiment (Armored)**Brigade Reconnaissance:**
Troop H, 17th Cavalry
Regiment (Armored)

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2303	ADVA Life Patch (Small)	\$5.00			
2304	Americal Shoulder Patch (Blue)	\$5.00			
2305	Americal Shoulder Patch (Subdued)	\$5.00			
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2311	Americal Ornament	\$8.00			
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2317	11th Brigade Unit Pin	\$5.00			
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2338	Americal Tie	\$23.00			
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2341	Americal Beer Mug	\$15.00			
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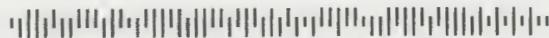
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