

April • May • June 2020



# AMERICAL JOURNAL

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



UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS



## Locator Requests (continued on page 27)

**Looking for:** Information about my grandfather. He was on Cebu island in 1945 and was wounded in April (I think). I am looking for any information your organization might have. He was in the 132 Americal division B company (all he could remember). He said only 3 people from his company where not killed or wounded in the battle he was injured in. His Name was Ralph Dean Lee (born 1925) he was a replacement on Leyte prior to going to Cebu. I recorded him in 2005 telling some stories. One of which was his company commander being to his right and getting hit before he himself was injured. He never found out if he was killed or not. Infact he never made contact with anyone after coming home (he passed away some 14 yr ago). Any info nearly related to where he was or what his unit did or what he did. would be awesome. Contact: Nathan Grissom; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Information on my grandfather, Charles Alfred DiRienzo who was in Americal Division in World War 2. He was at Guadalcanal and Bougainville and was a medic or worked in medical division. He was friends with a soldier named Al and we have many cartoons that the two drew. He was also a boxer in the army, which I believe was welterweight. Contact: J. L. N. Grant; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Anyone who may have known, known someone else who knew, or personally had known about Ralph Holso, G Co., 2/182 Inf. Regt., who was killed during the Battle of Hill 260 on Bougainville on March 11, 1944. He was awarded the bronze star posthumously for his actions during, or around, that time. Any information whatsoever would be greatly appreciated. Contact: Aaron L; email: [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Information regarding when my dad, William A. Gold, 26th signal Corp would have gone to Australia for R & R. One time saw an engagement notice in an Australian paper. Disappeared. Now that my mom has passed away trying to see if I can find any information. Dad loved going to the ADVA reunions and I was lucky enough to accompany him

to a couple. Any guidance appreciated. Contact: Carl Gold; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Anyone who had carried out research or had information in relation to the construction of the Chu Lai Base during the Vietnam War. I have located references to 10TH NMCB and their work in constructing the base and contacted the Seabee Museum and also have looked at some unit and operational records on the Virtual Vietnam Archive. I work in Australia for a company that is involved in the clearance of remnant munitions and unexploded ordnance and was particularly interested in any research that might document the munitions stored at the base. Also any records that may have detailed the mined perimeter areas for protecting the base specifically. A number of records I have looked at mention mine clearing operation outside the base – but don't have any specific details about the perimeter defence. Contact: David Jolliffe; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Information as to how my friend in high school died in combat in Vietnam. All I know is he died of "small arms fire". What I have from the online NARA extract data file is: Patrick James Connor, PFC; Service # 341446059; Birthdate 11/5/1951; From Glenview, IL; Casualty City: Quang Tin; Americal Division; Process date 9/1/70; Death Date 9/970 Contact: Ned Miller; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** My commanding officer, Co A, 1/46, 196th LIB, during our combat action on 8 Jun 1970. My name is . I was called the CRAZY PINEAPPLE. I was a member of a special unit, The Dirty Dozen. Our squad leader was SGT SHORT. Contact: Virgilio V. Flores; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Photographs. I was a crewchief on a DustOff ship that covered you guys at Kham Duc, July, 1970. Was wondering if anyone had pictures of our ship, and if anyone was picked up by us. Contact: Donald Jones; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Information about my father. My name is Michael Toschi and I am from Southeast Kansas. My father Jack Toschi served in Vietnam with the Americal Division 11th light Infantry Brigade Alpha Company 3rd Battalion. He

passed away and he never talked about the war. Looking though his discharge papers my siblings and myself are trying to piece together his time serving in Vietnam. I have a limited few pictures, a few stories he did tell, and a list of his medals and unit citations. I just want to know more about him. Contact: Michael Toschi; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Sergeant Benny Starr. Served with him at the Americal Division from 67-68 in Chu Lai. Contact: Lynn Toussaint; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Anyone who knows me wounded on Oct 23, 1968. I think Lt John W. Snapp was next to me Co. D, 1st.bn., 52nd Inf., LZ Bayonet. Contact: Peter Zeppetelli; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Anyone serving with D/4/3 11TH LIB Oct 67-Jun 68. Contact: James P Linn; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Men who had served with Terry (Anthony) Molea in Btry. A, 1/82d Artillery, from Dec 68-Dec69. He was a gun chief on 155mm howitzers. He recalls being on LZ Dottie, LZ Fat City, Hill 54, LZ Baldy, and LZ Sooner. He remembers SFC Willie G. Rucker of New Orleans, Jimmy Paschal of Pasadena, TX, Dennis Cogburn of Del Rio, TX and would like to get in touch with fellow veterans of A 1/82. Contact: Terry (Anthony) Molea; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Information about my friend Joseph Holmes, 10/15/69 KIA, 11LIB. I was looking for is death on Daily Staff or Duty Offices log. Location: Chu Lai. Where can I find this information? Contact: William E Murphy; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Bobby Williams from Bowling Green Ky. He went over to Nam late 69, was with 5th/46th 198th LIB, with C company. Contact: Dale Melton; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Information about my father, Richard A. Dunn, who served with the 132nd Infantry Division in the Americal Division. He was wounded in action on April 14, 1945. He received the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman's Badge and several Campaign medals. Contact: Richard A. Dunn, Jr.; [REDACTED]

## Pardon The Error

By Gary L. Noller

Several months ago a notable politician attended a local veterans event. The next day the newspaper carried an article about the happening. The bold front page headline stated, "HUGE CROWD ATTENDS EVENT."

The headline obviously attracted my attention so I headed straight to the text of the story. It was only then did I realize that the headline was in error. It should have said, "HUGE CROWD ATTENDS EVENT."

I chuckled at the embarrassing error and noted that it was not the first time that something like this had appeared in the newspaper. I knew it would not be the last.

The cover of the first-quarter 2020 Americal Journal is very attractive and shows the skills of our art designer, Lisa Anderson. But I must ask readers to pardon my error in not catching the obvious error in the graphic that I provided to Lisa.

The Americal Legacy Foundation worked for several months to come up with a design for a plaque to be displayed at the soon to open National Army Museum near Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. The foundation submitted an idea and the museum created a graphic image of the plaque. After careful review, but not so careful after all, the plaque design was approved and payment made to the museum.

The graphic provided by the museum is what was used on the cover of the Americal Journal. The graphic had been reviewed by several people including me. But no one spotted the obvious error of a misspelled word.

Shortly after the magazine arrived at readers' homes I received an email from my sister. She lives in Tulsa, OK and reads the magazine sent to her son, associate member Kevin Sartorius. She sent me a short message that read, "Do you know about the error in the magazine?"

My immediate thought was, "What error?" I know there will be some things that slip through the proofing of the magazine. It is inevitable. I did not look to see what she referenced in her message.

Over the next few days I received a few more messages of similar content. One stated that the words World War II were shown as Word War II. I thought to myself, "No way is that what is on the plaque." So I finally pulled out a copy of the magazine and saw that the error was there.

I immediately contacted the National Army Museum and

informed them of the error. They told me that the plaque had not yet been made and that the required correction would be made. That made me feel a little better.

It seems like errors such as this one should be easy to catch. And perhaps that is the problem. It is an easy error so the eye glances right over it. Even if it said Word War II it read World War II. Only one small letter was missing.

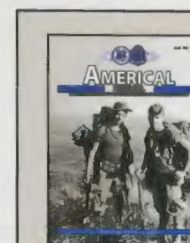
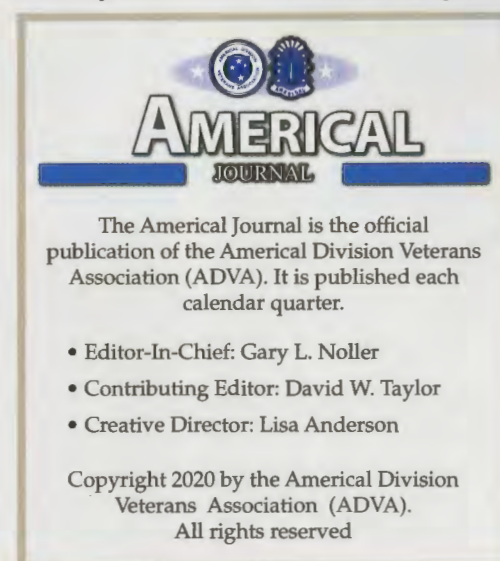
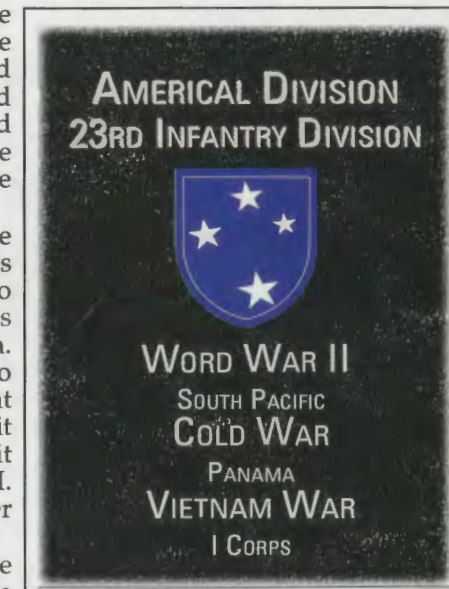
This episode reminded me of a similar mistake that was avoided but only at the last minute. Several years ago the Americal Legacy Foundation designed the Americal monument that is on display at the National Infantry Museum at Ft. Benning, Georgia. One of the features of the monument is the Medal of Honor tablet. The tablet displays information about the fourteen Americal veterans who earned the Medal of Honor.

The information about each specific medal was reviewed three times before it was submitted to the monument company for production. But for some reason I decided to check the details one more time. I was sure that I was over-managing the situation. But on the fourth check I found an error. The date of the award of the Medal of Honor to SSG Nicky Bacon was incorrect. Thankfully this was caught and a correction made.

I am very proud of the quality of the Americal Journal and the opportunity it provides to veterans of the Americal Division to have their stories and photos published. I appreciate the work of David Taylor, Contributing Editor, and Lisa Anderson, Art Director. All of the composition and production of the magazine is completed by email. Although I have worked with Lisa for many years I have never met her or even spoken with her by telephone.

But the success of the magazine relies on the individual veterans who provide their stories and news for consideration. This is what keeps me going. The magazine is sometimes a chore but I am always enthusiastic about seeing what may be submitted by our readers. We have been able to publish outstanding articles that help tell the true history of the Vietnam War and describe the activities of veterans since the war.

Do us both a favor. Send me something. I will try to avoid errors.



**Cover:** Jim Dowling and RTO Sal Pulio (left) atop a mountain with coastal plain and ocean in the background, 196 LIB AO. Photo courtesy of Jim Dowling.



Adjutant's Notes

By Roger Gilmore, National Adjutant

Midst all the hardship and difficulty brought on by the recent Covid19 pandemic and ensuing counter measures to protect our nation and the world, I sincerely hope all ADVA members are safe and healthy. Hope all have been able to stay informed and comply with the local guidelines for staying safe. I know the VA has been very proactive in helping our veterans cope with this and keeping us all informed on protective measures and symptoms of the virus.

Our ADVA new member additions were flat for the past three months. Some impact of the social distancing mandates may have affected our new member additions, as most settings where our members meet other Americal Division veterans were pretty much shut down over the past few weeks. When compared to the same reporting period for year 2019, the numbers are pretty much in line. The early months of each year are typically slow for new member sign-ups.

Total new members added for this reporting period is twelve. Of this count, two joined as life members. Quite a few annual pay members exercised their option for a life membership upgrade. Eleven annual pay members paid the required life member dues to upgrade their membership. The life upgrades count is a normal count over a three-month reporting period. Six former members reinstated their ADVA membership. Hats off to ADVA members Paul Hennes, Richard Waggoner, Wayne Bryant, Mark Deam and PNC Gary Noller for their recruiting efforts this quarter.

Due to the cancellation of this year's ADVA reunion in Indianapolis, we will not pick up any new members from reunion registration sign ups. Past reunions have proven the value of picking up new members through reunion registration forms. Most past years when this initiative was in place, we picked up approximately ten or more new members each reunion. The social distancing norm encouraged by our leaders further inhibits recruiting since we are no longer out and about with opportunities to meet other Americal veterans

Although I had no definite information at the time this article was written about relaxing local guidelines for large groups of veterans meeting (i.e. Memorial Day ceremonies), most like these will either not happen or will be significantly down sized. VFW and American Legion posts, potential opportunities to recruit new members, will likely severely restrict numbers of veterans that can gather at one time within the facility. We will continue to rely heavily on the ADVA website for membership recruiting.

If you know an Americal Division veteran that is not an ADVA member, you can direct him to the association web site, [www.americal.org](http://www.americal.org), for a membership application form. I am always ready to help provide prospective members information about the association if you have a name and mailing address. Send me the information and I will mail the prospective member an application form and instructions on filling out the form. The Americal Journal publication is available on request, and a good tool for recruiting new members.

Your dues renewal status is listed in the address box on the back cover of this issue. If your annual pay renewal date is listed as SEP19, JAN20 or May20, please mail your dues renewal check ASAP. May 2020 renewal notices were mailed the last week of April. **If your renewal date is May 2020 and you did not receive your notice and new annual pay membership card, contact me and I will mail you another.**

The Taps section of this report lists our ADVA members and Americal Division veterans who passed away recently. We sadly list the name of ADVA member and Vietnam Veteran Ed Den Braven. Many members knew Ed well as he was a regular attendee at annual reunions. Ed was always a good conversationalist and loved to visit with reunion attendees. He was one of our Americal Legacy Foundation directors and his input on our projects will be sorely missed. Please inform me when you know of the passing of an ADVA member or Americal Division veteran so his name, hometown and unit information can be listed in the Taps section.

When you make an address change, whether permanent or seasonal, please inform me as soon as possible so I can update the ADVA roster. Email is the best way to notify me when you move, and you incur no costs. My email address is listed on the back cover of this publication. If you prefer to call, my cell phone number is [REDACTED]. The membership application form on the back cover of any Americal Journal can be used to send written notification for address change to this address: [REDACTED], Richardson, Texas 75080

New Members

**Larry C. Bush**  
HHC/3/1st Inf  
Pensacola, FL  
★ Self

**Gary R. De Bruin**  
1/6th Inf  
Kaukauna, WI  
★ Paul Hennes

**Keith D. Donally**  
123rd Avn Bn HHC  
Rio Rancho, NM  
★ Self

**William D. Irwin, Jr.**  
196th LIB  
Boaz, AL  
★ Self

**Hubert Jordan**  
3/18th Arty Btry B  
Germantown, TN  
★ Self

**John S. McDaniel**  
B/1/46th Inf  
River Ridge, LA  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

**Michael Sinno, Jr.**  
123rd Avn Bn  
Secane, PA  
★ Wayne Bryant

**Robert White**  
Div HHC  
Rainbow Lake, NY  
★ Self

New Paid Life Members

**Robert K. Scott**  
C/1/6th Inf  
Quincy, IL  
★ Mark Deam

**Michael Strong**  
1/52nd Inf  
Cherry Hill, NJ  
★ Richard Waggoner

**Carroll Ballinger**  
23rd MP Co  
West Liberty, KY  
★ Rich Merlin

**Robert J. Behnke**  
B/1/20th Inf  
San Leandro, CA  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

**Ronald R. Capek**  
D/1/46th Inf  
Glendale, AZ  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

**Billy H. Coleman**  
3/18th Arty Btry C  
Farmersville, TX  
★ John Anderson

**Jimmy Creech**  
E/2/1st Inf  
Howey In The Hills, FL  
★ David Eichhorn

**John Henningson**  
3/82nd Arty  
Guilford, CT  
★ Self

**James Obermayer**  
63rd ICPT  
Lynden, WA  
★ PNC David W. Taylor

**Dave Salemma**  
B/1/6th Inf  
Baltic, CT  
★ Chris Collins

**J. Peter Schultes**  
B/4/21st Inf  
St. Petersburg, FL  
★ Mbrshp Com.

**Gregory M. Victor**  
6/11th Arty Btry B  
Vanderbilt, PA  
★ Bernie Chase

**Robert L. Yancy**  
C/1/20th Inf  
Laurel Hill, NC  
★ Self

Reinstated Members

**Dan Anderson**  
23rd Admin Co  
Henderson, NV  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

**Gary M. Callahan**  
A/5/46th Inf  
Dallas, TX  
★ Self

**Larry Cassell**  
C/5/46th Inf  
Lone Oak, TX  
★ Self

**Gary E. Fennington**  
723rd Maint Bn  
Jarrettsville, MD  
★ PNC Jon Hansen

**John J. Licata, Jr.**  
3/82nd Arty A Btry  
Santa Monica, CA  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller

**William G. Urban**  
E/4/21st Inf  
Whiting, NJ  
★ Mbrshp Com.

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

World War II Veterans

**George P. Dakin \***  
121st Med Bn  
Revere, MA  
July 8, 2008

**John Duff \***  
101st Medical Bn  
Reading, MA  
March 13, 2011

**Leonard Forecki \***  
182nd Inf Rgmt  
St. Francis, WI  
Date Unknown

**Dewel J. McGriff \***  
182nd Inf Rgmt  
Decatur, AL  
July 8, 2019

Vietnam Veterans

**David G. Clark \***  
23rd Admin Co  
Rochester, IN  
Date Unknown

**Edward J. Den Braven \***  
3/82nd Arty B Btry  
Vineland, NJ  
March 29, 2020

**Paul Hrynkievich \***  
A/3/1st Inf  
Fairfax, VA  
February 7, 2020

**Aaron L. Kerns**  
C/4/3rd Inf  
City/State Unknown  
March 24, 2020

**Maury Lee**  
C/4/3rd Inf  
Round Mountain, NV  
January 21, 2020

**Floyd L. Lenard \***  
B/1/52nd Inf  
Falls City, NE  
March 13, 2020

**Bruce L. Morton \***  
B and E, 3/1st Inf,  
11th LIB  
Reseda, CA  
March 19, 2020

**Rayburn Nichols**  
A/5/46th Inf  
Brenham, TX  
March 30, 2020

**Eddie A. Odom \***  
C/4/3rd Inf  
Sarasota, FL  
March 18, 2020

**Raymond J. Ostrowski \***  
A/1/20th Inf  
Norwich, CT  
February 22, 2019

**John L. Schlotterbeck, Jr. \***  
C/5/46th Inf  
Marietta, OH  
January 24, 2020

**COL (Ret) Clyde Tate \***  
HHC/1/46th Inf  
Hagerstown, MD  
August 28, 2019

\* ADVA Member

Memorial Day Tribute

In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae (1872-1918)



In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

[Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae was a military surgeon in the Canadian Army. He wrote this famous poem in May 1915 during the battle of Flanders Field. The Flanders Field American Cemetery and Memorial is located in Waregem, Belgium. It is the final resting place of 368 American soldiers who died there in World War I. May they rest in Peace.]

ADVA MEMBERSHIP  
30 April 2020

World War II	257
Vietnam	2,493
Cold War	5
Associate Members	177
<b>Total Members</b>	<b>2,932</b>



## Americal Legacy Foundation Report

By Roger Gilmore, Chairman, Board of Directors

### The Global Corona Virus Pandemic – Impact on Legacy Foundation Projects

In the past few months, the world has suffered tremendously from the Corona Virus pandemic, and we see the impact into our world of Americal Legacy Foundation projects. Obviously, first and foremost is the health and safety of outside parties involved with our projects. We certainly acknowledge the need to be patient as the pandemic runs its course and the business world begins its slow return to work. The following paragraphs will address the impact on our Legacy projects based on discussions with our project contacts.

### Foundation Web Site

In this paragraph of the Americal Legacy Foundation article, I typically refer to the web site PayPal link as an easy way to donate. Several past donors have made use of the PayPal tool for foundation donations. Earlier this year, we worked with former Foundation director David Taylor on a changeover from his contact information to another so he can cease his involvement with the PayPal administration process for ALF. Dave found from his discussions with PayPal Support that a change in user ID and password is not an easy process. PayPal has evidently added layers of security requirements to new user set up to combat the never-ending scammers and fraud artists attempting to gain financial access to its data. In view of this more complicated process and the ongoing need to maintain our account, we have decided to discontinue the use of PayPal for donations on the web site. Effective September 1, 2020, we will no longer have the PayPal link on the web site available for donations. We regret any inconvenience this may cause loyal donors, but feel it is necessary to lessen our workloads. PayPal will not be available for ordering books or calendars. We will be looking at a re-design for the web site to permit shoppers to contact us for orders with the Contact Us link. Payments by check or money order will have to be remitted directly to director Gary Noller once we acknowledge order information.

### Americal Legacy Calendar – 2020 Edition

ADVA member and friends support for the Foundation through calendar donations to date is a tremendous success. Donations for the 2020 calendar edition amount to \$22,501.00 as of the close of the third quarter ALF financial statements. In addition, we show miscellaneous donations (primarily through the PayPal option) of \$3,561.00. We sincerely appreciate the generosity of all who steadfastly support the Foundation's various monument and grant programs through your donations. All calendar donations are considered "unrestricted" which means these funds can be directed to any of our programs. Our primary use for these funds is the current monument placement program for VA cemeteries as well as grants to worthy memorialization projects brought to us.

The Foundation received a very generous donation from the 1/52nd reunion group in March. I received notification about the \$500.00 donation from group coordinator Conrad Geibel. Thanks so much to those 1/52nd veterans for their generosity supporting the Americal Legacy Foundation.

As I indicated above, additional calendars are available

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

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### Americal Monument Programs – National VA Cemeteries

As I stated above in the opening paragraph, we are seeing a profound impact on our monument's placement programs due to COVID 19 and the ensuing national shut down. It is very likely we will see no further progress in 2020. The cemetery staff members I spoke with recently about our projects advise they are eliminating as much pedestrian traffic on grounds as possible. Many have gone to direct internments with no family members attending. Essential staff only on site. We continue to work with our POCs at these locations to be keep abreast of the situations.

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

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

As reported in the last issue of this publication, our monument placement proposal is approved. Initial plans were to initiate the monument placement in late Spring to avoid any inclement weather in the Long Island area. The current shutdown orders have pushed this back to an undetermined date. We had initial contact about the constructing the concrete base with a local masonry company lined up by ADVA member Steve Leventhal. Unfortunately, this contractor's liability insurance coverage does not comply with minimum requirements set forth by the National Cemetery Administration. We are now working to locate a masonry and concrete contractor near the cemetery (Long Island proper) who is willing to submit a bid and has the required liability insurance coverage. More on this project's installation progress in future editions of this publication.

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

As expected by other national cemetery locations, extra projects such as our monument proposal are on hold for the time being due to the lockdown mandated by the Covid19 pandemic. I spoke with the POC there in mid-April about our placement proposal documents. The response is the documents are complete but have not been submitted up through the approval chain at the district level. The district is aware of the monument placement proposal, so we expect the review to take place once some normalcy returns to national cemetery operations.

#### Rock Island Arsenal National Cemetery (Rock Island, IL)

Our package was submitted to Midwest District office in mid-February. Engineers at that office were in the process of reviewing the drawings would submit the documentation to the NCA Field Programs office after their review. The latest information from the cemetery assistant director overseeing the proposal package is the cemetery director is now taking over the project and will follow up with the district. With the pandemic lock-down in place at national cemeteries, it is

unknown currently when more information is forthcoming for this site.

#### Washington Crossing National Cemetery (Newtown, PA)

The on-site POC advised us to submit an estimate for the concrete base work. The estimate must accompany the proposal documents being submitted for district approval. The cemetery did provide a referral for getting a construction bid. The construction bid submitted is very high, and I advised the POC at Washington Crossing we will have to work out a contractor bid on our own. More on this project in future issues of this publication.

### Americal Monument/Memorial Programs Other Locations

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

In the last issue of this publication, we reported the Foundation has purchased an Americal Division unit tribute plaque to honor the division's service in its three eras of activation. Our \$5,000.00 check for the purchase was mailed to the Museum's memorial program coordinator in mid-January. Immediately thereafter for the plaque purchase.

The museum was scheduled to open in June 2020. A message on the museum's web site advises that with the current Covid19 developments unfolding continually, there is a possibility the opening will be pushed back. We do not have a schedule or time frame for when the Unit Tributes (these will line the Path of Remembrance leading up to the Museum) will be placed.

#### Fort Polk, LA

Good news on this monument memorial project. The POC there advises the post senior commander approved the placement proposal in mid-March. Due to the cost of the monument, additional approval must come from the post's higher headquarters (no indication as to who the higher headquarters is). The Covid19 restrictions will impose some time restraints for the additional review and approval. More information will be provided once we receive word from the POC on post. I did receive a very encouraging email from the post director of Plans, Training and Mobilization regarding the monument placement. Following (in italics) is some of his narrative: *As a retired LTC with 30 years in the active Army and five more as a civilian, I know a little about the "Americal" and even had some NCOs that served in Vietnam it when I was a young Soldier. Their experience and combat wisdom were priceless and shaped me for a lifetime in the Army. I have done several LPDs using the Americal as a primer. I look forward to talking more with you on this in the future when this current crisis dies down.*

#### Fort Rucker, AL

Another success story here at Fort Rucker. We learned in late February our monument placement proposal to honor Americal Aviation is approved. I was given the name of the post projects manager as the POC for the actual site selection and placement procedure for the granite monument. We gave Columbus Monument Company the go ahead to begin work on the project. A down payment for the monument construction was mailed to Columbus Monument in early March. Another review of the spec drawing was done, and approval given to proceed. Artwork for the tiles displaying aircraft images was completed in late March and approved.

Follow up with Columbus Monument Company in mid-April confirms they expect the carving, etching and tile placement on the granite to be complete by May 1, 2020.

The POC at Fort Rucker will need to confirm if the placement work can be done on site with the current restrictions in place (non-essential personnel not allowed on post) for Covid 19. As of the writing of this article, we were still awaiting word on that.

#### Camp Edwards, MA

Reported in the last issue was a potential Foundation grant to assist refurbishing an Americal Division monument located near Otis AFB Massachusetts. BG Len Kondratiuk of the Massachusetts National Guard is our POC for this.

In a recent update from BG Kondratiuk, his plan is to travel to Camp Edwards soon to assess the refurbishing needs. He advises he will clean the plaque and send some pictures for our review and decision on what can be done on the financial end. Like our other projects in the works, timing and scheduling for any work to be done will be dictated by Covid 19 restrictions.

### Other Foundation Projects The Vietnam Center and Archive

ADVA Vietnam Historian Les Hines is in contact with With the closure of all academic institutions in response to the Covid 19 pandemic, we can safely assume no work is being done under our grant to Texas Tech to archive Americal Vietnam documents.

ADVA Vietnam Historian Les Hines send a new disc with more current date to Dr. Maxner, Director of the Texas Tech Vietnam Center and Archive, in early January. Texas Tech had planned to start work on the new materials in mid-January. Texas Tech required a sign off attesting to the disc contents, which Les completed and returned to Texas Tech in early March. Since then, we have had no information back from Texas Tech regarding next steps on the project. I emailed Dr. Maxner in early April asking for a status on the project, expecting the entire staff to be furloughed until the pandemic eases restrictions. At the time this article was written, I have not received a response to my inquiry. More on this project as details become available.

### Scholarship Program

This pandemic and the ensuing Covid 19 restrictions throughout the nation have deeply impacted the Foundation's annual scholarship program. Scholarship Chairman Bill Bruinsma reports he has received only five applications through mid-April for the 2020-21 academic year. He normally receives around twenty by that time. Since all academic institutions are closed for the remainder of the spring semester, he is not requesting transcripts.

At the time this article was written, we had no assurances that colleges and universities would re-open for the Fall 2020 semester. Our initial thought is most schools will proceed slowly once the country begins to open for normal interaction. Bill's initial thought is to award a smaller scale total dollar amount to applicants he has by the end of the application period (May 1st). Initial discussion among Americal Legacy Foundation directors leans towards granting awards to applications received by the deadline on a case by case basis based on the program criteria. We hope to have more information about this on the Americal Legacy Foundation website under the Scholarship link.



National Election Results Announced

Jim Turner, Nominating Committee Chairman, recently announced the results of the 2020 ADVA national election. Deadline for ballots to be returned for tabulation was May 1.

The ballot listed candidates for the positions of National Commander (1), Senior Vice-Commander (1), Junior Vice-Commander (2), and Executive Committee (11).

Incoming officers will begin their terms on July 1, 2020. They are, David Eichhorn, National Commander; Bob Cowles, Senior Vice-Commander; and ,Junior Vice-Commander.

Eleven members will begin terms on the Executive Council. They are: Cary Bacall (I), PNC Bob Cudworth (I), PNC John (Dutch) DeGroot (I), Claude Frazier (I), Charles (Chuck) Holdaway (I), Cameron Baird, PNC Jay Flanagan, PNC Reggie Horton, Joe Kotarba, Lawrence Lennon, PNC Larry Watson, and Wayne Bryant, Junior Vice-Commander. (I) indicates that the member was an incumbent on the council.

The ballot also had one bylaw amendment proposal. It concerned the filing of annual reports by ADVA chapters. The ADVA Executive Committee reviewed the proposed bylaw amendment and recommended approval of the change. It was approved. ADVA national elections are held bi-annually in even numbered years. The next election will be in 2020. Complete rules with regard to elections may be found in the ADVA bylaws.

Each chapter is allowed one representative on the Executive Council. Chapters hold elections or choose officers according to the bylaws that they adopted for themselves.

Jim Turner chaired the committee consisting of Joe Kotarba, Wayne Bryant, Rich Heroux, and Gary Noller. Reggie Horton, National Commander, appointed the committee with approval from the ADVA Executive Council.

**2020 ADVA Annual Reunion Rescheduled to 2021**

The 2020 ADVA annual reunion scheduled for August 2020 in Indianapolis, Indiana has been moved to 2021. This action is a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the health hazards related to social gatherings.

Chuck Holdaway, Reunion Chairman, is working with the host hotel to reach a new agreement on dates and costs. Anyone with hotel reservations for 2020 should cancel their reservations and request a refund of any fees charged on the reservation.

Arrangements are also being made with Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFRI) to handle the activity reservation process for the reunion. Some members paid AFRI for activity reservations for the 2020 date. AFRI has agreed to refund all fees except for the base registration fee.

The ADVA Executive Council approved a measure to allow the ADVA to refund registration fees paid by members to AFRI. In this way individual members will not suffer a financial loss due to the no refund policy of AFRI.

Details of the 2021 reunion will be available on the reunion page of ameircal.org as soon as they become available. News will also be included in the next issue of the Americal Journal magazine.

The 2022 annual reunion is under the chairmanship of PNC Larry Swank. The reunion will be held in the Washington, D C area with the host hotel located near Reagan National Airport. It is expected that a tour of the soon the be opened National Army Museum with be a feature of the reunion.

Americal Scholarship Program Provides Flexibility

High schools and colleges closed in many states in March in order to provide social distancing for students, instructors, and staff. This action was deemed necessary to protect health in light of the risks associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bill Bruinsma, ALF Scholarship Chairman, recently reported that due to school closures some scholarship applicants were having a difficult time in providing the necessary information to complete their scholarship applications. Many times this involved obtaining letters of recommendation from school instructors and principals.

Students also reported that they did not know if the college of their choice was going to be open in time for the fall semester. Some schools may choose to do on-line computer classes only. Some students may wish to decline on-line instruction and wait for classroom instruction to resume at a later date.

The board of directors of the Americal Legacy Foundation agreed that rules for scholarship awards need to have some flexibility due to the unfortunate circumstances overshadowing the start of the fall 2020 term. Bill Bruinsma will work closely with applicants and their intended schools to determine awards on a case-by-case basis. Bruinsma stated that about 40 applications had been submitted by the May 1 deadline.

Scholarship award payments are usually sent in July and are made payable jointly to the student and to the school. Students sometimes change schools after the scholarship award has been made. In such cases the payment is returned to the scholarship program and a new check is sent to the new school.

**ADVA PX To Resume Sales**

An arrangement is currently in place that will re-open the ADVA PX. The collaborative effort of PNC Ron Ellis and incoming national commander Dave Eichhorn is expected to provide the necessary means to handle PX sales and shipments.

Dave has obtained the PX inventory from Wayne Bryant. Wayne handled PX sales for a number of years but retired from this position on January 1, 2020.

The planned procedure is for sales orders and payments to be sent to Ron Ellis. Ron will receive the payments and then forward the orders to Dave. Dave will then package and ship the items to the purchaser.

Under this arrangement Ron will handle the financial aspects of PX sales while Dave will do the product fulfillment duties. This is a change from the way it was done in the past. Wayne conducted all activities from his home with the valuable support from his wife Gina.

The existing PX order form has been modified to reflect the need to send orders and payment to Ron Ellis. Payment may be made by check, money order, or credit card. Questions about payments should go to Ron. Questions about product details and availability should go to Dave.

The ADVA PX regularly stocks items of interest to veterans of the Americal Division. The association makes a small profit on items sold. Proceeds from PX sales are retained for ADVA general budget needs.

Contact Ron Ellis at [redacted]. Contact Dave Eichhorn at [redacted].



Phone [redacted]  
ADVA PX Order Form

Item #	Description	Price	Size	Qty	Total
2301	ADVA Logo Patch – (Small) 2 1/2"	\$5.00			
2302	ADVA Logo Patch (Large) 4"	\$5.00			
2303	ADVA Life Patch (Small)	\$5.00			
2304	Americal Shoulder Patch (Blue)	\$5.00			
2305	Americal Shoulder Patch (Subdued)	\$5.00			
2306	ADVA Outside Window Sticker – 3 1/2"	\$5.00			
2307	Americal Bumper Sticker – 11 1/2" x 3"	\$5.00			
2308	ADVA License Plate	\$8.00			
2309	Americal Shield Pin (Large)	\$5.00			
2310	Americal Crest Pin	\$5.00			
2311	Americal Ornament	\$8.00			
2312	ADVA Decal Inside Window – 3" x 3 1/2"	\$3.00			
2313	Americal Lapel (Small)	\$5.00			
2314	CIB Mini	\$5.00			
2315	ADVA playing cards	\$8.00			
2316	182nd Regiment Unit Pin	\$5.00			
2317	11th Brigade Unit Pin	\$5.00			
2318	196th Brigade Unit Pin	\$5.00			
2319	198th Brigade Unit Pin	\$5.00			
2320	Baseball Cap – Khaki w/ADVA Logo	\$14.00			
2322	T-Shirt, ADVA Gray (Med, Lg, XL, XXL)	\$18.00			
2323	Americal Trailer Hitch Cover	\$10.00			
2324	Americal white License Plate Holder	\$5.00			
2325	Americal Koozie	\$4.00			
2327	Americal Division History - DVD	\$15.00			
2330	Baseball Cap – White, Black, or Blue w/Americal Patch	\$14.00			
2331	Americal Coffee Mug, Blue - Acrylic	\$12.00			
2332	Americal Grey Sweatshirt (Med, Lg, XL, XXL)	\$35.00			
2333	ADVA Challenge Coin	\$10.00			
2334	Americal Division polo shirt, Black (Med, Lg, XL, XXL)	\$28.00			
2335	Americal Flag w/grommets	\$46.00			
2336	T-Shirt Americal Brigades (Med, Lg, XL, XXL)	\$18.00			
2337	Americal Nylon Wallet	\$8.00			
2338	Americal Tie	\$23.00			
2339	Americal Beer Stein	\$45.00			
2340	ADVA Ballpoint Pen, Blue	\$7.00			
3512	Americal Division Vietnam Veteran–decal, round, multicolor	\$5.00			
3513	Americal Div Vietnam Proudly Served–decal, oval, blue & white	\$6.00			
3515	Americal Jungle Fighter T-Shirt	\$18.00			
Total:					

Ship To Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, St, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

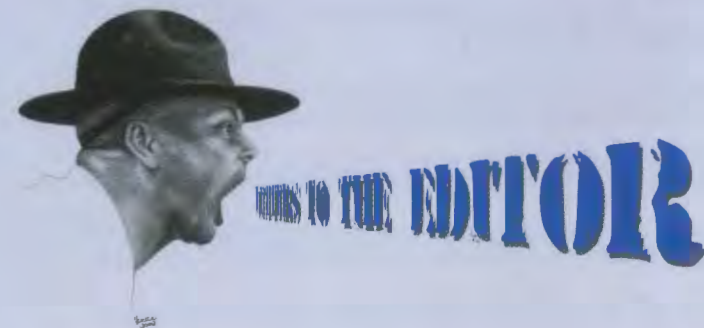
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Order by mail, email, or phone:  
PNC Ronald R. Ellis  
[redacted]  
HENDERSON TX 75652  
[redacted]



Send Check or Money Order made out to the Americal Division Veterans Association  
Now you can use your Visa or MasterCard to pay for your PX merchandise.  
Include the credit card name, credit card number, and expiration date on the order forms.





Dear editor,

My father, Charles T. Bell, 164th Infantry, was Chaplain to the Americal Division and in that role, wanted to deliver a message to the veterans that your organization serves. He is hard of hearing and almost blind, but still wanting to be active at age 97.

His message is Psalms 23 and the lyrics to a favorite hymn, In the Garden.

Psalms 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
He leads me beside quiet waters,  
He refreshes my soul.  
He guides me along the right paths  
For His name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I will fear no evil,  
For you are with me;  
Your rod and your staff,  
They comfort me.

You prepare a table before me  
In the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil;  
My cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and love will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
forever.

The gospel of John, Chapter 20, inspired author C. Austin Miles to write this hymn as he enjoyed the companionship that anyone can experience when walking with Jesus. In The Garden was written in 1912 and performed by many music artists over the decades since.

I come to the garden alone,  
While the dew is still on the roses,  
And the voice that I hear falling on my ear,  
The Son of God discloses . . . . .

And He walks with me, and He talks with me,  
And He tells me I am His own,  
And the joy we share as we tarry there,  
None other, has ever known!

Anita Zantos for Charles T Bell

Dear editor,

I just wanted to send a quick note to the Americal Journal. I haven't seen any information or stories about the Americal's supply and transportation battalion gun trucks that provided convoy security to convoys delivering beans, bombs, and bullets to the division's LZs etc. To that end I want to send out a job well done to all those transporters who drove, manned, and maintained those gun trucks day in and day out. The photo is of my salute to the battalion. It shows my personalized vest that features the guntruck Ironhorse.

Theo Esquivel;



Dear editor,

ADVA member and 4/31st Infantry veteran Mike Harper stays busy with his volunteer work for North Louisiana veterans. Mike lives in Minden, Louisiana and spends much of his time working with veterans at the local VA facility. He greets people as they come into Overton Brooks VA Medical Center in Shreveport. He helps find them find where they're going in that massive complex. Our he gives a push to veterans in need of a wheelchair. "I enjoy helping them. It gives me a lot of satisfaction," Harper says. "And it gives me something to look forward to doing every day."

There are 300 volunteers at the VA hospital. But only one could be Volunteer of the Year -- Mike. "He's someone that we strive to find -- more Mike Harpers in the world," Larry Moore, Chief of Voluntary Services, says. "Mike Harper comes in early, stays late. He does whatever he has to do for our veterans. Even their family members, as well."

Mike says he's there for veterans, because he remembers how it felt not being appreciated. "There's some war stories told. I visit with them if they want to. Some do. Some don't. And that's ok," Mike says. "I hope it helps them. I'm sure it helps me some to engage with somebody that actually experienced what you experienced. I enjoy serving them. I like being around them."

Mike finished college at LSU Shreveport after the war and went into the car business in Minden, like his dad. And Mike passed that on to his son. Mike and the many other ADVA

members that stay connected to the veteran community are a real credit to the Association.

Roger Gilmore, National Adjutant.

Source: KTBS TV Shreveport Community Page

Dear editor,

I have some interesting information concerning the Americal Division in World War II. The Presidential Unit Citation was given to the 1st Marine Division Reinforced and the note on the bottom left shows the names of eight members of the Americal Division including my grandfather, Tec 4 Charles E. Rockwood. We believe he was with Edson's Raiders on Tulagi and then Guadalcanal before he rejoined the Americal Division.

The document was given to him so he could wear the Presidential Unit Citation Marine ribbon. He also displayed the Army Presidential Unit Citation on his right breast. The award was for actions that took place from August 7, 1942 to December 9, 1942 in the Solomon Islands of the South Pacific.

Coby Rockwood



Dear editor,

I have found that two previously unknown issues of the Americal Division Southern Cross newsletter are located in the National Archives. They are issues dated October 15 and October 29, 1971. The box information is: RG 472, Entry P 1660, Box 37. I have been trying for 30 years to locate issues like these. There are only 16 pages in these two issues, but these are very a very important find for our history. They are considered oversize so I can not order them through the normal channels.

I am looking for these Americal Division Southern Cross newspapers: 1969- 21 NOV, 5 DEC; 1970- 9 JAN, 23 JAN, 30 JAN, 6 FEB, 13 FEB, 10 APR, 24 APR, 6 JUN, 10 JUL, 17 JUL, 14 AUG, 2 OCT, 16 OCT, 23 OCT, 13 NOV, 20 NOV, 27 NOV, 11 DEC; 1971- 5 MAR, 16 APR, 21 APR, 7 MAY, 14 MAY, 28 MAY, 18 JUN, 10 SEP, and 1 OCT 71 thru 20 NOV 71.

Les Hines, ADVA Vietnam Historian

Dear editor,

I am a new member of the ADVA and just finished reading the first quarter 2020 edition of the Americal Journal. The article about the Da Nang Gang was of particular interest to me. This article told of action involving the 1/6th Infantry during the Tet 1968 enemy offensive.

I was the third platoon medic for Co. C, 1/6th Infantry and earned a Purple Heart on this day. I have a good copy of the 1/6th battalion newsletter that describes action during this time. An article is titled, "Regulars" Defeat NVA in Vicious Fight" and begins on February 7, 1968.

The article states, "The battalion was called in as part of the 1st Marine Division Task Force Miracle to stop a determined NVA and Viet Cong attack on the huge Da Nang military complex."

The article is nearly four pages long and gives a great description of the courageous actions taken by members of the 1/6 Infantry. At the conclusion of the battle the casualty count indicated that the enemy had suffered massive losses. It was estimated that more than 250 enemy soldiers were killed. The article also stated that, "battalion casualties were 22 killed and 62 wounded".

Gary R. Du Bruin; Kaukauna, WI

[I am happy to forward a copy of the 1/6 "Brave and Bold" newsletter to any who wish to read the entire account. Send a message to [redacted] and I will forward the .pdf file in return. Thanks to PNC Ron Ellis for forwarding this letter to the Americal Journal. -Editor]

Dear editor,

I request you include the following announcement in your media sources. The Americal Division has been memorialized in the OCS Hall of Fame, Heritage Center and Memorial alk at Fort Benning. Also, the Officer Candidate Schools Annual Reunion is set for May 2-4, 2020. The United States Army Officer Candidate Schools Alumni Association has announced the 2020 Annual Reunion, Hall of Fame Inductions, Heritage Center and Memorial Walk Dedications, Mini-Reunions, presentations of the Nett and Patterson Awards, BBQ with the OCS Candidates and Program Updates, National Infantry Museum and Fort Benning Activities, and Board of Directors elections. Registration is now open. Please refer to <https://ocsalumni.org/> for the schedule of events, administrative details, points of contact, and updates. For further information please contact Dan Johnson, [redacted], or [redacted].

Jim Wright; [redacted]



## Before The Americal: Task Force 6814 and Saving America's Asian Empire, 1940-1942

Roger R. Thompson, PhD  
(Copyright 2020 Roger Thompson)

*(Contributing Editor's Note: Before the Americal in Vietnam was the historic formation of the Americal on New Caledonia after it arrived as Task Force 6814. But what were the conditions that shaped the Task Force to come to that part of the world which sealed the legacy of the Americal as a jungle-fighting infantry division? This article gives you the unique background to what was to become "The Americal Story.")*

### Introducing Walter Walt

Walter W. Walt, Jr. (1916-2006) served in the Americal Division from the moment it was created in New Caledonia in May 1942. Drafted in October 1941, and inducted into active service on 17 November, Walt was in training in Virginia as Task Force 6814 was forming in mid-January 1942. A Californian, he was assigned to the Massachusetts National Guard's 101st Medical Regiment, Company I. Task Force 6814, which included the 182nd Infantry Regiment (Massachusetts) and the 132nd Infantry Regiment (Illinois), embarked from New York in late January 1942, reached Australia in late February, and landed at New Caledonia on 12 March 1942.) The task force was joined in April by the 164th Infantry Regiment (North Dakota). With these three National Guard infantry regiments at its core, the Americal Division was established in May 1942 on New Caledonia under the leadership of Task Force 6814 commander Alexander Patch. General Patch, and Walt's unit, arrived on Guadalcanal in early December 1942 with the last echelon of the Americal Division to reach the still-embattled island. Walt, who was awarded the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, left Guadalcanal on 25 May 1943 for the United States. He, like General Patch, went on to serve in the European Theater. Walt was discharged from active duty on 12 August 1945.

### Dawn in the Pacific

We saw Walter from our room at the Royal Hawaiian, a solitary figure on the empty beach at Waikiki, watching another dawn in the Pacific. My wife Melissa's first instinct was to rush down to her 83-year-old father and make sure he would be OK, but she left him to his thoughts and solitude. We were on holiday with Walter, and his wife Dorothy, who had invited us to join them as they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1999.

We did all the usual tourist activities, including a trip to the USS Arizona memorial at Pearl Harbor. All was going smoothly as we pulled into the parking lot, when quietly and firmly, Walter and Dorothy said: "We'll wait for you here. You two go on. We'll be fine." We gently protested, but to no avail. Nothing more was said, then or later. Why wouldn't they join us? I've been trying to answer that question ever since. I still have questions for Walter and Dorothy, but like so many of their generation, time has silenced their voices. As I write this in April 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, I cannot even visit my father, my first World War II vet. But we still talk, and I continue to ask questions.

"The Pacific War" is one of the courses I teach at Western Washington University. Every time I teach this course I think about Walter, who served in the South Pacific in 1942-43, and I think about Dorothy, whose first husband was killed in action in the Pacific. I also think about the sixteen million Americans who wore a uniform during World War II, and I think about a civilian population mobilized for "total war." I think about the estimated seventy million persons, military and civilian, who perished in the war; at least a third of these deaths were in Asia, where millions starved to death. The scale of World War II is almost too much to imagine. And so when I teach the Pacific War, I also try to make it personal for my students. We start with their family histories; I sometimes share a few of Walter's stories. Shortly before he died in 2006, Walter brought out for the last time--although we did not know that--his World War II album. Full of photographs and other items, Walter's album was clearly a labor of love, and an object of great

meaning and significance to him.

Our visits were too short, and Walter and I never had enough time to spend together with his album. And he rarely talked about the war. He still suffered from malaria; he had nightmares. But for the most part his memories were kept private. Walter was not unusual; America's World War II veterans often put the war behind them and focused their energies on families and careers as the post-war boom began in the 1950s.

When I began dating Walter's daughter in 1975, his war was only three decades distant. The fall of Saigon had just brought to a tragic end America's role in Vietnam. I was a freshman at Stanford University and I rarely mentioned my four years in the Air Force; I never talked about what I did in northern Thailand during the Vietnam War. But I did share this with Walter; I thought it might be a way for us to connect. Perhaps it did, but it is also possible Walter might not have understood why anyone would enlist. He was drafted when he was twenty-five, and went on active duty just before Pearl Harbor, one of the million or so men drafted in the first fifteen months of America's first peacetime draft; And then, Pearl Harbor. We served America in Asia in two very different wars, Walter and I, but it was a bond.

About forty-five years after we met, and over a decade after Walter's death, the time had come to go to the storage locker where Melissa and I had placed the boxes we packed up after Walter's death in 2006. I had remembered a large envelope with an inscription in Walter's hand that I thought was war-related. Last summer I located it--the envelope read "Contents: Letters sent home from service in army, Ribbons etc., Discharge copy"--brought it home, and opened it up for the first time. There was a small envelope with medals and patches, including a patch with a striking design: a cluster of four white stars in a cross design on a dark-blue background. And then the treasures Walter had never mentioned to his son Christopher or his daughter Melissa: Two letter-diaries written to his mother before and after his service in New Caledonia and Guadalcanal.

The first letter, dated 20 January 1942, was written the day Walter boarded the St. Elena, one of the seven ships of Task Force 6814 soon to leave the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The last letter is dated 21 June 1943 and describes Walter's arrival back in the United States after his long voyage across the Pacific from Guadalcanal to San Francisco.

But there were no letters from New Caledonia and Guadalcanal. Could I fill in this gap, I wondered, from March 1942 to May 1943? I had the album photos and ephemera from his time on the two islands, but little else. In ways that have astounded me in recent months, I found I could indeed fill in these gaps. And when I completed this extraordinary journey, I discovered that Walter and I shared the experience of two young Americans in Asia that links his service in New Caledonia with my tour in Thailand. We were connected by the French, their empire, and the United States that first came together in fateful ways in 1940. The consequences of that fraught relationship continued until 1975, transforming in turn my generation. One early consequence is the Americal Division, the only infantry division formed and trained overseas on foreign soil and the United States Army's only "named" division. The Americal Division, book-ended by Task Force 6814 in World War II and Task Force Oregon in the Vietnam War, has an extraordinary history that resonates in profoundly important ways in the histories of the United States, Asia, and the world. Let us turn to these histories.

### Globalizing the European Conflict

In May 1940, Germany attacked France and the French state and military soon sued for peace. The Vichy regime, beholden to Berlin, took power on 10 July 1940. Germany, Italy, and Japan formalized their military alliance with the signing of the Tripartite Pact in September 1940. The European crises was now a global crisis as the Japanese and Italian empires established common cause with Germany, whose empire had vanished two decades earlier under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. German imperial ambitions had now returned to dominate the world stage two decades after the Great War; once again a world war loomed.

Although the French state had surrendered to German might, the French empire and diplomatic and military forces abroad had not. Diplomats, admirals, and generals, including one Charles de Gaulle, had to decide whether or not the newly-established Vichy government was the legitimate representative and defender of French sovereignty. Most obeyed orders from Vichy, but de Gaulle was one of the "Free French" contenders who did not. He would become, eventually, the symbol of Free French resistance to Hitler's Germany. And while there was not much de Gaulle could do in France itself, he had all of the French empire to appeal to in the dark days of 1940. French colonial officials and military leaders throughout their empire tended to hew to the lines established by the Vichy administration in France--French Indochina is a good example--but de Gaulle's blandishments resonated with some of the French empire's imperial subjects.

Britain and the United States, with their own empires to protect around the world, turned to the people and democratic principles of self-government as they sought to

prise pieces of the French empire from Vichy influence. If the people, in free elections, decided to align their colony with the Free French, then both countries were willing to recognize the people's voice as the crucial legitimating factor in these high-stakes struggles for sovereignty in a fracturing world. In the South Pacific, this obscure but pivotal process would involve Britain, the United States, Japan, Vichy France, and the Free French in dramatic and fateful ways in 1940 and 1941. Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 is just one part of this very complicated story.

### A Shadow Diplomatic War in Asia

The shadow diplomatic war of 1940-41, when none of these protagonists was at war with one another, anticipated the global war to come. In China, where Western empires had acquiesced in Japan's expansion of its Asian empire in 1931 when it took Manchuria, the West continued to recognize and work with the Japanese government and military that had occupied much of northern and coastal China after its undeclared war with China began in July 1937. Japan tolerated the continuing Western presence in China, most notably in Shanghai, even as its anti-imperialist and anti-Western rhetoric became shrill. As would General Petain in Vichy France, China's Wang Jingwei took power in Nanjing (30 March 1940), near Shanghai, and collaborated with Japanese authorities as he headed the Reorganized National Government of China. Unlike General de Gaulle, however, "Free China's" leader Chiang Kai-shek commanded significant, but beleaguered military forces from his wartime capital deep in China's interior at the Yangzi River treaty port of Chongqing (Chungking) in Sichuan province. Elsewhere in Asia, Japanese and Western imperialists also eyed one another warily. Even in French Indochina, nominally under Vichy control in 1940, French colonial authorities accommodated Japanese demands with reluctance since imperial competitions were always ones with clear winners and losers. Except for "semi-colonial" China, where all imperialist powers had once agreed to cooperate, sovereignty in Asian colonies was held by the nation-states located in the West or Japan.

Sovereignty and legitimacy, then, were key elements in the shadow war of 1940-41. The rules of war and diplomacy still guided policy-makers. French diplomats sent to Washington, D.C., by their Vichy government were accredited and received in the halls of power. Americans travelling to French colonies obtained visas from the Vichy government; the United States government dealt with General de Gaulle with great discretion. But there was one part of the French empire where significant exceptions were made for reasons of grave geo-political importance: the South Pacific. After 1919, and the Treaty of Versailles, Japan had been granted League of Nations mandates for Germany's island colonies and areas north of the equator; Western imperialists shared the German spoils of war south of the equator.

From these starting positions in China and the Pacific, Japan extended its influence to the northern part of French Indochina in 1940 (a year earlier it had taken control of Hainan, a Chinese island near China's southeastern coast,



and quickly established air assets that could strike at all of French Indochina). From Indochina, all of Britain's southeast Asian possessions (Malaya, Singapore, and Burma) were at risk. And to the south lay the Dutch East Indies, Australia, and New Zealand. None of these imperial possessions could survive without protection from either Great Britain or the United States. And the United States' air and sea lines-of-communication with Australia and New Zealand cut through the South Pacific. The South Pacific mattered.

### A Shadow Diplomatic War in the South Pacific

President Roosevelt, who would eventually have a secret Map Room in the White House to help him visualize this vast geo-political panorama, was also convinced that the South Pacific mattered, especially New Caledonia. Located about one thousand miles off Australia's northeastern coast, and astride the sea and air lines-of-communication between the United States and Australia, New Caledonia became a destination point on the Pan American Airways Pacific Clipper Service new southern route via Hawaii to New Zealand in 1940; the northern route from San Francisco Bay, with intermediate stops in Hawaii, Midway Island, Wake Island, and Guam en-route to Manila in the Philippines (all U.S. possessions), had been pioneered in 1935.

The Japanese had also been paying attention to New Caledonia. A Japanese consul was dispatched to New Caledonia in 1940 and soon took residence in a fine house with a splendid view of Noumea Harbor. About 1,500 Japanese citizens lived on the island, mostly as farmers and merchants in both urban and rural areas; New Caledonian iron ore was being shipped to Japan by Japanese mining interests. But the rarer, and strategically-important minerals nickel and chrome, were mainstays of the island's mining economy, and these were held firmly by Western economic interests. And yet the West tread carefully in Asia in 1940—neither Britain nor the United States answered the plea for help from the Vichy governor-general of Indochina after Japan's incursion into northern Indochina in July 1940, a move that cut supply lines to Chiang Kai-shek's military. Only the Burma Road was left. No pretext could be given to Japan to launch a pre-emptive strike, military or otherwise, and take control of New Caledonia as it had in French Indochina; no Western power could have reversed such a dire development in 1940-41.

Pan Am's sea planes landed in New Caledonia's Noumea Harbor, the most developed shipping port in all of the South Pacific, another reason this was an important point on America's line-of-communication with Australia. And so the shadow war played out in New Caledonia. In the same month, September 1940, that the Axis powers inked the Tripartite Pact in Berlin, British colonial authorities made the first move in New Caledonia. Hoping to help repeat de Gaulle's success in neighboring Tahiti, where a plebiscite had gone in favor of the Free French, the British nudged New Caledonia toward their corner. While New Caledonia's urban colonial elite leaned toward Vichy France, it was its agrarian rural elite, some of whom were descendants of the radical political prisoners sent from Paris to Noumea after the failure of the Paris Commune in 1871, who supported in word and deed de Gaulle's Free French call.

In September 1940, these mostly rural New Caledonians rose up and forced a capitulation of both Vichy French colonial and naval authorities. These men had sought and received de Gaulle's support in August. British authorities in London and the South Pacific had yet to come to a firm position. But the arrival of a Vichy French gunboat from Tahiti on 25 August 1940 forced their hand in August; meanwhile in London a new agreement between Prime Minister Churchill and de Gaulle was signed on 27 August. The British still had to convince Australia to act on their behalf in the South Pacific. The Australian government, tentatively, and finally definitively, approved the operation on 9 September 1940. Orchestrated in part by British authorities, and approved and executed by Australia, the plot began in the nearby colony of New Hebrides to the north of New Caledonia. (British authorities had protected the French colonial authorities who supported the Free French cause in the New Hebrides, an Anglo-French "co-dominion"

shared-power colony.) An Australian gunboat escorted the French Resident Commissioner from the New Hebrides to Noumea, where he was greeted by the New Caledonians who had "rallied" to de Gaulle's Free French call. The Vichy French gunboat from Tahiti eventually sailed away, and the one that had been dispatched from Indochina was recalled. General de Gaulle added New Caledonia to his meager Free French portfolio.

### A Shadow Diplomatic War in New Caledonia

By the end of 1940, these three small pieces of the French empire in the Pacific were aligned with Britain and America. And New Caledonia was the largest and most strategically important of these French possessions. This was certainly the argument made by the French naval officer in Saigon who telegraphed his ideas to Vichy in February 1941: dispatch a Vichy naval expeditionary force to New Caledonia and seize the renegade colony from the grasp of the Free French. But no action was taken and the shadow war continued. A diplomatic consul from the United States joined the Australian representative who had arrived in Noumea in August 1940 (An Australian military party arrived in early 1941 to assess New Caledonia's defense needs and its potential for air fields.)

The American consul carried credentials granted by the Vichy French embassy in Washington, D.C. Roosevelt and de Gaulle still eyed one another with caution as Roosevelt continued with his "Vichy Gamble." Ever mindful of the tendency for imperialism to be a zero-sum game, de Gaulle jealously guarded all shards of Free French sovereignty that he could. Looking to the post-war future, he wanted to insure, as did his Vichy foes, the long-term survival of the entire French empire. The interests of his metropolitan France, even if only an aspirational government-in-exile in London, were paramount. Hints of de Gaulle's anti-American propensities, whenever he thought French sovereignty or pride was at risk, were evident from the beginning of this often-contentious relationship between the Free French and the Americans around the globe.

And even New Caledonians, especially those in the monied urban elite, were suspicious of this developing relationship with both America and Australia. Despite New Caledonia's proximity to the coast of northeastern Australia, it was part of the French empire. Its trade was largely within the French imperial trading bloc, except for the Australian coal needed to power its mining industries. Its flour and butter came from France; some of its contracted labor from northern Indochina. Without new trade agreements with the British Commonwealth, especially Australia and New Zealand, and the United States, the New Caledonian economy would collapse. These re-orientations were made. Australia began to sell food to New Caledonia; Australia agreed to buy its nickel production, previously sold to Germany via France. But Japan would challenge this new status quo. It too needed New Caledonia's nickel production, especially after Japan lost access to the world's primary source of nickel, Canada, in 1940. Vichy authorities in Indochina promised Japan these riches and more in July 1941, soon after Japan's army had moved into southern Indochina. The United States reacted immediately, freezing Japanese assets in the United States, and suspending trade with Japan.

The shadow war in the South Pacific was coming into the light of day as the stakes were raised. In late September 1941, Britain convened a short conference of allies, including the Free French National Committee represented by General de Gaulle. Mindful of the increasing importance of his Pacific colonies, de Gaulle offered the British access to New Caledonia, its harbor, and its airfield-in-progress. American military personnel had already been in New Caledonia assessing its military assets, a mission taken without the permission of the island's Free French governor. Their reports were sent back to Washington, D.C., where a recent Harvard Ph.D. in French history, David Pinkney, had been searching for information in the Library of Congress for a two-hundred-page report on New Caledonia he wrote for the Coordinator of Information, William J. Donovan, who reported directly to President Roosevelt.

### Empires in Collision in the South Pacific

The shadow war ended on 7 December 1941. Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor was coordinated with a much broader attack on American, British, and Dutch imperial possessions in Asia. In the first page of President Roosevelt's first draft of his famous "Date of Infamy" speech to Congress, written hours after the attacks at Pearl Harbor, he placed this action in the context of Japan "simultaneously" bombing "Hawaii and the Philippines." The President later mentioned Malaya, penciled in Guam, and summarized: "Japan has . . . undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area." Japan needed to control the United States' Philippine Islands in order to protect the line-of-communication with its so-called "Southern Resource" zone. Resource-poor Japan needed much from British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. (Even the resource-rich United States relied on rubber and tin from these colonies.)

And now the strategic importance of the South Pacific for Japan came into focus for all too see. It was the flank

to Japan's line-of-communication from southeast Asia to the Home Islands that must be protected. On 23 January 1942, Japan took Rabaul, a natural harbor with an airfield in New Britain that would eventually have six airfields and be home to over 100,000 Japanese. Rabaul, at the northern edge of the Coral Sea, was about 1,600 miles from Noumea at the southern edge of the Coral Sea, where the Australians had been helping the New Caledonians fortify their defenses and build an airfield since early 1941.

In a very deadly game, less akin to the dynamic game of chess than the apparently static positional Asian game of Go, moves and counter-moves were played very quickly; the shadow war of 1940-41 had prepared the board. British Hong Kong had fallen on Christmas Day; America's tiny Wake Island soon followed as President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and their military staffs debated the strategy and tactics of global war at a closed-door conference in Washington, D.C., in late 1941 and early 1942. All agreed Hitler should be the priority. But America was also especially concerned about the fate of the American, British, and Dutch empires in Asia. Just after the first formal meeting of the United States and British Chiefs of Staff at the first Washington Conference of the war on 24 December, de Gaulle's Free French representative in Washington, D.C., reported a communication to the United States government offering the "technical use of Free French airfields at New Caledonia." Could the British Commonwealth, the American planners asked in the midst of the conference, defend New Caledonia? After conferring with Commonwealth authorities in Australia and New Zealand, the British answer came quickly. Neither Australian nor New Zealand could send re-enforcements to the Free French outpost in the South Pacific, secured in September 1940 through the machinations of Britain and a hesitant Australia, until the middle of 1942.

And so the defense of New Caledonia—and most strategists argued that it should be defended—would be America's temporary responsibility. Within twenty-four hours the U.S. Army's shipping experts came up with the ships, including the four in New York already being loaded with troops bound for the relief of British and American troops in Iceland and North Ireland. The next day, 12 January 1942, Roosevelt and Churchill met at the White House for the final decision-making meeting of the First Washington Conference. The two men, as advised by their military staffs, agreed to the immediate shipping shift from Europe to the Pacific. The relief troops left their four ships, and three more ships were made ready in haste. Ten days after the White House meeting, and only six weeks after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor (and the same day the Japanese took Rabaul), about twenty thousand Americans were squeezed into seven ships about to pull out of the Brooklyn Navy Yard to an unknown destination; (The operation was highly classified; most of these men would not find out their true destination until a few days before they reached New Caledonia on 12 March 1942.)

The race was on. Designated Task Force 6814, these seven American ships rendezvoused with another secret task force (headed for Bora Bora in the south-central





Walter Walt peering out of the St. Elena sick-bay porthole; Like General Patch, who would later become the Americal's first commander, Walt caught pneumonia, for him soon after Task Force 6814 left New York. Shortly after the St. Elena had passed through the Panama Canal and reached the Pacific, Walt had recovered.

Pacific) off the coast of South Carolina. Together, these two convoys of ships that had been quickly loaded with U.S. Army forces, weapons, and equipment headed for the Panama Canal. The responsibility for escorting both task forces as they zig-zagged across the Pacific fell to the newly-appointed Admiral Chester Nimitz, whose Pacific Fleet had been stationed in Hawaii since 1940. Admiral Nimitz dispatched two fast-carrier task forces to the South Pacific. As Task Force 6814 neared Australia at the end of February, the USS Lexington planned a diversionary attack on Japanese forces at Rabaul. But Japanese scout planes discovered the task force and soon two waves of bombers, eighteen in total, attacked the Lexington in the first battle involving carrier-type planes of the war on 20 February 1942. The men of the Lexington cheered their pilots in the air battle taking place over them. The Lexington was saved, and resumed its escorting of Task Force 6814, which arrived safely in Melbourne on 26 February 1942. On their way across the Pacific, the men of the St. Elena, one of the ships of the task force, had



The Grace Lines' St. Elena, a luxury liner with a South American route, was hastily re-fitted as a troop ship. Corporal Walter Walt, with the St. Elena still docked in the Brooklyn Navy Yard on 20 January 1942, wrote to his mother just before midnight: "Well. Here starts adventure"

been given the short pamphlet Private Pillsbury Goes to Australia. What now? Australia? For most of the men their stay in Australia would be very short indeed. Task Force 6814 was under orders to embark once again as soon as possible. Most men still did not where, or why.

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



The threat of Japanese sea-and-air attacks kept Task Force 6814's track to Melbourne well south of the area displayed on this map. Admiral Nimitz's fast-carrier task forces, however, challenged Japan in the South Pacific in early 1942.

## My Destiny With The Americal

Richard Sytsma

(As told to Les Hines and Dave Taylor)

(Editor's note: This article is part 2 of remembrances of the author while serving with 1st/20th Infantry Battalion of the 11th Light Infantry Brigade as a Radio Telephone Operator (RTO). Part 1 appeared in the Jan-Feb-Mar 2020 issue of the Americal Journal)

### Raid on the Bicycles

The area around LZ Liz was always ripe for enemy activity. That's because Highway 515 ran north of our hill and the enemy used that road as a resupply route to support the NVA in the mountains. We would monitor that area all night long and fire artillery to try to interdict their resupply efforts. There was hilly terrain around LZ Liz (not the triple canopy jungle we had around LZ Cork, but plenty of cover and concealment) and so the NVA and VC could move quite a bit of equipment and troops.

We would also put recon out there all the time to try to interdict the enemy's resupply efforts. We got word from MACV who told our battalion commander the enemy was using bicycles, mopeds and motorcycles from the hamlets to move supplies up and down Highway 551. So we landed next to some hamlets on the commander's bird and he told me to confiscate all the bikes, motorcycles, etc. and bring them back up the hill. I told him I would need to get some help so I got some recon platoon friends and we loaded everything we could find in the ville's

onto the commanders bird and it made numerous trips hauling that stuff up to LZ Liz. I guess we hauled about 80-100 bikes, etc. up to our LZ.

The next day the village chief of those hamlets was at the gate, claiming we took their livelihood away. The battalion commander was not having any of it. We took them all of them over to the artillery side of LZ Liz and blew them up.

### Remembering LZ's

LZ Dragon was another place we were on from time to time. It seems that everyone made it up to that LZ. We had to cross a large and wet rice paddy east of the coast to get to it. Of course we would get sniper fire as we crossed because of our slow movement, which hastened us along. Once we got up to the beach-type terrain we would find a lot of spider-holes and other



Battalion Recon Platoon member enjoying one of the confiscated bikes on LZ Liz.



Dick Sytsma enjoying one of the finer motorcycles confiscated.



indications that the enemy was active in the area. The enemy knew that area well and used it to their advantage.

We always preferred to go out there by helicopter to avoid the snipers and mines. It was less risk. And, of course, the villagers in the area were no help at all. If they weren't the enemy they would have been dealt with severely if seen talking to us or giving us information.

I also remember LZ San Juan Hill was a crazy area, and we always went into that LZ by Chinook, so the enemy would of course know we were coming in to reinforce that terrain. We also worked off some special forces camps. I'm glad I survived all of those places.

### Working with the ARVN

We had a couple of times when we worked with the South Vietnamese Army and frankly, I didn't trust them. They weren't very reliable. Elah time we went out with them and set up a night perimeter, we would have our own perimeter inside theirs. At times during a firefight some of them would bolt and run. Maybe it was just that unit we worked with but I didn't like working with them. I've been told some ARVN units were good but our SOP was we didn't allow any of them to be behind us, no matter what.

We'd watch the ARVN go into a hamlet and yell and scream, shaking things up because they knew we were watching. Then they'd just leave to go down a trail to another hamlet. If we captured a military-aged male with no ID or, if he had an enemy weapon, we'd tie him up and blindfold him and turn him in to our S-2.

We also had Kit Carson Scouts from time to time. These were former NVA or hardcore VC whose story was always their family member was killed and so they changed sides. We'd watch them go into a Ville and display the same boisterous behavior as the ARVN. Once again, we didn't trust them. The scout would usually stay with the company commander. When I was the company RTO I watched them. They would interrogate villagers and would tell our CO, "let's go here, let's go there" to check for weapons. Sometimes we would find some weapons, most times not. I didn't trust them. Maybe other units had a better rapport with their scouts, but we didn't have one long enough to really trust them.

The Special Forces guys we worked with would

have scouts all the time and they stayed with them through thick and thin. But for us, the Kit Carson scouts would come in and spend a few days with us and then leave, so there was no way of bonding with them. We couldn't verify their performance. We called them "cowboys" because they would arrive with their bush hats and sunglasses and crisp uniforms, and walk around with a .45 caliber pistol. I think not having them permanently with us was a waste of a resource.

We also worked with the ROK (Republic of Korea) soldiers once. They were the toughest soldiers I ever worked with. They took no backtalk with any villagers we encountered. The ROK assumed they were always being lied to and would beat or shoot villagers who weren't 100% cooperative.

### Working in Triple Canopy Jungle

That triple canopy jungle was so thick that in the middle of the day it was dark on the ground level. The enemy would try to fire 60mm mortars at us but their rounds couldn't clear the top of the canopy and would explode in the branches. Likewise we couldn't pop smoke for resupply. The smoke just wouldn't clear the canopy. We tried having someone climb a tree to pop smoke at the top but there were so many other trees densely packed together that it didn't help either.

It was just incredible how it was.

We would follow trails. Of course you are not supposed to be on trails but after breaking down bush and exhausting yourself, and not moving very far, we tended to migrate to trails and tried to spot mines and booby-trap's and be prepared for any ambushes.

The monkeys would be very aggressive and scare us and we shot several of them. We also had a tiger follow us for about three days. After we'd leave a night position he would come in to see what was left in the way of food scraps, digging where we had buried cans, etc. At night we could hear him roar. I think some guys were more afraid of that tiger than the NVA.

### A Little Humor

I carried the radio all the time with an extra battery and once I told the company commander it was his turn to carry the shovel (entrenching tool). He said, "I'm not carrying a shovel". So I had to carry the

shovel as well. One night after I had dug a one-man foxhole, we got hit by enemy mortars. The company commander reached my foxhole before me and I made him get out. There is nothing more frightening than getting hit by mortars and you can't get below ground. From that point on he carried the shovel and we took turns digging a two-man foxhole.

We had a guy called Johansen and, when we were walking through an area of dense hedgerows we came to an opening with a trail crossing. It was getting dark. Johansen looked around the hedgerow to see what was on the other side and an NVA soldier was looking around to our side to see what was there, at the same time. They both ran. Not one shot was fired. We put in that location for the night and we could hear them on the other side of the hedgerow all night. I don't know if they thought

we were part of another NVA squad or what. We knew there were no other friendlies in the area but us. Those hedgerows were extremely thick with big thorns. I don't think a bullet could penetrate through them. It was a non-starter to mix it up with the enemy in that area. We both went our separate ways.

### The Monsoons

The monsoons were very bad. It would rain in the morning until about 10:00AM, clear up a little until early afternoon, then at about 2:00PM it would rain again, always with a heavy downpour. You would lie down to sleep and be wet, get up and be wet and be wet throughout the day. Just at noon when your jungle fatigues started to dry they would get soaked again. We always said the only ones out in the field were the G.I.'s. The enemy was hunkered down under shelters, staying "high and dry"

The weather was so miserable we had quite a few days when nothing could fly and so there was no resupply. We hoped we didn't have anyone with a serious illness or wounded because even the dust-off could not get in when it was rainy heavily. Our lead medic would do what he could for those injured or sick. He carried all the heavy drugs such as morphine, with him. We usually had two other medics in the company and they would get their guideline's from the head medic.

(To be continued)



Chinook landing at LZ San Juan Hill



Dick Sytsma next to the battalion commanders Command & Control bird, ready to go out as the CO's RTO.



## If not me, then who?

By Gerry Thacker

There are 58,307 names of men and women on the Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C. I will always remember their supreme sacrifice.

I was raised on a farm in Southern Illinois. I attended a very small high school. There were only 160 students in the four year school. We pretty much knew everyone. During this time it was pretty clear that all the eligible guys would be receiving a letter from the President asking them to serve in the military. We all understood that it was important to serve when our President called.

I remember looking at our flag as we stood in class, placed our hands over our hearts, and recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America. Our parents instilled in us the basic beliefs of God, Country, hard work, and what it means to be an American. I believe we were all patriots. We were raised to believe, "If not us to serve, then who?"

In May 1970 I graduated from college and within one month I was inducted into the US Army at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. After Basic Combat Training (BCT) I proceeded to Ft. Ord, California for Advance Individual Training (AIT). I arrived in Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam, just after Christmas 1970. My assignment was to second platoon, Alpha Company, 4/3rd Infantry, 11th Lt. Inf. Bde., Americal Division, located at Duc Pho. I began my one-year tour as a platoon radio operator.

I believe we were needed to keep Communism from spreading and to keep democracy in America safe. Our cause was just. Our generation of military soldiers performed with honor and pride. In our infantry company we were always trying to do the very best we could do in some very trying situations.

We all believed the saying, "No man left behind." No matter what, these were not just words. They were reality. I know if men who were wounded while trying to retrieve bodies to be returned to their families. They risked their lives so the families could have closure. Many times I witnessed heroics and compassion. I am not a hero, but I have walked beside many who were.

After a helicopter flight from Duc Pho to the bush I met the other members of second platoon. I was the new guy. New uniform, new ruck, a clean M-16, and shiny new boots. The fact that I stood out as GREEN would be an understatement. I knew I was inexperienced. I was yet to be battle tested. All the second platoon soldiers I met that day had time in-country already. They were experienced.

I felt at ease as I met the members of the platoon. They were regular guys just like me. For months after graduating from college I worried about going through BCT and AIT. I wondered, "How will I measure up as a soldier in Vietnam?" For the first time I felt, "I can do this."

The second platoon soldiers were a varied group. "Jungle Jane" was our M-60 machine gunner. His real name was Dave Moran and he had been in the bush for several months already. He was six feet tall and very muscular. We called him "Jungle" because of his experience and "Jane" for his girl back home. I came to know that "Jane" was always looking out for us. He welcomed me with a smile.

One time we were about to be combat assaulted into the bush from the base at Khe Sanh. We were low on C-rations and were instructed to stay in place for further instructions. We were all afraid that we were going out without enough food for the mission. "Jane" went out on his own and found cases of C-rations and brought them to us. He was not going to let anyone in second platoon go out on a mission without enough food.

On another occasion several members of second platoon heard some movement in front of us. We thought it came from hidden enemy troops. I flipped my M-16 off safety but held fire so that the enemy could not detect our position. "Jane" ran to the front to see what he could do to help. He was in front of us all acting as a shield to protect us in case of an attack. This is the kind of soldier that David "Jungle Jane" Moran was; he wanted to protect his men.

Another member of the platoon was Bones Bullard, a M203 rifleman. He was a tall, thin guy that offered advice and counsel to help new recruits like me.

There was Larry Nylander, a real professional. He was not very tall, but he always had a big smile on his face. He talked a lot about his girl back home. He just wanted to do his best and go home. I liked Nylander because of his positive attitude about almost everything. He could always make me laugh.

Glenn Wright carried a M-16 along with a camera. He took many photos of the guys in second platoon. It was only recently that I learned of how many photos he took of us in the bush.

Steve English came in-country after me and was the newest guy in second platoon. I was glad to see him as now I would not be the newest guy. Steve was quiet and did his job well. He became the assistant M-60 machine gunner to Jane. On patrol he would always walk directly behind Jane.

Doc Cote, our medic, would always be one of the first on the scene to help when a soldier was wounded. He not only helped second platoon but also helped wounded in the entire Alpha Company.

Jim Gaul was the other second platoon radio operator. He was a very experienced soldier and had previously been a M-60 machine gunner and M203 rifleman. I know he volunteered to do a lot of different jobs.

LT Walker was our Platoon Leader and was well respected by all his men. I was lucky that I was assigned to this platoon led by LT Walker. He looked out for all of us. He would walk point on many jungle patrols. This was unusual as walking point was one of the more dangerous jobs to do. He would not ask any of us to do anything that he would not do himself. He cared for us. He was patient with me and helped me to quickly learn my duties as a new radio operator in the platoon.

It did not take me long to have a great amount of respect for all the members of our platoon. We were a very cohesive unit. We looked out for each other every day. We were like brothers.

I arrived just as Operation Lam Son 719 was launched. This turned out to be one of the largest airmobile operations of the Vietnam War. It was a significant event and books have been written about it. One is Into Laos by Keith William Nolan. Pages 163 to 175 detail actions of Alpha Company at a place called The Rockpile.

Operation Lam Son 719 was a large, complex operation designed to sever the enemy's supply lines and destroy stockpiles along the supply routes from Laos. American forces would reopen the road QL9 and also the airbase at Khe Sanh. The mountains and jungle around Khe Sanh were controlled by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA).

The American plan called for Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) forces to attack the NVA forces in Laos and thus cut enemy supply lines. Airmobile support from American helicopters, jets, and gunships supported the South Vietnamese ARVN. Our infantry company, along with many other American units, provided support, prevented enemy infiltration, and secured road QL9. Soon there would be 10,000 plus American troops in the area around Khe Sanh. ARVN forces totaled 20,000. Although we did not know it at the time, an enemy force of 30,000 NVA troops were also operating in this area.

During January 1971 Alpha Company conducted regular patrols and had little contact with the enemy. This was about to change.

On February 11, our sister company, Charlie Company, combat assaulted 110 soldiers into a high ground location called The Rockpile. Alpha Company consisting of 122 soldiers was scheduled to follow right behind Charlie Company. Late in the morning 17 Huey helicopters began the movement of C Company. The Hueys were protected by several Cobra gunships and scout helicopters.

The Hueys took C Company to the landing zone (LZ). As the choppers neared the LZ the door gunners prepped the area by laying down covering fire.

As the first helicopter began to unload troops an unknown number of NVA responded with ground fire. Two helicopters were shot down. During the ensuing firefight at least two Americans were killed. The remaining Hueys continued to unload troops until the insertion of C Company was complete. The Americans

quickly set up a defensive perimeter. The downed helicopter crews were extracted and C Company continued to control the high ground.

Now it was time for Alpha Company to move to The Rockpile. The helicopter crews indicated that we had a hot LZ. We could see bullet holes in the helicopters. We were really scared, but my whole platoon quickly got aboard the bullet riddled Hueys and made our way to The Rockpile. Upon approach the door gunners again prepped the area. We received no return fire and did not have any casualties. We were safely in the LZ.

We controlled the area but we did not know how many NVA troops were in the surrounding area. We set up for the night. It was important that we control the high ground around The Rockpile.

Alpha Company began humping early on February 12. First platoon was on point followed by second platoon. First platoon surprised two NVA soldiers on the trail in front of them. I was very tense. We were moving in company strength but still did not know the size of the enemy force. We moved along a ridge line in a dangerously narrow path. It was heavy jungle with very dense overhead canopy.

I had been pretty miffed all morning. My radio wasn't working properly and I couldn't seem to fix it. A decision was made for second platoon to move past first platoon and take the point. I explained to LT Walker that my radio wasn't working and asked if I should go up front with him. He told me to move back and switch places with our other radio operator, Jim Gaul. I moved back 30 yards and got in line and waited for the rest of the platoon to move forward. Geez, I thought, typical Army hurry up and wait. I could not see LT Walker or any of the second platoon soldiers.

Before we could move out I heard at least two loud explosions to my right front. Someone screamed. There was rapid automatic fire from AK-47 rifles. I felt a sudden burst of air from the concussion of the explosions. I dove for the ground. Doc Cote had been close to me and was blown off his feet.

What happened to the guys in front of us? Small arms fire from an unknown number of enemy soldiers continued and members of second platoon returned fire. One of our M-60 machine guns opened up on the enemy.

The whole area was chaos. Captain Spinning asked for a volunteer to carry ammo to the machine gun up front. I volunteered. I began a low crawl carrying as much ammo as I could. The rapid gunfire continued to the right of our position. Our whole company was now returning fire and it was really loud. I was scared but tried to stay focused. We all had our jobs to do.

Our company established a perimeter around wounded members of second platoon. I continued to low crawl to the position of our machine gun up front. I dropped off the ammo and low crawled back to the perimeter. It took



me some time to get back to the rest of the company.

I wondered what happened to my friends LT Walker, Nylander, Moran, English, and Jim Gaul.

Later I learned what happened from Jim Gaul. LT Walker was walking point with Dave Moran carrying the machine gun right behind him. He was followed by assistant gunner Steve English and then by Jim Gaul with the radio.

LT Walker, Dave Moran, and Steve English advanced into an open area. Jim Gaul stopped to clear his radio antenna caught in heavy brush. This momentary stop held him up just a minute. Just as Jim freed the antenna and moved forward the NVA detonated at least two Chicom mines. Dave Moran and Steve English were blown away by the blasts. LT Walker suffered a severe head wound but his life was likely saved by his steel helmet. In a matter of just a few minutes we had two KIAs and eight Americans WIAs.

The explosions tossed Jim to the left. He bounced off a tree and ended up on the right side of the trail on his stomach. He had blood running down his face, ringing in his ears, and was covered with dirt and vegetation. The NVA opened up with AK-47 small arms fire and bullets zipped all around him. He was able to put his radio in front of him for protection. Jim was the first from our company to return fire to the enemy; his radio took several enemy hits. The radio most likely saved his life. Others from first and second platoon rushed up and opened fire on the enemy. Then, the NVA were gone.

Doc Cote rushed to the front and started to tend to Jim's wounds. Jim told Doc to help David and Steve first. Glenn Wright and Bones Bullard also rushed forward to provide assistance.

LT "Mad Dog" Dewing and LT Cunningham called in a roar of artillery fire on the slope and valley occupied by the NVA. Our company held the perimeter while medics worked on the wounded.

Heroes David Alfred Moran and Steve Craig English were KIA in the ambush. The eight wounded included Jim Gaul, LT Walker, and Larry Nylander.

Medevac helicopters could not get in and land to retrieve our wounded due to the dense jungle canopy. A jungle penetrator helicopter was called in and one by one the wounded were lifted out in a basket. The last two Jim Gaul and Nylander, went out together. Nylander had a broken arm and several other wounds. Jim held on to Nylander so he would not fall out of the basket.

As the basket with Jim and Nylander was winched up to the helicopter it began receiving fire from enemy troops below. The pilot took off with Jim and Nylander still in the basket under the chopper. They continued to fly this way until they reached the 18th Surgical Hospital in Quang Tri. All wounded were safely transported and taken to surgery. To my knowledge,

all survived. Only Jim Gaul remained in-country afterwards. All other wounded were transferred to hospitals and then back home.

With all that happened that day I tried to calm down. I read some letters and tried to think of my family back home. I was grateful that several helicopters came into our area and provided support and protection.

Ammo was distributed and we were told to get ready to move again. Second platoon had been cut to almost half. We moved forward and humped a few hours that day. We needed to patrol and offer protection to the area around The Rockpile. I have an appreciation for all who did their jobs that day on that ridge.

I will never forget the heroes of second platoon- David Alfred Moran and Steve Craig English.

The four-month run of Operation Lam Son 719 was costly to Alpha Company. We started with 122 soldiers and returned to Duc Pho with only 88. We suffered eight KIAs and 26 WIAs.

I completed my tour of duty and came home just before Christmas 1971. I tried to put my combat experience on the back burner and get on with my life. I had the great opportunity to work in sales and marketing for many years. I earned a MBA degree. I married my lovely wife Judy. I joined the VFW and served as Senior Vice-Commander.

After retiring in 2012 I had time to reconnect with many of my Alpha Company buddies. I found information about our time in Vietnam from personal accounts and various written reports.

I never forgot those heroes that had fallen from Alpha Company many years ago. I want to reach out to their family members and see if they would like to know how their loved ones had performed their jobs in Vietnam. They gave their all. I will always remember them. This is the least I could do for them.

I did find some families. They seemed to really appreciate the memories I shared with them.

I am also involved in a project with other members of the Americal Division Veterans Association. We locate the families of fallen Alpha Company heroes and present the families with flags to honor the memory of their loved ones. The flags were all flown over the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

Always remember the fallen. Remember the life and good times you shared with them. American troops are serving all over the world. Please show your appreciation for their service.

Thank you to each of you that served in the U. S. military and to all the families that supported them. Thanks for asking yourself, "If not me, then who?"

[This article is based on a Memorial Day 2016 speech delivered by the author at Menifee, California. -Editor]

## Vietnam, My Story

By Jim Dowling

During college at the University of Minnesota-Duluth in 1966-69, I worked at nights at the Kitchi Gammi Club (an old historic men's club) as a waiter and bar tender. The 6 P.M. TV news showed the Huntly-Brinkley News Hour. Every night there was footage of combat in Vietnam. I was an Air Force military brat, so war genes were in my blood; however, from seeing the news, I felt that history was being made and I wanted to experience it. Considering a military career I felt that the Army offered the most advancement potential, especially during a war. I volunteered for infantry and passed the OCS tests. I don't remembering telling my family or their reaction; typically stoic military.

I did Basic Combat Training (BCT) and Advance Infantry Training (AIT) at Ft Ord, California. While waiting for OCS I was put as an assistant at the induction center. Once a week the induction center received new recruits from LA and from North California. The LA bunch were a rag tag group of every kind of person. Northern California recruits were more main stream, nice guys. I would meet them as they arrived at night



Descending mountain to coastal plain

and get them up to the barrack with a lot of yelling and shit. They would be frozen at attention at the foot of their bunks. I would say "at ease", then I would tell them, "relax, what you are going to go through is a bunch of bull shit, go with it, it's ok".

OCS was six months of bullshit, so I just relaxed and went with it. (Interesting, 50 years later, our OCS class has a reunion every 1 1/2 yrs. I am hosting ours this year in San Francisco). I went to Airborne Training and then to Ft Hood, Texas, the arm pit of the army. Someone gave me the phone number of officer's assignment at the Pentagon. I called and by noon that day I had orders for Vietnam via the way of Special Forces Officers Course at Ft Bragg.

I was expecting to be assigned to the 5th Special Forces Group in Vietnam but these units were being turned over to ARVN Rangers. I ended up as an infantry platoon leader with the 3rd / 21st Infantry, 196th Brigade, 23th Infantry Division (Americal). I was soon promoted to platoon leader of the battalion reconnaissance platoon- a group of about 12 personnel. It was difficult to get volunteers to join recon so when not able to get enough the battalion would put out a draft to the companies for recon replacements. The makeup was usually 18 and 19 year old soldiers. Some of our men were told by the judge to "go to jail or go into the army". This made for a young aggressive platoon.

Not much exciting happened when I was with Co B. But one of the wonderful, memorable periods of that time was with Platoon Sergeant Bob Sturgill. We would bring out a bottle of scotch at the beginning of a twelve-day mission and nurse it as long as we could. At night we would each take two slugs of scotch, hold it in our mouth and slowly swallow it, feeling the heat go down our throat and the our bodies relax. I can still taste it and have never had a better straight shot of scotch.

With recon, our mission was to go where the line company could not go without all kinds of fanfare and commotion. We would slip into an area and observe and then engage at the appropriate time; body count. We had a high enemy kill count and a low casualty rate, mostly by booby traps.

One of my early missions with recon was off of LZ Center. We found a covered pit with a cache of multiple munitions which we blew up. A day or so later we lost a man in a skirmish. Again, a day or two later we were back in the same area where we found the cache. We set up our night position there.

Sometime in the night we saw flash lights coming down the mountain to our south. I called in artillery but the lights kept coming then disappeared into a ravine. A while later we heard the clanging of equipment and movement of people with flash lights coming in our direction. I called in artillery but was refused as the ARVN command said it was too close to the "no fire zone". These guys were literally on our door step but they didn't know it. The twelve of us knew if we were discovered it would be a mess.

Down in the coastal plains there was a PF camp (Popular Force camp- like



Making a hazardous river crossing





**Dowling in chopper returning from Antenna Valley**

the National Guard). About 3:00 AM all hell broke loose on the camp as the NVA attacked. All kinds of stuff was going back and forth. I often wondered if the cache we found and destroyed had a bearing on the outcome of the attack.

The next day very near to our location we found a four-foot deep trench that was dug from the high vegetation of the mountain through the low brush of the



**Enemy weapons found in cache**

coastal plain. It was to conceal troop movement into the flats - so well thought out by the enemy.

A day or two later we bumped into an NVA patrol - got one of them. This NVA had an M203 (M16 with a M79 grenade launcher attached). I spotted a NVA lookout about 200 yards up the side of the mountain. I shot the captured M203 at him and hit close enough to blow him off the rock; a great shot.

The next day a six man patrol went out in the morning. I was back with the other men. The patrol was skirting a rice paddy on one side and a jungle on the other. The point man, Art Lerma of Texas, saw a break in the wood line and turned into it instead of taking the path around the rice paddy. He walked right into the flank of an NVA "L" shaped ambush. All hell opened up.

I was at another location. I radioed back to battalion and then ran to the action. Battalion had called in a "Blue Ghost" team. This is an aviation group that stays in the air waiting to be called into action. It consists of a utility helicopter (Huey slick) with a six-man squad of troops aboard, a command ship, a two-man light observation helicopter (LOH), and two gunships. By this time, the bad guys had retreated up the mountain.

The LOH flew above the hill and received hits in its belly from a burst of AK fire. It spiraled down like a rock. The slick dropped the troops near the action and they came under suppressing fire. The slick then ferried six of us to support the men up the hill.

Once there, I took two of my men and moved forward into the enemy lines toward the LOH. The chopper was on its side with two dazed out crew. We pulled them out. Two of us stayed behind and fought to secure their retreat and the area. When it was all over there were dead on both sides.

Reinforcements came to relieve us. As we walked back to the location we were at the night before I became aware of the adrenaline high I was feeling. My whole body was alive without limits.

Suddenly there was an explosion back at the crash site. The troops that came in after us were preparing the LOH to be lifted out by the Jolly Green Giant helicopter. They popped smoke for the pilot's reference. The smoke grenade caught the grass on fire which caught the chopper on fire which caught the fuel on fire. That in itself tells the Catch 22 of the American-Vietnam story, all that effort for nothing. The battalion S3 (operations officer) radioed saying "you are way over your head out there". All this contact was with a major NVA unit that had slipped into the area. I totally agreed with the S3.



**Soldier displays enemy RPG round from cache**



**Dowling calls in artillery on enemy supply movement**

Reverting back to my experience with Company B, we were assigned to meet up with another unit on the other side of a river. My platoon was looking for a river crossing. The point man opened fire and gave out a scream. I was third in line and then up front in a flash. Point man, Larry Flurry from Tallahassee Alabama, was totally shaken, a creature had attacked him. When he fired it retreated into the grass. I fired into this location and when all the thrashing had finally stopped, I pulled out a 60 pound, 7 foot Asian Monitor Lizard. A photo and story was put in the Star and Strips. A couple of years ago our OCS unit had a reunion in Seattle. I was telling the story of the Lizard. Two guys still remember reading and seeing the photo at that time. Now that is impressive marketing.

The 196th Brigade was based at Chu Lai. When the Marines moved out of Da Nang our battalion took over their AO (area of operation) with the fire base located on Hill 510. Our platoon was assigned to recon the area before line units were introduced. To maintain secrecy, we spent a day on foot moving down into the valley. We found bad guys all over. Once we were exposed, we had contact about every day.

On another mission in the valley, we

were up against a mountain with heavy vegetation and scattered rice fields. On a morning patrol we jumped two enemy soldiers but one got away. We were scheduled to get resupplied that morning but it kept getting delayed and delayed. I was extremely worried as we were stuck in the same spot all day waiting for resupplies. I felt the enemy had a chance to set up on us. We usually walked trails, but not this time. I was so concerned I took the point position and my Kit Carson Scout walked slack.

I cut through the jungle, staying off trails. It started to rain and I had glasses on, so the Kit Carson Scout took point and I took slack. We broke onto a little clearing with a trail through it. The Scout hit a trip wire and gave out a yell and ran forward; I turned and ran, colliding into my RTO (radio operator), thus unable to move in any direction. The blast came and threw me into the jungle. I felt the shrapnel slap against my skin like hot mud and then penetrating into my flesh. I just lay there mentally taking inventory of my body starting with legs and moving up.

They were able to get two of us out in a rain just before dark. I was wounded in the leg and finger. I was sent to Camp Zama, Japan to recuperate as infection was certain if I stayed in country. We were helicoptered from the Air Base across Tokyo to the hospital, put on gurneys, tagged and wheeled off to our assigned wards. Our ward, the orthopedic ward, had rows of occupied beds on each side. As we were going in, someone was playing on their boom box, the theme song to the movie "Mash". I felt like I was in the movies. "Mash" was a hit movie and TV series about war, the music was haunting and identified with the Viet Nam era.

Most of the guys were amputees, I was not. An amputee would spend about two weeks there. The idea was to work out infection from the wound before being sent home. Wound dressing were changed twice a day. As the days went by the dressings came off easier. The dressing would stick to the puss of the infection. To change the dressing it would be ripped from the stump. I helped the orderly on a number of occasions; he would put a stick in the patient's mouth, I would hold the stump down and he would rip the dressing off. This was usually the first couple of days for new patients. For pain, Darvon was the medication of choice. It was non-addictive but not very effective in pain suppression. Doctors would come by in the afternoon; a very hard callus group, in and out, that was it.

After three weeks of treatment I was back with recon. My platoon said they got the guy that got me. They booby trapped the site; curiosity killed the cat. Before being wounded I was 110% into the job. Afterwards I found that I was only 90%. It cost me a man. The rotation for officers was supposed to be six months in the



**Sheridan tank encounters difficult movement**





Casualty lifted out on Stokes basket

field; I was 10 months.

My parents retired to Hawaii so that is where I went after Vietnam. I joined the Sheraton Hotel chain and spent many good years with them on several of the islands of Hawaii, Hong Kong and San Francisco. I made my own investments in real-estate and rolled them into a small hotel, Gerstle Park Inn in San Rafael.

In reflecting on my experience in Vietnam, two thoughts stand out: on night guard duty I would close my eyes and try to envision what it was like back home with people walking freely conducting their life and consumerism without serious concerns or restrictions. I could not comprehend that picture. It was foreign, unreal to me. When I was back home I would close my eyes and think back to Vietnam. My mind took me right back to Vietnam in a very real way. I related so completely to it, like it was now. The intensity of a conflict can instill a spike in a person's mind that will overpower the norm.

To carry this thought forward, it felt very normal to be a hunter and to be hunted. It was a natural feeling to carry a weapon for survival. It felt like



Recon sniper displays special rifle



Large lizard causes commotion on the trail

the genes of my primitive ancestors were being activated; it was like I was there before.

The second thought that stands out is the power of focus. I had several psychic experiences where I sensed a future event. In Vietnam it is normal for a person to focus on the now, it is intense and by so doing one's mind is open to receive information that is not normal. I knew I would be wounded but not to what extent. Another instance, I overheard my point man speaking of his fear for tomorrow (we were in a safe area); He lost both legs the next day. Another occurrence was when I looked at one of my men and told myself that he should be dead; he was 30 minutes later. It is interesting that it seemed to only come up on life changing event.

Once back in the real world, I found that I was not as tolerant of people as before; it took a year to calm down. I joined the Army reserves and found that was a healthy transition as I had a network of fellow Vietnam veterans who spoke the same language and we would focus on duties as a team. As I have moved on in life I have found that the Army experiences as given me grounding in handling life's challenges. I believe I am far better for it.

[Photos courtesy of the author.]

## Locator Requests (continued from page 2)

**Looking for:** Wendell K Adams, SSG E-6. We were on Hawk Hill 68-69, 1st Sq 1Cav. He was from Houston Tx. Contact: Jerry Kelley; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Mike Smith of the 23rd Admin Co [AGDR1-2] Americal Division. I know Mike lived in Battle Creek Michigan. I was his pen pal while he served in Vietnam and I have something I would like news of him. Contact: Magdaline Volaitis; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Individuals who served with my father, Lt. Gary Boyum (Signal Corp) from August 1968 - Feb. 1969. 1/52nd Infantry, 198th Light Infantry Brigade. I'm interested in learning more about the events that transpired in August-Sept 1968 on LZ Bowman. Contact: Jennifer Boyum, [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** On October 14, 1970, I was assigned as an emergency replacement forward observer to B/1/52 after the CP group was decimated by an IED along with the Brigade Chaplain. I was with B Co. north of the "Big Bend" on the river west of Quang Ngai for about a month. During that time I got to know a terrific lieutenant who led 3rd platoon. Sometime between 10/21/70 and 11/7/70 he was seriously wounded with a sucking chest wound by another IED. I'd like to find out if he survived but I can't remember his name. Would you have access to the names and ranks of WIAs during that period? Contact: John Henningson; [REDACTED]

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

## BREAKING NEWS 2020 Scholarship Program Update

By William Bruinsma  
Scholarship Chairman

The last month or two have been interesting and have come with many changes to our lives. This has also been true of the Americal Legacy Foundation Scholarship Program. Some applicants had problems obtaining letters of recommendation, transcripts and other items. The program has been as accommodating as possible and recognizes the difficulties presented by social distancing caused by the pandemic.

Now it is the scholarship recipients turn to help the program. There is some uncertainty about when some schools will open and uncertainty of which schools some recipients will attend. Recipients will be responsible for letting the scholarship program

know where and when to send the scholarship funds. Furthermore, the funds must be used by December 31, 2020. It is not expected this will be the new normal.

While this has been an unusual year there are some things that have not changed over the last few years.

1. The application form says that completed applications must be legible. This year 32% of the returned applications were hard to decipher. It is necessary to use items included with the application to obtain further information. Legibility of the application makes a difference in the ranking of applications.

2. Essays are rated on content, grammar and construction. Content and grammar are usually acceptable but, according to the judges, construction leaves much to be desired. It is noted that 28% of the essays did not have the name of the applicant on the essay.

3. It was found that 39% of the essays did not have the title of the essay as a heading to the page. This required me to hunt through the application pages for the essay. This is also considered by the judges when rating the applicants essay.

The above items are all considered when making scholarship awards. The mailing addresses the awards are sent to are also considered. Some addresses are correct but others are the main address of the school and not the particular office at the school that receives student funding. When in doubt I contact the school to obtain the correct address. The applicant should take the time to check with the school and furnish the correct mailing address. Awards must be sent to the proper school address to ensure timely receipt and credit.

I also request that any student who changes schools let me know immediately. The student may also be required to inform the original school of the change in attendance plans and request that the school return the scholarship funds to the Americal Legacy Foundation. A new check will be sent to the new school.

The assistance from scholarship recipients in keeping me informed of developments is greatly appreciated. I may be contacted by email at [REDACTED].





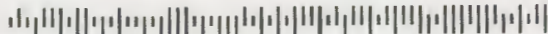
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DR. STEPHEN F. MAXNER

LUBBOCK, TX 79409-1045

### DEDICATION



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

### Eligibility for Membership

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

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

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

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



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

Henderson, Texas 75652

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

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Americal Unit: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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