

April • May • June **2022**



# AMERICAL

## JOURNAL

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



**AMERICAL DIVISION - 80TH ANNIVERSARY  
ACTIVATED IN NEW CALEDONIA ON 27 MAY 1942**

UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS



## 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			
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	Americal Cambena Key Ring	\$2.00			
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	Americal Bottle Opener Key Ring	\$2.00			
2331	Americal Coffee Mug, Blue - Acrylic	\$12.00			
2333	ADVA Challenge Coin	\$10.00			
2337	Americal Nylon Wallet	\$8.00			
2338	Americal Tie	\$23.00			
2340	ADVA Ballpoint Pen, Blue	\$7.00			
2341	Americal Beer Mug	\$15.00			
3512	Americal Division Vietnam Veteran-decal, round, multicolor	\$5.00			
3513	Americal Div Vietnam Proudly Served-decal, oval, blue & white	\$6.00			
3516	Americal Shot Glass	\$4.00			
3517	Americal Magnet Large	\$5.00			
3518	11th LIB Magnet	\$3.00			
3519	196th LIB Magnet	\$3.00			
3520	198th LIB Magnet	\$3.00			
3521	CIB Magnet	\$3.00			
3522	Americal Vietnam History Book	\$28.00			

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

Order by mail, email, or phone:  
PNC Ronald R. Ellis

HENDERSON TX 75652



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.

## 2022 Reunion Hotel and Event Registration By Larry Swank, Reunion Chairman

Americal Division Veterans Association National Reunion  
August 24-28, 2022

Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel  
[REDACTED], Arlington, Virginia 22204

Reunion program and events are located on pages 11-12. A mail-in event registration form is located on page 13. See reunion reservation cancellation provisions below.

**Hotel Reservations:** Use a computer or smartphone or call the hotel directly at [REDACTED], select option 1 (reservations), and ask for the Americal Division Veterans Association special room-block rate of \$119 + tax. This also applies three days before and after the reunion. Complimentary breakfast and free parking at the hotel for ADVA guests. The online reservation link is <https://www.marriott.com/events/start.mi?id=1631827213892&key=GRP>.

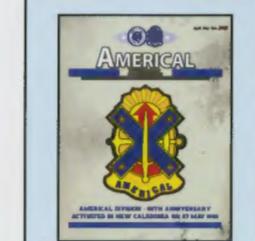
Our reunion rate saves ADVA hotel guests the \$36 fee for daily parking. Standard room rates now run from \$252-\$319. The reunion hotel is on a hill overlooking the Pentagon, Arlington National Cemetery, and Washington, DC. Please note that the free airport shuttle is to the Ronald Reagan National Airport (DCA), just five miles from the reunion site. Please book early and use the Reagan airport if you can. There is also a free hotel shuttle service to Pentagon City shopping and the Washington subway (called METRO).

### Reunion Registration & Tour Planning

Tour highlights include: Washington D.C. City Tour; Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History; National Museum of the United States Army; Smithsonian National Museum of American History; World War II Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, and Vietnam Veterans Memorial. See pages 11-13 for details.

Reunion events are managed by Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. We have used them many times in the past and they are familiar with our needs. Members can register online or by sending in a completed paper registration form. Detailed information and a registration form are located on pages 11-13 of this issue of the *American Journal*. The AFRI reunion link is [www.afr-reg.com/american2022](http://www.afr-reg.com/american2022).

The registration form and other reunion information is also on the ADVA website at [american.org](http://american.org) or upon request you may have this mailed to you. Please contact Larry Swank and leave a message with your mailing address at [REDACTED] (cell) or [REDACTED]



**Cover:** Distinctive Insignia of the Americal Division

### Cancellation of Reservations

**HOTEL:** (Sheraton) Each individual guest must make their own reservations by calling [REDACTED] by August 2, 2022. They must identify themselves as members of the Group. All reservations must be guaranteed and accompanied by a first night room deposit or guaranteed with a major credit card. Guestroom cancellation must occur by 4:00pm the day prior to arrival. If guest does not check-in OR has not cancelled their reservation by 4:00pm the day prior to arrival, one night's room and tax will be charged to the guest's credit card. Canceling your reunion registration and activities does not cancel your hotel reservation.

**ACTIVITIES:** (Armed Forces Reunions) For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date (August 2, 2022), Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less the non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$10 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable AFR registration fee. Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays. Please call [REDACTED] to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities.

Contact: I may be reached by email at [REDACTED] or by phone at [REDACTED].

### Upcoming Unit Reunions

**196 LIB Association, Jul 20-24**  
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; 196th.org

**1/52 Infantry, Oct 20-24**  
Columbus, Georgia

Michael Hertz [REDACTED]

**19 Engineers, Sep 9-11**  
St. Robert, Missouri (Ft. Leonard Wood)  
Betsy Thompson, [REDACTED]

**26 Engineers, Oct 12-16**  
Sierra Vista, Arizona  
Douglas Duston, [REDACTED]



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

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

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**Adjutant's Notes**

By Roger Gilmore, National Adjutant

Thanks to the efforts of PNC Gary Noller, we are picking up new association members at a steady pace. Gary has mailed membership applications to several Americal Division veterans over the past months with an invitation to join the association as a life member at our newly reduced rates. For this past reporting period, we added twenty-four new members. These are very good gains for the membership roster. Of the twenty-four new members joining, fifteen joined for the new life membership rate. Forty-four active annual pay members paid the new Life member rate to upgrade their membership status. Two former members re-instated their annual membership. A salute to members Mark Deam, Bill Norris, NC David Eichhorn, John Worrel and PNC David W. Taylor for sponsoring new members.

Do not put off your upgrade to Life membership. Take some of that 2022 increase in VA disability pay or SSA benefit pay and mail it in. It's an easy process - mail your check or money order, payable to ADVA, to Assistant Finance Officer Ronald Ellis. Ron's mailing address is at the bottom of the back cover of this issue. The current roster shows 58.6 percent of the Vietnam Veterans to be Life members.

When you upgrade to life membership, you will receive a new ADVA life membership card and wall certificate suitable for framing. I've mailed quite a few of these in recent months. The mailing goes out in a 9" by 12" envelope. The USPS has a lot of mail to manage these days with reduced staffs, and that can create handling problems with this size envelope. Sometimes large documents are torn or destroyed when placed in your mail receptacle. If you recently received a life member certificate and membership card that was mutilated during delivery, let me know and I will have another printed and mailed to you. The same goes for the *Americal Journal* publication.

For many annual pay members, this membership payment plan is preferable for your financial situation. This is still a very affordable annual dues amount, and this rate will remain the same for the foreseeable future. We appreciate the prompt response from members with January 2022 renewal dates. By mid-March, 84 percent of those members had mailed their payment to Ronald Ellis. If your dues renewal date is listed as Jan22 on the back cover of this publication (just above your name in the address block), contact me and I will mail you another notice and remittance envelope.

The Taps listing is not extremely lengthy in this issue. The listing does contain the names of Americal Division veterans whose service and contributions to military service and veterans' causes are noteworthy. GEN Colin Powell served as a staff officer in the Americal Division in 1968-69. He went on to serve as Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, overseeing Operation Desert Storm in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Robert L. Wetzel had a distinguished 34-year career in the U.S. Army with combat service in Korea and Vietnam. He was a battalion commander for the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment in Vietnam and rose to the rank of Lieutenant General before retiring from the Army. Garry Augustine was very active in the National Disabled American Veterans organization, serving as Executive Director. His duties included oversight of DAV's National Service and Legislative Programs and acting as the organization's principal spokesperson before Congress. Bradley Jackson served as a combat medic in Vietnam and continued his military medical career after enlisting in the Oregon National Guard. His assignments included medical positions with various Washington State reserve units and overseas assignments during Operation Desert Storm. He retired with the rank of Major after a 22-year career in the Army Reserve.

In closing, a reminder to please notify me when you move. The mailing address for address changes is on the back cover. Emailing or texting your address change is preferred.

As another reminder, membership questions and address changes come to me, Roger Gilmore, National Adjutant. Dues payments go to PNC Ron Ellis, Assistant National Finance Officer. If you wish to contact the *Americal Journal* you may send a message to Gary Noller, Editor-in-Chief, at [REDACTED]. Thank you for your continued interest in the Americal Division Veterans Association.

**New Members Annual Pay****Ron Coverstone**B/3/21st Inf  
Sidney, OH  
★ Mark Deam**Gumercindo Gomez**3/21st Inf  
Springfield, MA  
★ PNC David Eichhorn**Woody Joslin**D/5/46th Inf  
Maplewood, OH  
★ Mark Deam**George Murphy**A/4/3rd Inf  
Blue Earth, MN  
★ John Worrel**Felix Peterson, Jr.**3/82nd Arty B Btry  
Lawton, OK  
★ PNC David Eichhorn**Frank Serso**C/1/46th Inf  
Holbrook, NY  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller**Charles Solis**Div HDQ  
Alsip, IL  
★ Self**Rick Weidman**23rd Med Bn Co C  
Silver Springs, MD  
★ PNC David Eichhorn**Ken Weitzel**198th LIB  
Jacksonville, FL  
★ Bill Norris**New Members Joined as Life****John W. Barnard**C/1/46th Inf  
Huntsville, AL  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller**Gerald P. Fox**5/46th Inf  
Massillon, OH  
★ PNC David W. Taylor**Rodney W. Foy**No Unit Listed  
Jamestown, TN  
★ Self**Archie Hapai, III**557th Trans Co  
Kurtistown, HI  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller**Kim Henningson**E/1/52nd Inf  
Jefferson, SD  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller**Robert Ison**A/4/31st Inf  
Lake, MI  
★ Self**Dennis E. Kearns**HHC/1/46th Inf  
Waynesville, OH  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller**Jackie Lucas**No Unit Listed  
Wichita, KS  
★ Self**Daniel J. Maksymowicz**23rd Admin Co  
Venice, FL  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller**Garland W. McGinnis**C/1/46th Inf  
Eldorado, TX  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller**Tim A. Peterson**C/4/31st Inf  
Millersburg, OH  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller**Robert F. Porter**23rd Admin Co  
Erie, PA  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller**Rodney T. Priess**A/4/3rd Inf  
Sierra Vista, AZ  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller**Noel R. Rewerts**None Provided  
Grundy Center, IA  
★ Self**Eugene R. Ethier, Jr.**C/5/46th Inf  
New Tazewell, TN  
★ PNC David W. Taylor**Michael Silva**123rd Avn Bn Co A  
Aurora, CO  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller**New Life Members****William J. Bechtel**17th Cav H Trp  
Cheekowaga, NY  
★ Les Hines**Bob Brantley**ACSI - HHC  
Visalia, CA  
★ Brian Mulcrone**William A. Burston**23rd Med Bn Co D  
Ft Belvoir, VA  
★ PNC Rollie Castranova**Manuel D. Chavarria, Jr.**C/1/6th Inf  
Big Spring, TX  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller**Joe D. Christian**Div HHC  
Plano, TX  
★ Self**James E. Conway**D/2/1st Inf  
Grosse Point Farms, MI  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller**Robert K. Cowles**E/1st/1st Cav  
New Berlin, IL  
★ PNC Bernie Chase**Gary R. De Bruin**1/6th Inf  
Kaukauna, WI  
★ Paul Hennes**Thomas R. Diggs, Jr.**D/5/46th Inf  
Hampton, VA  
★ Rich Merlin**Richard Dukat**1/52nd Inf  
Syracuse, NY  
★ Don Ballou**James C. Jordan**23rd Admin Co  
Lexington, KY  
★ Self**Robert J. Fossett**A/4/3rd Inf  
Avondale, PA  
★ PNC Rollie Castranova**Kenneth H. Fritz**176th AHC  
Sacramento, CA  
★ Self**Eugene Gamache**1/6th Inf  
Cumberland, RI  
★ PNC Larry Watson**Jose Garza**A/1/20th Inf  
Somerset, TX  
★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis**William Gilliland**23rd MP Co  
Placerville, CA  
★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis**P. Earle Gleason**D/5/46th Inf  
Penn Yan, NY  
★ PNC Bernard Carroll**Thomas C. Greime**52nd MI Det  
Bellevue, WA  
★ Self**John Haas**A/5/46th Inf  
Woolwich Twpshp, NJ  
★ Les Hines**Jim Hamilton**5/46th Inf  
Florence, MT  
★ Thomas P. Rose**Paul S. Miller**E/2/1st Inf  
Baldwinsville, NY  
★ Roy Anderson**Roland Moore**3/16th Arty Btry B  
Haines City, FL  
★ Self**Leandro Navarro, Jr.**D/1/6th Inf  
Arlington, TX  
★ Tommy Acosta**Terry L. Kanzler**196th LIB  
Selah, WA  
★ Self**David E. Kasper**C/4/21st Inf  
Grand Forks, ND  
★ PNC Bernie Chase**Walter P. Keely, Jr.**198th LIB  
Strasburg, PA  
★ Self**Paul Lefkowitz**17th Cav H Trp  
Great Neck, NY  
★ PNC Bernie Chase**David A. Lutz**D/4/3rd Inf  
Fairmont, MN  
★ Les Hines**Peter Lutz**198th LIB HHC  
Ridgefield, CT  
★ R. Marceau**Stephen Maluk**26th Engrs Co E  
Staten Island, NY  
★ PNC Gary L. Noller**John L. Mansfield**A/4/31st Inf  
Sioux City, IA  
★ Les Hines**Eugene F. McGrory**198th LIB  
Bayonet Point, FL  
★ Self**Paul S. Miller**E/2/1st Inf  
Baldwinsville, NY  
★ Roy Anderson**Rhiney H. Hyde**4/31st Inf  
Sweetwater, TX  
★ Cameron Baird**~ continued on page 10**

## Americal Legacy Foundation Report

By Roger Gilmore, Foundation President

### americalfoundation.org Website

Since early October 2021, nine orders have been placed for items in the Legacy Store. Most are for the book *Under The Southern Cross*. This book is a complete history of the Americal Division in the Pacific Theater of World War II. Many of these orders are from individuals who are not ADVA members. We see interest in Americal Division history from non Americal Division veterans. Other Legacy Store items available are the 2022 calendar and the ALF challenge coins. The current calendar and coins can be ordered directly from Gary Noller. Call or send an email with your order to gnoller@aol.com or 830-377-8115.

Although orders are being placed through the Legacy Store, many of those placing the order are not following through with the payment and remit to instructions. This means that the orders are not going to Gary. Once an order is placed and the store checkout process is completed online, the purchaser will receive an email with payment and remit to instructions. The email instructions direct the purchaser to remit payment by check or money order and mail to Gary with a copy of the email. The orders not reaching Gary may be due to incorrect email address entered in the order, or the purchase simply not wanting to provide an email address to prevent receiving future emails. Since there seems to be a disconnect with this order process, we will look at revamping the Legacy Store order process.

I am usually able to respond to inquiries coming through the Contact Us link for ADVA reunion or other program information. If not, I will refer the inquirer to one of our subject experts (Americal history or scholarship) for a response to the question or issue. Inquiries for the ADVA locator program or address changes should go through the Americal web site, [www.americal.org](http://www.americal.org). The same Contact Us link is available on that site for inquiries.

### Americal Legacy Calendar – 2022 Edition

Donations received through the 2022 calendar mailing totaled right at \$28,000 at the end of March. Again, a fantastic response from ADVA members who continue to steadfastly support our memorialization programs. The 2022 edition of the Americal Legacy Calendar was expertly designed and created by our staff members Gary Noller and creative designer Lisa Anderson and mailed with the 4th Quarter 2021 Americal Journal.

If you have not received your Americal Legacy Foundation 2022 calendar yet, please contact me and I will mail another. I have had a few members contact me (as late as mid-February) and advised they did not receive one. So apparently the USPS is still experiencing some difficulties in getting mail to the intended destinations. In some cases, the member advised the calendar arrived in a mutilated condition. If this happened to your calendar mailing, we would send you a replacement immediately.

These donations are vitally important for our ongoing monuments construction program. Since the start of this fiscal year (July 1, 2021), our outlays for various monument programs has totaled just over \$26,000.00. These costs include the actual monument construction (most going to Keith Monument Company) and contractor expense for concrete base construction. We cannot say it enough - **THANKS** - to

all who loyally support the program.

During the remainder of the fiscal year, we expect to have some expenses related to refurbishment and restoration of existing monuments that honor the legacy of the Americal Division. Some of those projects are covered in updates written in this article.

### Americal Monument Programs

We are slowly seeing progress in the Foundation's monuments placement program for national VA cemeteries. In the past two months, we have received approval for placement at two national cemeteries where proposals were submitted to the cemetery director. This is truly encouraging as this final approval can drag on for weeks. Another aspect of this process for placing the monument at the cemetery site that can be long and time consuming is locating a contractor to pour the concrete base and set the monument upon delivery to the cemetery.

Pouring the concrete base is a small job for a concrete contractor or company, so locating the right company or contractor who will take on the job and do it properly requires time and a lot of searches. The search is primarily conducted online. In some cases the cemetery staff's position is to not provide local contractor referrals, so we are on our own to find a contractor. Occasionally, we begin the proposal process over when our POC at the cemetery is transferred to another position or another cemetery location.

The cemetery assigns the proposal review to another staff member, so the education process begins again. In some cases, the proposal review process is put on hold until a new cemetery director is appointed. This has happened to our POC Ron Krul for the monument placement package at the Western New York National Cemetery at Corfu, New York. Ron advises his contact there is transferred to another location, and we don't yet know who the new cemetery POC will be. We were advised in late January there has been a change in the directorship at Natchez National Cemetery in Mississippi; the assistant director has taken over responsibility for our proposal and received our documentation.

In the prior report I detailed Foundation director Ronald Ellis' efforts to contact several national cemetery sites and present our program and placement proposal. In early January, a complete proposal document package was sent to the POC at each of these sites. We have received receipt acknowledgment for the proposal and expect reviews and a response from these sites in the next few months.

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

**Washington Crossing National Cemetery (Newtown, PA)** - Still no word from the Philadelphia, PA district office on this proposal. I received an email from the cemetery director in late March stating he has heard nothing and will start pushing the project through the district office once again. He indicated the district office has reached out to him about the proposal and he is starting to work on refreshing the package with pictures of recent Americal monument installations. Hopefully, with spring here and some interest from the district office, we can get approval here by mid-year.

**Riverside National Cemetery (Riverside, CA)** - Our POC at this cemetery, ADVA member Steve Mackey, advised in late January the acting director has no power to review or comment on our monument placement proposal. Any



review of the proposal will have to be undertaken by the new director. Steve has been advised once the new director is in place and oriented to his job duties, the cemetery will arrange a meeting to review the package.

**Fort Jackson National Cemetery (Columbia, SC)** - We received word from the cemetery director in late January that the Southeast District director approved the Americal monument placement proposal. Two concrete contractors in the Columbia area indicated they would look at the site and submit a bid. At the end of March, I planned to be in Columbus, GA for the 196th LIB monument dedication ceremony. After the dedication ceremony, I will travel to Columbia to meet with these two contractors at the placement site to discuss the work and their interest in the job. More on this monument site in a future issue.

**Fort Snelling National Cemetery (Minneapolis, MN)** - A package has been forwarded to VA national office for approval. It is approved at the local level. This has been stalled for several weeks but we were advised by Ft. Snelling staff that approval at the national level of VA would take months.

**Fort Bliss National Cemetery (El Paso, TX)** - Installation is approved for the Ft. Bliss National Cemetery. Gary Noller is in the process of contacting contractors to perform the work at the cemetery.

**Fort Polk, LA** - Contractors installed the monument at the end of December 2021. Plans are to conduct a monument dedication ceremony later in 2022. Mission accomplished.

**Fort Rucker, AL** - In February, invitations to a monument dedication ceremony for the Americal Division Aviation monument were mailed to 55 ADVA members who lived in proximity to Fort Rucker. Expectations were that those living within a reasonable driving distance to Fort Rucker would attend and RSVP for a headcount. I received less than five confirmations to attend by mid-March, so unfortunately the ceremony had to be canceled due to small attendance numbers.

**Missouri National Vietnam Memorial** - First, a correction on the Perryville, Missouri Vietnam Wall memorial and Museum. In the last issue I reported our donation amount for this monument was \$10,000.00. That figure was incorrect. The donation amount was \$7,500. In January, we received word the memorial bench was in place along the memorial East Wall. Photos on this page show the bench placement.

### TTU - Vietnam Archive Project

Texas Tech University houses a vast trove of Vietnam

War related official and personal records. Student interns at the university do most of the work transcribing or scanning materials furnished by historians or individuals. ADVA Historian Les Hines, Americal Journal Editor-In-Chief Gary Noller, and many ADVA members have provided much of the Americal Division's official history records and personal memorabilia that now reside in the Americal Division portal on the archive web site.

Most useful for those wanting to research the archive for Americal Division Vietnam history are editions of the in-country periodicals Americal Newsletter (primarily 1968), the Southern Cross (May 1968 is the earliest I see) and the ADVA publication Americal Journal. Some indexes show the Americal Journal but are not digitized because they are from private collections and copyrighted. Any document available for online viewing is tagged with a .pdf icon in the left-hand portion of the index. Some unit newsletters are available for viewing (listed at the bottom of the link page).

### Scholarship Program

Foundation Scholarship Chairman Bill Bruinsma conducted the 2022 Scholarship raffle mailing in late March. I received my mailing the third week in March. All ADVA members on the mailing roster should receive the notification with raffle tickets and donation envelope (blue this year). We expect the program to be enthusiastically supported as it has been in past years. Many children and grandchildren of ADVA members have benefited from the program in past years and been able to pursue their higher academic goals. All funds raised by this mailing and raffle program go to those deserving students who submit the necessary application form and essay document.



**196th LIB Dedicates Memorial at Walk of Honor**

By Gary L. Noller

Photos by Roger Gilmore

March 29 is known as National Vietnam War Veterans Day. It was the day chosen to dedicate the 196th Light Infantry Brigade memorial statue at the Walk of Honor at the National Infantry Museum. The location is near a gate to the entrance of Ft. Benning at Columbus, Georgia.

The seven-feet high statue depicts two Chargers exiting the battlefield after a long fight. One soldier helps his wounded brother walk to a safe location to get much needed aid. The statue is cast in bronze and will last decades and centuries into the future.

The 196th Infantry Brigade is the Indo-Pacific Training Support Brigade and headquartered at Ft. Shafter, Hawaii. Its training mission covers American Samoa, Alaska, Arizona, the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas, Guam, the Hawaiian Islands, the Republic of Korea, Japan, and states along the Pacific Coast.



**Sarah Hahn unveils her work with assistance from Bill Stull.**

Colonel Ryan O'Connor and Command Sergeant Major Evan Lewandowski, current brigade leaders, attended the dedication ceremony and greeted 196th LIB veterans. COL O'Connor spoke at the morning breakfast and thanked veterans for leading the way for him and those he commands.

Don DeGain, Vice-president, and Dave Eichhorn, Secretary-Treasurer, represented the 196th LIB Association leadership. The association began planning the monument in 2017. Approximately 50 veterans, spouses, and friends attended the ceremony.

MG (Retired) Jerry A. White, Chairman of the National Infantry Association, was a guest of honor. White led the effort to create the National Infantry Museum at Ft. Benning. White served two tours in Vietnam. This included one with the 11th LIB.

The statue was designed and sculpted by Sarah E. Hahn of Columbus, Ohio. In 2012 Hahn earned a Master of Fine



**CSM Lewandowski, Don DeGain, Sarah Hahn, Dave Eichhorn, Colonel O'Connor.**

Arts degree from the University of Kentucky. During the ceremony she unveiled her work and received thanks and praise from many admirers.

Hahn gave much attention to the detail of the uniforms and equipment depicted by the sculpture. A Vietnam jungle uniform was provided to her by John Murphy, 1/1 Cavalry veteran. John attended the dedication and proudly beamed with pride that he was able to contribute to its creation.

The completed and installed statue along with a companion plaque cost nearly \$90,000. It was paid for by donations from veterans as well as by major contributions from the 196th LIB Association and the Americal Legacy Foundation.

The Walk of Honor is a short walk from the National Infantry Museum. It features approximately 100 memorials to Infantry units. The Americal Division memorial was dedicated in 2012 and the first achievement of the Americal Legacy Foundation. By coincidence, the 196th memorial stands next to the Firebase Mary Ann memorial. The Walk of Honor is now full and expansion plans have been discussed.



**Veterans attended the memorial dedication ceremony.**

**Looking for:** Paul N. Yurchak, LTC USA Retired, Captain 1968. 3/21 "Gimlets" under USMC Operational Control in Joint USMC-Army Defense of Dong Ha 1968. Contact: LTC WL Shade USA Retired [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** George Sherrill, Army, Vietnam War, 1966, Staten Island New York. Contact: Marsh Bibb-Goggans Johnson; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Guys I served with D/4/31 in 1968-1969. Contact: Richard Czop; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Anyone who knows me. Arthur Frederick, alias TTBear, 11th Brigade, 3/1st Infantry, 1968-1969, Bravo Company 1st platoon. Contact: Arthur Frederick; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Information on PFC Boyd Lee Anderson 164th Infantry from NC died March 1, 1945 "on Leyte" according to his sister. Contact: Kevin White; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Friends. I have an uncle from Puerto Rico that served with B Co 4/21 Americal Division in 1968 (Vietnam). He deployed from Hawaii to Vietnam and spent 11 months there. His name is Esau Orengo-Santiago. He currently lives in Yauco, PR. Told me he has a friend that served with him named Wilfredo Barroso who was injured badly but survived and lives in Puerto Rico, too. Anybody served with them please contact me. Contact: Esau Orengo-Santiago; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Anyone who knew Joseph A Williams who was in 16th signal battalion, 56th artillery, Americal division 1968-May 1969. Contact: Joseph Williams; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Anyone who knew my husband, PFC Charles F Hornat Jr 196th LIB 544th MP Platoon 196th Light Inf. Bde Task Force Oregon 1967 then transferred to 23rd MP Co 23 Inf Div Americal 3rd Plt late 1967-68. Contact: Lorraine Hornat; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Information on my father, Samuel Carl Starling, who was in a field artillery battalion of the Americal Division. He was on Guadalcanal, Bouganville, and Philippines. Contact: William Starling; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Any information regarding my grandfather Claude Willis (CW) Lee from Kentucky. He was in 132nd Infantry, Company E. He was killed April 19, 1945 during a battle on Cebu. Contact: Jason Givens; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Ed Ball, Co. C, 198th LIB. We were in Chu Lai together from 6/68 to 6/69. Contact: Pat Cookston; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Someone on Hill 65 in D 1/82 8" gun. Contact: Michael Franis; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Info on my dad, Leslie N. Gross Jr, who served with the Americal division on Guadalcanal and many other Islands in the South Pacific during WW2. He was eventually evacuated due to severe malaria. Contact: Les Gross; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Someone I served with in 1969/70. His name is Jim Siegel and we were in E Company 1/46th Battalion 196th LIB. He was a Sgt & I was his SSgt. Contact: James Morrissey; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Sp4 Michael Williams from Hawaii and is of Hawaiian decent. We were both with 23rd Infantry HHC 196th Como Hawk Hill 70-71. He would be about 70 years old. I was sent to LZ Center for a few months and upon my return he was gone, may have rotated. Contact: Jim Wiese; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Pat Hurley who I served with in 1969/70 on quad 50. I know he lived in Covina, CA after the Army but have lost touch. He was my best friend during the war and I'd really like to catch up with him. Contact: Bob Douglass; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** My BCT Drill Sgt from back in 1973- SSG Eugene Chavez. He was my DS (Ft Ord) A 4-3 5th Plt. Jul-Aug 1973. I just wanted to reach out to let him know he made a difference in my life as well as my two buddies. He wore a Americal Combat patch. Contact: Bobby Wingate; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** My gunner. I nicknamed him "Barney". A 3/82. Checking on "Barney" one night found him burning up with fever. Called for "dustoff". "Barney" had malaria. Sent him to Japan. Contact: Larry McDonald; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Information about my uncle, Robert Lee Mitchell, who served A Co, 3/21st Infantry. He was killed in action on 03/18/1969. Any pictures, resting place or information would be greatly appreciated. Contact: Derrick Mitchell; [REDACTED]

**Looking for:** Anyone who knew SP4 David (Doc) Styles, KIA March 29, 1969. I am from Philomath, Oregon. I was the mayor of the town where SP4 David "Doc" Styles is from. I worked together along with a number of Americal Veterans to put together this newspaper article remembering Doc Styles who was KIA in an NVA Ambush 53 years ago today (March 29th). A link to the article is provided here for anyone else who served with or knew Doc Styles. <https://philomathnews.com/love-of-learning-remembering-david-styles-on-vietnam-veterans-memorial-day>. Contact: Eric Niemann; [REDACTED]

~ continued from page 5

**Jonathan A. Neil**  
4/21st Inf  
Sun City Center, FL  
★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

**Vernon D. Pesek**  
26th Engrs D Co  
Stanton, MO  
★ John W. Anderson

**Anthony J. Romeo, Jr.**  
D/4/21st Inf  
Pullman, WV  
★ Self

**Kenneth E. Sandquist**  
1/52nd Inf  
Cambridge, IA  
★ PNC Bernie Chase

**Scott Schuelke**  
5/46th Inf  
Storm Lake, IA  
★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

**John W. Small**  
123rd Avn Bn HHC  
Springfield, MO  
★ BPNC Gary L. Noller

**Charles N. Summers**  
A/3/1st Inf  
London, OH  
★ PNC Richard Scales

**Paul W. Watkins**  
A/5/46th Inf  
Hamburg, NY  
★ PNC Ronald R. Ellis

**Thomas J. Williams**  
A/1/6th Inf  
Avon, CT  
★ Self

#### Re-Instituted Members

**Eugene P. Hardy**  
1/14th Arty Btry C  
North Bay, NY  
★ Self

**Ed Voss**  
1/82nd Arty Btry A  
Hot Springs Village, AR  
★ George Salcido

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

**Corrections  
(Unit & Hometown)**  
Vietnam Veterans

**Juan Moreno**  
D/4/31st Inf  
Aquada, PR  
November 17, 2021

**Clyde Rosin**  
1st/1st Cav C Trp  
De Pere, WI  
November 30, 2021

#### World War II Veterans

**Jack Dayan** \*  
164th Inf Rgmt  
Tampa, FL  
Date Unknown

**Nick Zonas** \*  
132nd Inf Rgmt Co G  
Ocala, FL  
Date Unknown

#### Vietnam Veterans

**Garry Augustine**  
D/1/6th Inf  
Chester, MD  
★ March 14, 2022

**Everett H. Barracough** \*  
57th Inf Plt (Scout Dog)  
Staten Island, NY  
Date Unknown

**Ken Bosc** \*  
A/4/21st Inf  
Terre Haute, IN  
Date Unknown

**Martin Chowsnski**  
3/16th Arty C Btry  
Rockford, IL  
December 2021

**Frank E. Cohee, Jr.** \*  
23rd S&T Bn  
Lakeland, FL  
October 15, 2019

**Gary Crechika**  
C/1/6th Inf  
Litchfield, CT  
July 30, 2020

**Don L. Hayes**  
A/1/6th Inf  
Palmyra, TN  
March 1, 2022

**Bradley C. Jackson** \*  
HHC/5/46th Inf  
Canby, OR  
January 6, 2022

**Richard Kinder**  
198th LIB  
Procious, WV  
March 27, 2022

**Jimmy R. Loman**  
C/1/6th Inf  
San Mateo, CA  
February 24, 2021

**Stephen G. Monroe** \*  
198th LIB HHC  
Conover, NC  
Date Unknown

**Timothy J. Nicholson** \*  
11th LIB  
Long Beach, CA  
Date Unknown

**Roger Osman**  
D/4/3rd Inf  
Residence Unknown  
February 19, 2022

**Alan E. Owens** \*  
3/16th Arty B Btry  
Peoria, AZ  
December 15, 2020

**Colin Powell** \*  
Div HDQ  
Bethesda, MD  
October 18, 2021

**Ruben Quintana**  
C/1/6th Inf  
Taos, NM  
November 6, 2021

**Tommy J. Skiens** \*  
C/4/3rd Inf  
John Day, OR  
September 3, 2021

**Ronald R. Richardson** (COL)  
5/46th Inf  
Clermont, FL  
January 19, 2022

**Walter J. Terkowski**  
3/16th Arty C Btry  
Cour de Alene, ID  
September 2021

**Harding A. Travis, Jr.** \*  
174th AHC  
Skippers, VA  
Date Unknown

**Jack Vater** \*  
A/5/46th Inf  
Owen, WI  
March 18, 2022

**Erich Weidner**  
196th LIB  
Chanhassen, MN  
December 15, 2021

**Robert (Sam) L. Wetzel** \*  
HHC/4/31st Inf  
Columbus, GA  
January 20, 2022

#### World War II Veterans

**Violet Kueker** \*  
Waterloo, IA  
December 1, 2018

#### \* ADVA Member

#### ADVA MEMBERSHIP 31 March 2022

World War II	228
Vietnam	2,461
Cold War	4
Associate Members	182
<b>Total Members</b>	<b>2,875</b>

#### AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION REUNION

AUGUST 24-28, 2022

SHERATON PENTAGON CITY – ARLINGTON, VA

#### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

##### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24

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

##### THURSDAY, AUGUST 25

8:00am - 11:00am **Reunion Registration Open**  
City Tour & Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History  
9:15am - 3:00pm **Reunion Registration Open**  
2:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration Open**  
4:00pm - 6:00pm **Meet & Greet/Cash Bar.**

##### FRIDAY, AUGUST 26

8:00am - 11:00am **Reunion Registration Open**  
National Museum of the US Army/Smithsonian National Museum of American History  
9:00am - 5:00pm **Reunion Registration Open**  
3:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration Open**  
5:00pm - 6:00pm Banquet Table Reservation Sheets will be collected at Reunion Registration Desk.

##### SATURDAY, AUGUST 27

8:00am - 9:45am **Executive Council Meeting**  
8:00am - 10:00am **Reunion Registration Open**  
10:00am - 11:30am **Association Business Meeting**  
12:30pm - 3:30pm **Memorial Tour**  
5:00pm - 5:45pm **First Time Attendee Reception**  
6:00pm - 7:00pm **Social Hour/Seating**  
7:00pm - 11:00pm **Banquet Dinner**

##### SUNDAY, AUGUST 28

Farewells and departures

*Breakfast is included in the room rate for up to two (2) guests per room. Breakfast will be served each morning in the South Ballroom from 7am-9am*

Like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/armedforcesreunions](https://www.facebook.com/armedforcesreunions)

#### CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date (August 2, 2022), Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less the non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$10 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable AFR registration fee. Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays. Please call [REDACTED] to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities.

**TOUR DESCRIPTIONS****CITY TOUR/SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**

Start the day with the sites of Washington DC. Enjoy a driving tour of Washington, D.C. Ride by the Lincoln Memorial, Jefferson Memorial, WWII Memorial, the Mall, Capitol Building, Washington Monument, White House, and other notable monuments and federal buildings. At the conclusion of the city tour, head to the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. The museum contains the largest natural history collection in the world. Be sure to visit the Hall of Mammals, Ocean Hall and many others. Enjoy lunch at one of the cafés on-site.

9:15am, board bus, 4:00pm back at the hotel  
Includes bus and guide. Lunch on your own.  
\$58/per person

**Friday, August 26, 2022****NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE US ARMY/SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY**

The Museum celebrates over 240 years of Army history and honor our nation's Soldiers – past, present, and future – regular Army, Army Reserves, and the Army National Guard. It's a massive undertaking led by a joint effort between the U.S. Army and the non-profit organization, The Army Historical Foundation (AHF). It is a technological marvel incorporating the latest advances in museum exhibits, while providing advanced educational opportunities that will capture the attention of visitors old and young. The Museum sits on 84 acres at Fort Belvoir, VA, less than 30 minutes south of our nation's capital. The 185,00sf main building displays selections from the Army Art collection, artifacts, documents, and images. The vast majority of these rare and priceless artifacts have never been seen by the American people. Enjoy lunch at the Museum Café and don't forget to stop in the Museum Store. Board the bus to head to the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. The museum collects, preserves and displays the heritage of the United States in the areas of social, political, cultural, scientific and military history.

9:00am board bus, 5:00pm back at hotel.  
Includes bus and escort. Lunch on your own  
\$57/per person

**Saturday, August 27, 2022**  
**Memorial Tour**

Board the bus for a stop at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. This US national memorial honors service members of the U.S. armed forces who fought in the Vietnam War. In the same area you can also visit the Vietnam Women's memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial and the World War II Memorial.

12:30pm Board bus, 3:30pm back at hotel  
Includes bus and escort  
\$37/per person

*Please be at the bus boarding area at least fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled time. All tours require a minimum of thirty-five people. Driver and Guide gratuities are not included in tour prices.*

**NOTE: There is a limit of one hydraulically lifted scooter or wheelchair per handicap accessible bus. If you use a scooter but can climb the steps to board the bus, either you and/or a person traveling with you must be able to put the scooter in the bus's luggage compartment. Due to liability issues, drivers and tour guides cannot assist with scooters.**

**Fellow ADVA members will help with scooter or wheelchair loading and unloading.**

**AMERICAL DIVISION VETERANS ASSOCIATION ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM 2022**

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. You may register online and pay by credit card at on the reunion web site at [www.afr-reg.com/americal2022](http://www.afr-reg.com/americal2022) (3.5% will be added to total). You may also register by completing the form below. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before August 2, 2022. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.

**Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.**

**Norfolk, VA 23510**  
**ATTN: AMERICAL**

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received \_\_\_\_\_  
Inputted \_\_\_\_\_ Nametag Completed \_\_\_\_\_

<b>CUT-OFF DATE IS 8/2/22 – reservations accepted after that date by space available</b>			
<b>TOURS</b>			
THURSDAY 8/25: City Tour/Smithsonian Natural History Museum - Member/Spouse/Guest	\$58		\$
THURSDAY 8/25: City Tour/Smithsonian Natural History – WWII Member/Spouse or Escort	\$0		\$0
THURSDAY 8/25: Meet and Greet – Member/Spouse/Guest	\$26		
THURSDAY 8/25: Meet and Greet – WWII Member/Spouse or Escort	\$0		
FRIDAY 8/26: US Army Museum/Smithsonian American History Museum -Member/Spouse/Guest	\$57		\$
FRIDAY 8/26: US Army Museum/Smithsonian American History Museum- WWII Member/Spouse or Escort	\$0		\$0
SATURDAY 8/27: Vietnam, Korean and WWII Memorial Tour - Member/Spouse/Guest	\$37		\$
SATURDAY 8/27: Vietnam, Korean and WWII Memorial Tour – WWII Member/Spouse or Escort	\$0		\$0
<b>MEALS</b>			
SATURDAY 8/27: BANQUET - Please select your entrée(s)			
• Chicken Parmesan	\$49		\$
• Sliced London Broil	\$49		\$
• Vegetarian Entrée	\$49		\$
WWII Vet, Spouse and/or Escort Banquet Dinner at no charge – Please select an entrée: <input type="checkbox"/> Beef <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian	\$0		\$0
<b>REQUIRED PER PERSON REGISTRATION FEE</b>			
WWII Americal Veteran plus Spouse or escort free	\$0		\$0
ADVA Member	\$25		\$
Non-member, Fee includes one-year ADVA membership dues & benefits	\$35		\$
Spouse and/or Guests (each)	\$25		\$
Total Amount Payable to <b>Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.</b>			\$

**PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WANT YOUR NAMETAG TO READ**

MAIN ATTENDEE: FIRST \_\_\_\_\_ LAST \_\_\_\_\_  
UNIT \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS WITH UNIT (YYYY) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ 1st TIME ATTENDEE? YES  NO

Please indicate your era - WWII  Panama  Vietnam

SPOUSE/ESCORT NAMES (IF ATTENDING) \_\_\_\_\_

GUEST NAMES \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN ATTENDEE STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PH. NUMBER (\_\_\_\_\_) - \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS \_\_\_\_\_

*(Sleeping room requirements must be conveyed by attendee directly with hotel)*

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

ARRIVAL DATE \_\_\_\_\_ DEPARTURE DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
ARE YOU STAYING AT THE HOTEL? YES  NO  ARE YOU FLYING?  DRIVING?  RV?

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

## Capturing Charlie

By Gerald Fox

My first platoon leader in Vietnam, Lieutenant Olson, recently told me that if you ask five guys what happened during any of our combat missions, you are likely to hear five different versions. It's no wonder. Each of us had our own unique vantage point during the mission, and now each of us has fading memories of what actually happened 52 years ago. But I will give this story my best effort and hope that it relates things closely to what actually occurred with Bravo company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, 198th Brigade during the first days of Operation Russel Beach on the Batangan Peninsula.

The Batangan Peninsula was located 22 miles south of Chu Lai on the South China Sea. It was regarded by most as one of the deadliest areas of operation in Vietnam, mostly because of the number of land mines that had been planted by the VC during their many years of occupation.

The terrain was hilly to flat, and divided into squares by a mesh of double-row hedges that contained a trench between them just large enough for Charlie to maneuver. These hidden trenches were interconnected to a vast network of tunnels and underground fortifications that contained barracks, hospitals, and food and weapons caches. The peninsula was occupied primarily by the 48th Viet Cong Regiment. This unit was regarded as one of the most effective enemy fighting forces throughout all of Vietnam due in part to their skill at planting minefields.

The goal of Operation Russel Beach was to drive out the 48th Regiment once and for all, while repatriating the civilians still living there. It had been tried in previous years with Operation Piranha but the effort was not sustained and the VC had swept back in just as fast as they had been driven out. The strategy of Operation Russel Beach was to squeeze the 48th Viet Cong Regiment between a long line of US army troops called a blocking force setup along the Chau Me Dong river and a large force of US Marines making an amphibious assault on the coast of the South China Sea, then sweeping inward onto the peninsula.

Feeling the pressure, most of the VC forces would flee before getting trapped, allowing the Army to begin its own sweep towards the coast, gathering civilians along the way to be sent to repatriation camps in the nearby city of Quang Ngai. Then, mass bombings by aircraft, supplemented by the 16-inch guns of the battleship New Jersey, would target and hopefully decimate the enemy infrastructure. Weeks later, the repatriated civilians would be returned to their villages to resume a more normal life under improved conditions offered by the South Vietnamese government.

Operation Russel Beach launched on January 13, 1969 on a wet dreary morning. But Bravo Company actually started its mission two days earlier on January 11. Although I had no idea at the time, I discovered recently in David

Taylor's book "Our War", that my company and a couple of others in the brigade were selected to be part of an early deception force. This was to lead the enemy to believe that US troops were deploying to various locations other than the Batangan Peninsula. I hope the plan worked, because it came at a big cost.

It was early morning and I remember third platoon shuffling around making final preparations on the rain-soaked helipad at LZ Gator. We had a new commanding officer (CO) and he insisted that we paint our faces with camouflage paint and tuck leafy branches into the sides of our ruck sacks to help hide us from the enemy ..... like that was really going to work. Old Charlie could see US troops coming from a mile away. We weren't happy about these measures but we followed orders just the same.

Bravo company packed heavy with four days of C-rations and plenty of extra ammo. Everyone carried his own M72 rocket launcher and a couple of bandoliers of ammo for the M60's. It felt like we were headed for something big, but third platoon was not briefed at all on details about our mission. I found out many years later that such information was kept very hush for fear that Viet Cong spies back at headquarters would gain vital information and send it to the enemy, thereby spoiling the entire operation. So, information was given out on a "need to know" basis, and a grunt like me didn't have to know much more than to jump off the chopper and follow orders from there. And that is how the day went.

We landed someplace out in the boonies, but nowhere close to the Batangan Peninsula. I recall that day started out wet and rainy and ended hot and humid. We patrolled all day in a company column formation through rice paddies, streams, swamps and heavy brush. In January, night comes early, so about 3:00 PM or 4:00 PM, our CO spotted a grassy hilltop ahead, and thinking it would offer a good site for bivouac, took an advanced team up the hill for a closer look. It was soon afterwards that a large explosion erupted from their location, accompanied with small arms fire coming from the tree line across the marsh. Word came down it was a mortar but why not more than one? We heard there were many casualties and that a Dustoff was called.

Third platoon was ordered up the hill to form a perimeter around the Dustoff site. I was on point and ordered to lead first squad into position and form a part of the perimeter. No sooner had I taken a few steps, someone yelled out "mine". So now I'm on point in three feet of saw grass. I pushed the grass aside with the barrel of my M16, examining the ground carefully to determine where I would place my next footstep. The guys behind me stepped where I stepped.

Then, I put my foot down on what I thought was safe ground when I heard and felt "click". I stepped on a detonation device. But it must have been a dud. That moment was and still is the most terrifying moment of

my life. My knees literally shook. I told the guy behind me what had just happened and to avoid where I had just stepped. We proceeded through the mine field until first squad found their firing positions. I found my position and set my ruck sack down carefully because there were two unplaced mines just laying on top of the grass only two feet from my right knee. I don't know if the VC had just dropped them in their haste or if the mines might have been used as bait for a booby trap. I wasn't going to try and find out, so I just left them alone.

It wasn't too long until the Dustoff arrived. We heard there were a two KIA and five more wounded. I remember the chopper hovering down to pick them up when all the sudden I heard small arms fire and another mine exploded. The chopper took off abruptly and circled overhead until the LZ could be re-secured. That Dustoff and two more arrived to carry off our wounded and dead. I heard the total casualties were four KIA and nine wounded, many grievously.

Among the wounded was our new CO; he received a severe hand injury. He refused to board the Dustoff and stayed overnight with his men. I spoke to his RTO about a year ago who told me that the CO had went into shock overnight and became incoherent. He was dusted off the next morning with two other troops and we never saw him again. From that point on, my platoon leader, Lieutenant Olson, was appointed acting CO of Bravo Company by our battalion commander, Lt. Colonel Richardson.

After the dust-offs, Bravo Company proceeded off the hill and set up in a tight circular bivouac strung through heavy brush and jungle not far away. The ground was too hard to dig foxholes so we only had the cover of the dense foliage. Not much sleep that night, but morning came and we moved out, our spirits severely dampened and our feet being even more wet. Most of us had the onset of paddy foot. That condition worsened over the next couple of days.

Early on January 13, 1969, we were sortied once again in Hueys, this time onto the Batangan Peninsula. The choppers dropped us on the east side of the Chau Me Dong river. Receiving no incoming, the one hundred men of Bravo Company stretched itself out in a line formation of three- man firing positions about twenty-five or thirty meters apart.

More infantry troops from the 11th Light Infantry Brigade started arriving in sorties across the river. They were sprayed with very heavy small arms fire coming from a village near their LZ. They immediately halted further sorties and waited for fire support to arrive. Shortly, a couple of Cobra gunships appeared on the scene and we stared out across the river in amazement as they strafed the village multiple times, flattening it in minutes. A friend of mine who was a Cobra gunship pilot in Vietnam told me recently that the ordinance onboard those crafts was overwhelming. He said operating the two six-barrel, 7.62

mm Gatling guns, fourteen rockets and the 40 mm canon on the front turret was like having the "power of god" in your hands. From what I remember of that day, I'd say he was right.

After the village was reduced to burning ash, helicopters dusted off the wounded, and the rest of the 11th LIB troops were sortied in without incident. They crossed the river, and extended themselves down the line with Bravo company and with other units to form the next part of a mile long blocking force.

It was hairy out there. We knew the VC could be in front of us, in back of us, and even in tunnels underneath us. So, everyone kept it on high alert. That night, a plane overhead dropped flares to improve our visibility, but when that stopped, the night turned black as coal. I don't hear so well today, but that night I could have heard a mosquito sneeze.

The next morning, we were resupplied with dry socks and foot powder so that everyone could start getting their feet back to better health. Heavy rains persisted. We manned our positions along the Chau Me Dong river and maintained the blocking force as ordered, while Charlie sniped at us from the dense brush. We would never see Charlie. All you could do was shoot back in the direction of the incoming to suppress them as best we could. This game went on all day and all week.

Everyone stayed on the line. Nobody wandered off because it was a free-fire zone in both directions. So, when it was time to do our business, we had to do it close-by our foxhole. My two foxhole buddies and I would normally dig our cat-holes about 15 or 20 feet from our foxhole along a bush row bordering the river.

During one of my bio-breaks, I happened to look left and spotted the trace of a geometric shape on the ground under leaves and some low hanging branches. I notified our platoon leader, and told everyone I was going in for a closer look. Closer inspection showed it was a trap door that was covering a tunnel entrance. These trap doors were planting boxes and made to match the surrounding vegetation almost seamlessly.

Being weary of booby traps, I somehow attached a string to the trapdoor, got behind some cover, pulled on the string, and dislodged the door from the tunnel entry. I low crawled up to the tunnel entry, rifle barrel first, and when I got close enough, I yelled "su dau hang" which is Vietnamese for "surrender".

I did this several times and after a few minutes I figured I had given Charlie plenty of time to surrender. I yelled out "fire in the hole", pulled the pin on one of my grenades, released the handle, waited a second to reduce the detonation time, then dropped the grenade down the shaft. Then, BOOM!! I figured if Charlie was down there, he had just lost his mind.

Two or three days passed and I'm keeping guard, looking out across the river, when all the sudden I hear a

voice coming from the tunnel entry that I had just fragged a couple of days earlier. I couldn't believe it. I summoned my buddies and we took aim at the hole. Then hands appeared from the hole, then Charlie's head. I kept yelling "Su dau hang" while he kept yelling back at me "toi dau hang". Things got tense, but he made it out of the hole and I took him into custody.

We spread the word up and down the line and everyone started performing a more thorough search around their immediate positions. Sure enough, many more tunnel entrances were discovered and Charlie surrendered from each. Charlie told our interpreters that they had to surrender because the tunnel floors were flooded from the heavy rain, and that they were suffering from advanced stages of paddy feet.

The tunnels all had two entries, one under the bushes, and a second underwater entrance along the shore of the Chau Me Dong river. It was no stretch when I said before that Charlie was all around us and even underneath us.

Word of our captives got back to headquarters fast and soon a chopper arrived with ARVN interrogators and a reporter from the "Stars and Stripes" newspaper. A photo shows the clip out of the Stars and Stripes published a day later. An ARVN interrogator is working over the enemy trooper that I captured. My buddy, Channing Polack, is in the background. I was standing next to him, but I didn't make the editor's cut.

The ARVN interrogators were brutal but effective. They extracted a lot of intelligence out of our captives which led to discovering some substantial weapons caches including a recoilless rifle. There are accounts that state that our captives were VC, but we were told at the time that they were part of an NVA reconnaissance platoon. I always found it very coincidental that this recon platoon was already there waiting for us in tunnels located in just the right positions. It always suggested that the VC spies back at headquarters had actually been successful and managed to learn details about Operation Russel Beach beforehand and relay them to the enemy so they could prepare for our invasion by digging tunnels exactly where our sorties were taking us. It was a sobering thought.

Soon we moved off the blocking force detail and began a sweep toward the coast while the Marines continued inland with Operation Bold Mariner. We heard they were experiencing very heavy casualties in the mine fields. Eventually, many of the 48th VC Regiment were pushed off the peninsula, but many remained there, sniping and laying mines just ahead of us as we conducted various missions. The Batangan Peninsula was living up to its reputation.

Advancing to roughly the middle of the peninsula, we set up a new blocking force line in a sweet potato field while tens of thousands of leaflets written in Vietnamese were dropped from Hueys. The leaflets stated to any civilians still there to surrender themselves because the

area would soon be heavily bombarded. Over the next couple of days, thousands of civilians walked into our lines with their families and a few possessions. I'm sure many were VC or VC sympathizers. They boarded Chinooks and were transported to repatriation camps that awaited them in Quang Ngai City.

Then the bombing began and suspected enemy strongholds identified with aerial reconnaissance and by troops on the ground were leveled.

The battleship New Jersey joined in on the action, using bunker buster rounds shot from their massive 16" guns to destroy deep tunnel complexes.

After the bombing, third platoon was ordered to sweep what was left of the villages in our area. This mission quickly turned into a humanitarian effort, as we discovered many wounded civilians who had decided to remain on the peninsula instead of submitting to the repatriation effort. The book "Our War" by David Taylor reports that the VC had convinced many into believing that the Allied Forces were going to enslave them in Da Nang, so they were reluctant to leave their homes and paid a heavy price. It was pretty sad. I remember the day very well, carrying a badly wounded child on a bed with the help of three other guys to a dust-off site. After that, I carried an old papasan with a bad leg wound (probably ex-Viet Cong) in my arms about a half mile to the same. I remember we had a quiet conversation on the way. Neither of us knew what the other was saying but it didn't seem to matter. The people were desperate, and Bravo Company did what they could do to help them along.

After that, it was nothing but "search and destroy" and all the ambushes, firefights, landmines and sniping that go with it. Far too many incidences to relay here.

And while all this was going on, US troops (Delta Company – 5th /46th and a platoon of Bravo/26th Engineers) were building LZ Minuteman right in the heart of the Batangan Peninsula, thereby establishing the first ever Allied Force base camp to be located in that hostile region. This achievement along with the repatriation of over 10,000 civilians and finally gaining some measure of control over the 48th VC Regiment made Operation Russel Beach a real success.

Bravo Company was first on the scene in Operation Russel Beach. While other units left the area to fight elsewhere, we were also last on the scene because we were assigned the dubious honor of remaining on the Batangan Peninsula, operating out of LZ Minuteman. Our assignment was to continue to root out what was left of Charlie and his infrastructure. We patrolled a lot and found many tunnel complexes, weapons caches, and even captured more VC from time to time. But these efforts often came at a big cost to life and limb of the brave men of Bravo Company. But hey, that was the life of an infantry soldier in Vietnam.

## GI Humor

By Bryne "Buzz" Sherwood

One of the unique features of military service is that it takes individuals from completely different walks of life and throws them together. This creates the possibility for friendships that likely would not have occurred otherwise. Such was the case with Ruben Bugge and Charles Warner.

In physical appearance, Bugge and Warner were as different as day and night. Bugge had bright red hair, a fair complexion and freckles. Warner, on the other hand, had dark, almost black hair, a large moustache and dark eyes. He could have easily played the role of the villain in an old time western movie.

Ruben Bugge, known to his friends as Ben, was an easy-going kid from the middle class suburban city of Novato, California. In 1971, he found himself bored and without direction. So he enlisted in the Army and volunteered for service in Vietnam. His wish was granted. Six months later, he found himself as a grenadier in a rifle platoon in Vietnam.

Then Ruben met Charles Warner. They shared an easy-going nature, but beyond that their backgrounds were quite different. Warner was a wild, cowboy type from somewhere in Colorado. He had been in the Army for a few years. He had risen to the rank of Staff Sergeant but had been busted down to buck private for some unknown offense. He held his cards close to his chest and never spoke of his background. This reticence, combined with the little that was known of him, added to his mystique. He seemed to relish being in Vietnam. On one arm he had the tattooed word 'War' and he wore a medallion that said 'War'. Behind his easy going façade lurked a mischievous mind always on the lookout for a prank.

In spite of their differences, Bugge and Warner quickly became buddies. Besides being squad mates watching each other's back, they ate together, hung out together and shared the same fighting position when in the defense.

In March 1972, Bugge and Warner's company was brought in from combat operations in the mountains to the west and assigned to man static defensive positions on what was known as "The Ridgeline". This was the first line of defense for the city of Da Nang. Unlike normal combat operations, which were characterized by constant patrolling and movement, there was little to do on The Ridgeline other than fill sandbags and stare out at a landscape of rice paddies and rolling hills, devoid of human activity. Even though subject to attack and therefore potentially dangerous, the lack of activity produced acute boredom and, as the old adage goes, "idle hands are the devil's workshop".

In order to relieve the boredom, individual soldiers were rotated to the rear to get a shower and change clothes and maybe even go to the nearby airbase to partake of the good life enjoyed by U.S. Air Force personnel. Another way to provide diversion was to send soldiers on details to the rear to pick up supplies.

One very hot day, Bugge returned from a supply run to the rear. He was tired, hot and sweaty. As he approached the bunker that he and Warner shared, he called out,

"Hey, who wants a cold soda?"

He got no response and, as he got closer, he could see

Warner and Sergeant David "Rock" Mixon sitting facing each other, almost knee to knee, just inside the bunker entrance. Closer still, Bugge picked up the sounds and vibes of a heated argument between the two. This struck him as odd because he had never seen Warner get angry at anyone.

In spite of the awkwardness of the situation, Bugge wanted to get into the bunker and away from the sun and heat. In order to do so, he had to slide between the knees of the two belligerents and take a seat near the back wall of the bunker.

Sergeant Mixon, his face flushed with anger and his mouth twisted in a snarl, said, "Warner, I'm gonna kick your goat smellin' ass!"

"I'm ready whenever you are, Mixon."

With that, Sergeant Mixon pulled a .45 out of his waistband, pointing it at the ground but holding it in a menacing manner.

Alarmed, Bugge said, "Dudes, calm down! What the hell's going on?"

Ignoring Bugge as if he wasn't even there, Warner pulled out a hand grenade, staring back at Sergeant Mixon with equal menace.

"Chuck! Whoa. Put that away, man. This shit's getting way out of hand. Calm down."

No sooner were the words out of Bugge's mouth than Warner pulled the pin on the grenade. The spoon came flying off and the primer popped. He let the grenade drop between him and Sergeant Mixon.

As happens in moments of extreme crisis, time slowed as a myriad of thoughts raced through Bugge's mind.

*'There's four and a half seconds until it explodes.'*

*'Surely one of them is going to throw it out of the bunker.'*

*'Surely they're not going to stay here and get blown up.'*

*'I'm gettin' the fuck outta here.'*

Yelling, "Are you crazy? What're you doin?", Bugge dove over their knees and through the entrance, landed on his belly and low crawled through the blistering hot sand as fast as his knees and elbows would carry him, all the time waiting for the explosion that would kill his two buddies and maybe him. Just at the moment he expected the detonation, he heard, "Ha, ha, ha, ha." Raucous laughter blasting from inside the bunker.

Picking himself up and dusting off his arms which were caked with sand and skinned, Bugge turned back to find Warner and Sergeant Mixon roaring with laughter.

"Oh man, you should have seen yourself. All we could see was assholes and elbows when you di-di'd the bunker. What a trip. You better check your drawers."

Sputtering with rage, all Bugge could manage to say was, "You fuckers, you mother fuckers."

Calm down, Bugge suddenly became fascinated with the mystery of why the grenade didn't explode.

"What happened? How come it didn't go off?"

Chuckling, Warner replied, "I just broke off the blasting cap. There was nothing to detonate the explosive."

And so ended this little practical joke, a bit of GI humor, the story of which never made it out of this trio of pals until almost fifty years later when Bugge shared it with his former platoon leader. Boys and their toys, you just never know what's going to happen.

## Humping the Pig

By Don Counter

Illustrated by Ed Gittens and Bill Pfau

During Basic Combat Training (BCT) there were attention-getting talks about the short life expectancy of officers, radio telephone operators (RTOs) and M60 machine gunners. Then during Infantry-Advance Individual Training (AIT) the topic was spoken of with more frequency by drill sergeants with recent combat experience. They emphasized that each of these soldiers stood out in the tropical landscape making them the preferred "targets of choice" by the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong. The key to survival was maintaining a low profile, blending in, and with due respect for life... saluting officers in the jungle was an absolute NO-no!

Upon graduation from AIT we were granted leave, then it was off to the foreign soil of South Vietnam with the realization of being newly ordained infantryman who would be required to dramatically further develop our newly acquired skills.

Being assigned the Military Occupational Skill 11-Bravo (MOS 11B) was not a cherished assignment but referred to as the kiss of death. Those select few who became RTOs or a M60 machine gunner got an even shorter end of the Infantry stick.

Each of the two enlisted positions, RTO and M60 gunner, carried the biggest and heaviest loads, which added to their being identified as prized targets. It is a curious fact that the PRC-25 radio with its battery weighed the same as the M60 machine gun with 100-rounds of linked ammo.

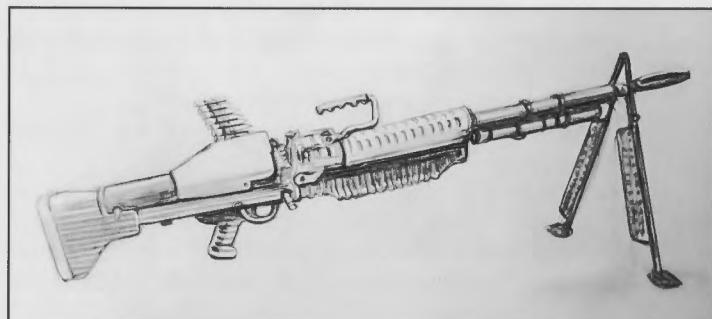
For the sake of comparison the M60 and the PRC-25 each weighed 23-pounds while the M16 rifle weighed six pounds. Each of these bulky and critical pieces of equipment individually weighed the same as four M16s.

It became apparent that being assigned the PRC-25 radio (commonly referred to as the prick) or the M60 machine gun (affectionately referred to as the Pig) was determined by virtue of one's height and build. The taller fellows got the M60 machine gun while shorter, stout and muscular men, inherited the radio. There were no tall RTOs because no officer wanted a bull's-eye target tethered to his hip.

It seemed that the weighty mass of the M60 was routinely coerced, handed off, involuntarily volunteered or shoved onto the newest guy (funewgy) to the platoon; often times without benefit of a transition period.

The M60 machine gun was 43-inches of elongated steel weighing in at 23-pounds and was commonly referred to as the "Pig" because of its bulk and its consumption of ammunition.

This weapon required an extra pair of hands due to its weight, ammunition and an extra barrel. Even with increased strength and stamina it was more than difficult for an individual soldier to go it alone. According to the proverbial operational manual or



text book guide this crew served weapon required the support of an assistant gunner and an ammo bearer.

The weapons dimensions and dangling accouterments made for awkward and clumsy portaging in a tropical landscape that was constantly fighting against you. It was a frustrating terrain that provided every opportunity to cause you to trip, stumble and fall and appear as if you were walking blindfolded. Adding to the difficulty with undergrowth, getting entwined or snagged on branches made for total frustration followed by cussing and swearing at the struggle to get untangled and work yourself free from every wait-a-minute vine that tore at clothes and flesh. There was unanimous agreement that the designer of the M60 never carried or experienced it in a jungle environment. All of this added to the uneasiness of being an over-sized target.

The M60 was carried in a variety of positions and methods: balanced atop the left or right shoulder while holding onto one of the bi-pod legs, suspended from a nylon shoulder strap sling, slung at port arms, by the so called "executive" carrying handle, or cradled in the crook of an arm and supported at the hip. There was a definite learning curve as you attempted to stoop, walk and weave through the vine ridden landscape with the weighted mass. Discovering your center of balance was a challenge and you alone had to figure it out because nobody could do it for you.

It seemed that no matter which carrying method was used with the Pig it was a cumbersome and strained shoulder process. Each carrying method was temporary. No one position was ever comfortable for very long, which required a constant repositioning of the Pig. With a 74-pound rucksack heaped on our backs and a heavy and lopsided weapon each step was a balancing act; and we were referred to as light infantry. After a couple of missions the M60 gunner began to realize the benefit of cooperating with the terrain rather than to fight or subdue it. In due course with adjustments and experience some center of gravity or equilibrium could be attained and you managed the intimately extended appendage. Nevertheless there was no escaping four-lettered words when walking face first into a giant spider web.

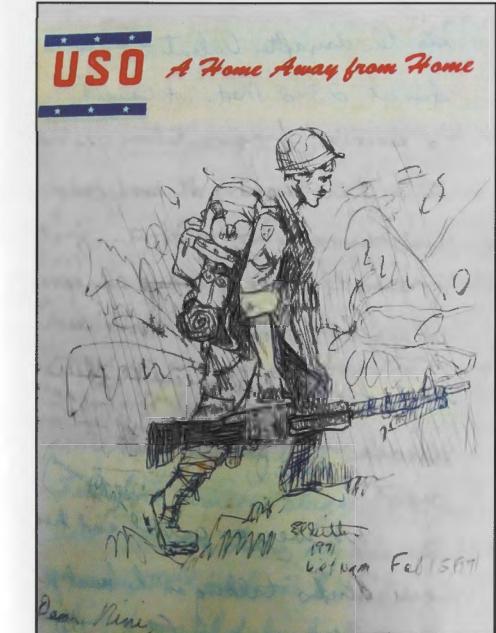
In the depth of the thick and tangling jungle we inched our way one foot step at a time across maps. Constantly hampered by entanglement with vines that caused us to get hung up. There was always something to cut, stick or lacerate the skin. A sharp whack from a branch was irritating but branches that sprung to smack you in the face were startling.

There was no competition to appear stronger or to out-do one another by humping the Pig. The reality was that humping it was a rigorous endeavor and more like getting issued a plow and you were the mule. Any illusions of being movie matinée heroes, the likes of John Wayne, were quickly diminished as faulty perceptions.

All too frequently the M60 gunner would be included in additional reconnaissance patrols simply because every patrol leader recognized the heightened benefit of the Pig's awesome firepower.

Some machine gunners carried a Colt .45 caliber pistol at their side for a mission or two then chose to rid themselves of the unnecessary weight, and responsibility of cleaning yet another weapon.

Every few months we returned to the division rear area for stand down, which included weapons and equipment cleaning and turned-in. The freedom to walk without the Pig or a rucksack for a few days was liberating. It was curious how you'd grow



This "Hollywood" method of transporting the ammunition fully exposed it to grit, sweat, and soil.

I knew of only one assistant gunner who dutifully carried a protectively waterproof six pound metal ammo can containing two 100-hundred round pouches of immaculately clean 7.62 ammo at the ready in his left hand. It truly was a balancing act because he carried a six pound M16 in his right hand. With a knowing grin he said it was his way of counter balance and maintaining correct posture.

The challenges associated with humping the Pig were many, below are four examples: *Malfunction, Misfortune, Mislaid and Mishap*.

### Malfunction

It had rained continuously for two days when the platoon slowed, then momentarily halted on a steep somersault slippery incline. It seemed that most everyone in the platoon had stepped on the same spots and had the same hand holds grasping trees, branches or limbs anything that offered support or helped to maintain footholds along the worn path.

Movement was at a temporary standstill. Then the gesture of an upward and extended arm with a clenched fist was mimicked down the line of infantry soldiers. The motion signaled a silent request for the machine gun which equated to the verbal announcement of "Pig man-up." From the very rear of the formation the muscular six foot two gunner maneuvered forward, inching his way up the slick incline.

He was brand new and had unceremoniously inherited the Pig due to his height and physical stature. This was his first mission and his very third day in the jungle. Because of personnel shortages he did not have the support of an assistant gunner and someone was overheard to say "just wing it."

Eyes only glanced as he slogged up the muddy trail. As he neared the top he lost his foothold, slipped and forcefully fell face forward slamming the front sight of the machine gun through his upper lip. It was a nasty fall, leaving him slightly dazed. Within minutes blood was seeping through his bushy "Tom Selleck" mustache.

A medic was quietly requested to evaluate the injury. The soldier slowly collected himself and after many minutes eventually resumed the slippery struggle to the top. Once there, the platoon leader directed him to position the machine gun and fire away at an unseen target. It was his time to shine but when he pulled the trigger the weapon didn't fire. A visual examination of the weapon revealed that the black steel and rubberized plastic shoulder stock assembly, commonly referred to as the "butt plate", was missing.

He returned back down the steep trail with his weapon and eventually located the stock assembly, reattached it, and retraced his steps back up the slippery path. As the proverbial "new kid on the block", the return hump back up the same hill was humbling and physically challenging. After maneuvering back up the incline, he took his previous position and like a blind man shooting at an elusive burglar in the dark, he fired indiscriminately.

Minutes later the medic re-looked the gunner's thick mustache, which was now matted with drying blood, and issued a few more over sized aspirins. As the platoon continued on their foot march one of the seasoned grunts walked by and said in a hushed and sarcastic tone, the great catch phrase "the needs of the Army take precedence and the war continues despite your discomfort."

The unit was under-strength on infantry personnel and with the current rates of attrition, manpower shortages were prevalent. The reality was there would be no going to the rear for stitches. In war bodies are crucial and you learn to endure setbacks.

### Misfortune

After a couple weeks of hospitalization with a severe bout of malaria, this tall broad-shouldered infantryman was returned to the field to his previous position as the Pig man. Aside from a noticeable 23-pound loss the illness had taken a toll on his body; his strength and stamina had diminished.

The jungle was steamy at times suffocating at others. weaving through the woven web of jungle vines, over-stepping the snake-like, above-ground roots was leaving many physically strained. Now amid a blazing sun, intense humidity and stifling heat and the strain of the bulky M60 the abrupt uphill walk kicked his butt. He felt like an over-worked pack animal.

The Pig was getting caught up on everything in the low jungle tangle and was cause for his ultimate exhaustion. At that moment in time a "shake-and-bake" buck sergeant shouted, "quit dragging your ass and hurry up!" In total frustration and with both arms over the head, he hurled the M60 down the hillside; an impulsive act he immediately regretted.

Without saying a word, his newly assigned and solidly built assistant gunner descended the steep incline, retrieved the bulk of steel and calmly shouldered the weapon which now had a slightly drooping left bi-pod leg. "Just tell me what I need to do" he said to the totally exhausted M60 gunner. That sharing of "teamwork" serves as the basis for their life-long bond that continues today.

As an added note, no one ever again told that beast-of-burden to "hurry up."

### Mislaid

After a three day stand down at the division rear area the routine was to be driven out in deuce and a half (2 1/2) ton trucks to the Tam Ky heliport airstrip where we'd form up by group, then sit and await the eventual arrival of rotary-winged aircraft for an air assault insertion into the jungle. With the typical hurry up and wait delays, infantry soldiers destined to be air assaulted into another unknown portion of the jungle would temporarily lean back against their rucksack with their assigned weapon readily available and within arms reach, eventually remove their boots and socks to expose the feet to some healthy sunshine, pull out a paperback book and momentarily let the mind drift.

As usual, locals appeared en-masse with toothy grins,



outstretched arms and pleading hands. There was no trading, it was the same bothersome "you souvenir me" routine. The requests were constant and never quelled, just tempered with cigarettes, accessory packets or a C ration. You were cautious not to let your guard down because among the hungry hands, hustlers and thieves were always present.

Eventually the unit would be notified that seven helicopters were inbound to pick them up for their mission. At a high state of rushed excitement the soldiers collectively assembled around their individual gear, re-checking their equipment (web-gear, rucksack, helmet and weapon), mentally preparing themselves for expedient loading onto their assigned aircraft. In perfect formation the helicopters landed with rotor blades spinning at a one hundred-percent RPM ready for immediate lift off. With a sense of urgency the grunts sprung to action, boarded and nervously switched thoughts to the landing zone... would it be hot or cold?

After insertion and amid the jungle foliage a seasoned staff sergeant suspected that something was wrong and out of place. He blurted out, "soldier where's your machine gun?" The response from the husky private was, "I left it back on the helicopter air strip."

With the wisdom of a sage, this "old school" sergeant, on his second infantry tour in Vietnam, immediately radioed back to the airfield to have the missing squad weapon located, retrieved and flown out to the jungle operation.

This school of hard knocks sergeant knew first hand that the youthful draftee was "genuinely a good kid" and as a leader "it's all about taking care of your own." He intervened to keep the situation below the radar to deflect any unpleasant fall out from higher ups. The military motto of "Mission First, People Always" succinctly describes his efforts to essentially rescue the hips of this young soldier.

That young soldier faithfully carried the Pig to the very end of his year long tour and has not forgotten the protective action taken by his insightful sergeant.

### Mishap

The platoon was tasked with escorting a group of refugees through the jungle to a relocation camp; a tasking that would take the better part of a full day. The villagers were, sort of prepositioned between us soldiers. Then out of the blue the platoon leader walked up and handed a toddler to the Pig man stating "he's yours!"

Standing well over six foot with great strength in his arms and shoulders, he was proof that physical stature and being the ideal fit had complications. While supporting the M60 machine gun with his right arm, the gunner now cradled the little guy in his left arm. Adding to this curious sight for sore eyes the toddler had clutched in his right hand the inert remains of an iguana and with each lumbering stride of the gunner the lifeless creature annoyingly swung and flopped without pulse against his rucksack.

Twice along that hours-long jungle trek the toddler released a warm shooting stream of piss on the M60 gunner. With each drenching of urine, the soldier's simple and unvarnished response was "That's life in the jungle, Tarzan." Proving there actually was a humorous side to the war.

This is dedicated to every fellow grunt who with balance and poise endured the challenges of humping the Pig.

God Bless the Infantry!

## Div Arty Air Hootches; January 1969

By Darryl James

Lieutenant Darryl James laid in his bunk, looked up at the plywood ceiling of his hootch, and thought about his nickname, Yoz. You had no control over what your buddies decide to call you in Vietnam. His nickname was after the character, Yozarian, in Joseph Heller's book, *Catch 22*. In the book, Yozarian thought everyone and everything in the war was trying to kill him. They jokingly claimed James felt that way too.

He hated the nickname but pretended he loved it. If he told them he hated it, they would keep on doing it to tweak his sensitivities. If he told them he loved it, they would keep doing it because they liked him. It was 'CATCH 22.'

Breakfast at the Officer's Club was black coffee, a couple of eggs, and two bacon strips. It's okay, but then it's hard to screw up breakfast. James looked over at Lee Leffert. The blonde-haired slender Lieutenant, as usual, was putting away the groceries. Leffert was 120 pounds soaking wet, but he would eat like someone triple his size. The skinny pilot was methodically putting three eggs, a stack of pancakes, and five Canadian bacon strips. He must have the metabolism of a sex-starved hummingbird.

Lieutenant John Duffy sat next to Leffert. 'Duff-man,' as we called him, was Div Arty's Maintenance Officer. He was the kind of guy you want around if you got into a card game or knife fight. He was tough as nails. You could always find him at the pilots' recreation room on Thursday nights in the weekly poker game. Duffy was known to exaggerate all his previous sexual exploits and other noteworthy events in his life. The Div Arty Air Flight all knew he was a bullshitter. Duffy knew they knew. It did not matter; he still bullshitted with the best of them.

America's Div Arty Air Section was excited about the Loaches' arrival to replace their aging Raven helicopters. The Ravens were reliable and rugged, but they couldn't carry much. The OH-23G pilot sat in the center on a bench-seat, and could only hold two passengers or small pieces of cargo. The Raven was also hard to fly. Whenever the pilot added power with the collective, he had to increase the throttle to keep rotor and engine rpm in the flight-range. When the pilot reduced power, he did the opposite and reduced throttle. The new turbine-powered Loaches had a governor that maintained a proper rpm and did this work for the pilot.

The OH-23G had other shortcomings. The Raven had low rotor momentum, which meant that the pilot had to quickly get the collective down and add right-pedal quickly to preserve rotor rpm if the engine quit. The OH-23G had only two poor-quality radios. The Raven pilot seemed vulnerable. He sat on an aluminum padded bench seat with a plastic bubble-like canopy around him. Div Arty maintenance put a piece of armor plating under the OH-23G pilot's seat to protect his butt from below.

The pilot's back was against the transmission wall, and

he wore a ceramic, bulletproof vest, which was called a chicken plate. The Loach pilot would be safer in its built-in ceramic armor seat.

Most helicopter pilots had one more safety feature. Most pilots carried a 45-caliber automatic sidearm strategically placed between their legs and the chicken plate resting loosely on top. Theoretically, this was to keep stray shrapnel in the cockpit from making the pilot a soprano in the choir.

Instead of a 45, James elected to carry a 38-caliber revolver as a sidearm. He was more comfortable hitting a target with it. James, the Safety Officer, tried placing the 38-revolver between his legs, a place like many Vietnam pilots. It hurt him in the business part on his body it was supposed to protect. James carried the revolver more conventionally in a holster around his hip, forgoing the unique between-the-legs protective feature.

"I see on the schedule," said Leffert with a twinkle in his eye, "where I am flying for MACV in our darling 23s, but you two pukes are training with Dotson in the new Loaches."

"Tough shit," Duffy and James said in unison.

"Somebody's got to do, right Yoz?" said Duffy as he began giggling.

The Loaches were big news at Div Arty Air. Lieutenants Connor Dotson and Mark Birmingham hitched a ride on the Division's Otter to Cam Rahn Bay the day before yesterday to pick up two of the sexy-looking eggbeaters. The Loaches were brand new. They even smelled new like the fabulous smell of a new car. They were jet-turbine powered, fast, maneuverable, and supposedly quite survivable in a crash.

Yesterday, Duffy and James each received two and half-hours of flight time in them. They were surprisingly easy to fly. "Felt like a damn sports car," Duffy later said. They had four radios and flight and navigation instruments such as an ADF (automatic direction finder), a radar transponder, a large artificial horizon on the right where the pilot usually sat, and an extra artificial horizon for the copilot on the left.

James looked down at his coffee and thought, my first approach yesterday was ragged. I came barreling into Ky Hai hot. I had a heck of a time getting it stopped and overshot the heliport pad. It was damn embarrassing.

Yesterday, Dotson, the check pilot, just laughed and said, "Remember, this isn't a 23. Be sure to look at your airspeed indicator and slow down to 60 knots when you begin your approach."

After an hour and a half of dual instruction, Dotson got out so James could get some solo time. He loved it. It was a dream to fly. He and Duffy needed to get an additional hour and a half each, five hours total, to qualify. They planned to get that time today.

The pilots left the O-Club. Duffy headed on down to the flight line ahead of James.

"See you in about thirty, Duff," James said.

"Right, Yoz."

Operations scheduled Duffy to fly another 30 minutes dual with Dotson, and then James would fly 30 minutes with Dotson. Afterward, they both would fly a few more

hours together, with each getting time in the right, Pilot-In-Command seat. The rest of the group turned on the path to Operations. James lingered a few minutes in Operations, then went to the pilots' ready room, got his gear, and walked down to the flight line.

As usual, Ky Hai Heliport was a beehive of activity with slicks and Snakes hovering, refueling, and queuing up in line for takeoff. A Rattler gunship slithered by so heavily loaded it bumped awkwardly across the tarmac, struggling to hover. The Cobra gunship had teeth painted on the front akin to General Chenault's Flying Tigers of WW2 fame in China.

James sat on his helmet by a revetment and waited. He looked over the only other Div Arty Loach sitting on the tarmac. The unit's two Loaches were training aircraft. They did not have armor seats and armor protection in the engine compartments. Tonight, Lieutenant Birmingham and our boss, Major Fulton, would be bringing two mission-ready Loaches from Cam Rahn Bay.

The pilot stared at the lonely Loach with his survival instincts stirring. It is a little spooky sitting in an aircraft here resting your butt on only an aluminum nylon seat, but no sweat. Battalion maintenance will have them fitted with all the combat embellishments within a week or so. Relax. NO ONE WILL BE SHOOTING AT US. WE WON'T FLY MISSIONS IN THESE TRAINING BIRDS.

Training ships or not, by rote, the new Safety Officer for Div Arty Air had his chicken plate, M-16, 38-caliber sidearm and holster, survival knife, a bandoleer of ammunition, and a survival kit with an emergency beeper radio. He looked at his watch and waited for Dotson and Duffy to return.

Ten minutes later, the new Loach descended onto the runway and hovered up to the waiting Lieutenant. Duffy stepped out of the right seat and climbed in the back. Connor waited for James to get in and connect his helmet to the intercom.

"Go get em, Yoz," Connor, the check-pilot, said.

James called Ky Hai tower and received permission to taxi. He picked the Loach up into a hover and found himself over-controlling the unfamiliar, sensitive aircraft. Connor sat in the left seat, seemingly oblivious. Duffy, in the back seat, chuckled. James thought, go ahead and laugh, Duff-man, I heard you never could hover in flight school.

James settled down and smoothly hovered to the active runway. He received clearance from Ky Hai tower and took off north over Div Arty's Hootch City. He leveled off at 200 feet. Almost instantly, the quick aircraft accelerated to 110 knots. They flew over to Arty Hill, located nearby on Highway One outside Chu Lai's village, and made a few pinnacle approaches. Then they low-leveled across the tidal flats north of Chu Lai until they reached the South China Sea.

James made a couple of landings to the beach. He was enjoying himself and began feeling a smite cocky about his Loach flying skills. Twenty minutes later, they landed back at Ky Hai and refueled. The check pilot got out and gave James

the thumbs up. Duffy climbed in the copilot's seat. James took off with Duffy and spent an hour and a half flying formation with large waterfowl around the tidal flats.

They returned to Ky Hai, refueled, and Duffy and James switched seats. They departed north with both pilots feeling puffed up with their loach flying ability. They were confident and comfortable with the new aircraft.

"Yoz, You mean they are gonna pay us to fly this thing?"

"You got that right. Almost better than sex, huh."

"Let's not get carried away. Never bullshit a bullshitter."

"No One alive could out bullshit you."

They were flying above the safety of Highway One at 1,700 feet just northeast of Chu Lai, having a large time when the UHF radio crackled. "Salvation Control, this is Red Hawk One."

James wondered, hmm? I hadn't heard that call sign.

"Red Hawk One, this is Salvation, over."

"Salvation, I'm over a downed Oscar One with two survivors lying on the wing. They appear wounded. They are in a tight, heavily forested ravine about 15 clicks north of Chu Lai. Looks bad for a pickup. Do you have anyone nearby to help? Over."

James hit the trigger on his cyclic and said on the intercom, "Duff, that's close."

They next heard, "Roger, Red Hawk One, this is Salvation, standby."

"Phoenix One-Six, Salvation, I see you are nearby. Can you assist Red Hawk One?"

James pushed the trigger on the cyclic to the second click and transmitted on UHF, with Duff's call sign, "Salvation, Phoenix One-Six, yes, we can help, over."

"Phoenix One-Six, this is Red Hawk One, say position, over."

James replied, "Roger, Red Hawk, we are over highway One, 10-klicks northeast of Chu Lai, over."

Then they heard, "Red Hawk One, Salvation, can you give position and altitude?"

"Roger, Salvation, Red Hawk One is three one nautical miles on the Chu Lai two-niner-five radial. We are circling at four and a half grand over mountains."

"Whoa," James said over the intercom. Listen to that shit, Duff. Does this guy think we are the Air Force? We're Army; we don't have those fancy instruments. Shit, we work for a living down in the trees and mud."

Before Duffy could reply, James, pressed the switch to transmit on the UHF, "Red Hawk One, this is Phoenix One-Six. We do not have VOR or TACAN. Can you give map grid coordinates?"

"Roger, Phoenix One-Six, wait one."

The radar operator at Salvation transmitted, "Phoenix One-Six, I have you on radar. Squawk two-four-five-zero."

James placed 2450 on the transponder and hit the ident button. A moment later, "Phoenix One Six, Salvation, I have you. Come to a heading of two-eight-five."

"Roger, Salvation," James replied in his mike. Duffy banked the Loach sharply left, heading into the mountains,

and pulled up the collective to climb. He leveled from his turn on a heading of 285 degrees and continued climbing.

"Phoenix One-Six, this is Salvation. Red Hawk One will be One Four nautical miles directly ahead."

"Roger Salvation," replied James.

James switched to Div Arty Air Ops and reported their position and intentions.

He looked at the beautiful, rugged mountains below and took a deep breath. I have my M-16, ammunition, sidearm, and survival pack. All Duff brought was his damn forty-five. Nice going, Duff. Well, we are certainly armed to the teeth.

He pressed the cyclic switch one click to transmit over the intercom. "Duff, do you feel naked here in the mountains?"

"Huh?"

"Remember, Bud. We are only sitting on NYLON WEBBED SEATS held up by aluminum frames with NO ARMOR PLATING!"

"No shit," he replied.

"Thanks for bringing your M-16," James replied sarcastically.

"I don't need it, shithead," I'm flying.

"Thanks, pal."

James pulled his M-16 off the first aid kit on the wall between them. He felt the triple taped assembly of three 20-round magazines and thought, bless you, Jenkins. The crew chief taped the triple clip assembly together for him last week. The pilot looked back over his seat and saw a bandoleer of M-16 ammunition and a survival radio strapped in the back seat¾right where he couldn't reach them.

Isn't that special? Someone is in real trouble, and we are to help?

They flew over the heavily forested mountains west of Chu Lai into the teeth of Indian country, feeling vulnerable in their training aircraft. Off in the distance, they saw an OV-10 Bronco with miniguns and two rocket pods under its wings circling ahead.

"That will be Red Hawk One, Yoz."

James hit the toggle switch and transmitted, "Red Hawk One, Phoenix One-Six, we have you in sight, over."

"Roger, One-Six, tally ho Phoenix."

James looked below and hit the intercom switch, "Duff, there they are."

He pointed as Duffy turned toward the crash site. The Loach descended, turning below the Bronco, and flew directly over a very bent-up airplane. The Bird Dog lay crunched in a narrow gorge in thick jungle. James looked out the door as they passed. He hit the intercom, "It's stuck in the trees. Duff two hombres are laying on the wings; One is waving."

"Roger, Yoz."

The radio crackled, "Phoenix One-Six, can you get in there?"

"Red Hawk One, I don't know. There is no place to land, and the crash site looks tight. We will go down for a good

look and give it a try."

"One-Six, my wingman is only zero-four miles out. Suggest you wait until he's on station. I can escort you down; he can provide high cover."

"Roger, Red Hawk."

The Loach circled as they waited for the second OV-10. James glanced out his side door and saw another OV-10 approaching. He noticed the large word, Marines, painted on its side.

James hit the radio switch and said, "Red Hawk, One, we are going in, over."

"Roger."

Duffy lowered the collective and descended in a racetrack pattern to the crash site. Red Hawk One moved in alongside off the right side of the Loach and descended with them. James looked out Duffy's open door and was momentarily startled. The OV-10 was close and "all dirty," with full flaps and gear extended to allow it to fly as slow as possible while he escorted them down.

These Jarheads are all right, thought James. He could have stayed overhead. Coming in low and slow with us makes him a pretty juicy target.

James laid the M-16 across his lap and chambered a round. Duffy concentrated on the tricky approach into the gorge and crash site now dead ahead. Gradually the Bronco crept forward of them as their chopper slowed below 60 knots. The Loach descended to 100 feet on short final to the gorge. Suddenly, James saw gun flashes ahead directed at the Bronco two hundred yards ahead.

Duffy transmitted, "Red Hawk, One taking fire, and breaking right."

Watching from above, his wingman replied, "Red Hawk Two is rolling hot, Phoenix One-Six we're coming in off your right, stay on the present heading or break left, over."

James hit the radio trigger with his left hand. His right hand remained tightly around the butt of the M-16 as he said, "Roger, ONE, we are low and slow on short final. We ain't going anywhere."

The second OV-10 swooped by above them. As it passed, James and Duffy heard the screech of its minigun firing ahead of them to their right. The firing abruptly stopped, and the OV-10 pulled up smartly into a turning climb to the right.

Duffy struggled to hover down into the crash site¾a tight, deep ravine with steep, vine-covered walls.

The Loach drivers, nervous and tense, looked out left and right as the Loach sank lower into the ravine. James looked up through the helicopter's rotor blades and watched the hillside climb higher and higher. How can so much stuff grow on such a sheer cliff?

Over the intercom, Duffy said, "Craps, this is a hole, not a ravine, watch my tail." He continued shakily. "You have to help us stay clear," He yelled, "Watch my fricking tail."

"You're okay," James replied nervously with his head full out the door. "I'll keep us clear."

They descended into the gorge surrounded by trees. The

impact of the crash had bent many trees over. James looked again out the door to the rear to ensure their tail rotor was clear, and then he looked to the side and then down into the blood-streaked faces of the wounded men now only 10 feet below them. The survivors starred up with ashen faces waving weakly.

James looked waved with his left hand, holding his M-16 with his right. Looking past them, he saw the ground and a small stream below the wreckage and trees. James glanced back up the steep hillside in horror. Shit, if I have to fire at anyone poking their heads over the top of the cliffside, I'd shoot through our rotor blades. We are sitting ducks.

James keyed his intercom switch and said, "Duff, this is bad. I can't shoot up the hill without hitting our rotor blades."

Duffy remained silent as he hovered down to four feet above the wounded fliers. They can't go lower. Trees and bushes encased the Loach in a cocoon, leaving no margin for error. If their tail rotor hit the trees, they would crash and kill the wounded pilots below and maybe themselves.

Hovering a few feet above them, James motioned for the survivors to climb onto the skids and into the back seat of the Loach. They lay there in the harsh rotor-wash, not responding. If they stood up, they could grab the skids. They can't move; they're badly hurt. They covered their bloody faces with their hands, protecting themselves from the rotor wash.

James motions with his left hand to come on as he screamed. "Climb in, climb in."

They did not move. James keys the intercom switch, "Duff, it is no use; they must be hurt real bad. They can't climb in."

James could not get out of the helicopter to help them. The collective on his left side was up high in hovering flight, blocking him. He also could not reach into the back of the Loach to pass them a radio or ammunition. He felt helpless.

"Duff, we can't do any good here. Let's get out and cover the top of the hill and try to protect them."

Duffy hovered out of the hole, and they heard the familiar call sign of their neighbors at Ky Hai Heliport.

"Red Hawk One, Rattler Three with a flight of two ready to help. I see a Loach down there. Can we assist, over?"

"Roger Rattler, that's Phoenix One-Six. We took small arms as we covered the Loach's approach to the downed bird. I don't think Phoenix can get them out."

James keyed his radio, "Red Hawk One, this is Phoenix One-Six. We couldn't land, and they couldn't climb in. They must be hurt badly. The plane is in the trees about 20 feet off the ground, but it looks stable. We would have placed our skids on the wing, but we couldn't get down far enough. We will protect the area around them, out."

"Roger Phoenix."

Red Hawk One in the OV-10 remained in control of the rescue operation but was glad for the two Rattler gunships. They could provide down-in-the-bushes close-in support  $\frac{3}{4}$  the kind that might need.

"Phoenix One-Six, this is Rattler Three with eyes on you. We have your backside covered, little buddy. If anything moves down there, let us know. We are cocked and ready to rock and roll. Stay safe, over."

James keyed his cyclic twice in the familiar "double squelch okay."

"Phoenix One-Six, this is Red Hawk ONE. Salvation has a Pav Low on the way from Da Nang. They'll be here in One-Eight mikes, over."

"Roger Red Hawk."

A new call sign joined in. "Red Hawk, One, this is Dolphin One-two off to your south in an empty Slick. Ready to help, over."

"Tally ho, Dolphin, be advised we have two Broncos, two Snakes, and a Loach low-level. We have a Pav Low inbound."

"Roger, we'll stay clear and high, and on-call, over."

James and Duffy heard the double squelch break of Red Hawk acknowledging.

Damn, it must be getting crowded up there, James thought as he silently thanked Jesus for all the eyes on them.

They were too busy to look up. Hovering slowly, James saw the jungle floor with a million places for the enemy to hide. They hovered at the Jungle treetops to the south side of the ravine.

James looked through the dense canopy along the narrow ravine's sloping contours and saw water reflected sunlight. A flicker in the sunlight to the left caught James's attention. Was that movement?

"Duff, swing around back toward the left. I thought I saw movement."

The Loach moved toward the mountain creek leading to the crash site behind them. James's eye moved to the left again, sensing movement. Could it be an animal? They have tigers, deer, and lots of other creepy things here.

"Come left again, Duff. I think I saw movement again; I'm just not sure."

Duffy radioed to the covering aircraft, "Rattler Flight, Phoenix One-Six, possible movement off to our left."

"Roger Phoenix," replied Rattler Three.

"Yoz, fire off a few rounds," Duffy barked over the intercom. James fired off a couple of three-round bursts in the direction of the stream. He watched the tracers, waiting.

Gunfire erupted around the Loach. James fired back, spraying the area on full automatic as Duffy lowered the nose and accelerated over the trees.

James keyed his mike, "TAKING FIRE TO THE LEFT AND BEHIND US IN A SMALL CREEK."

"Roger, Phoenix One-Six," replied the OV-10 lead. "Rattlers are coming hot behind you. Climb and continue to the north."

"Wilco," replied James.

James and Duffy could hear the roar of the gunships' miniguns, and then a salvo of rockets behind them they climbed.

A new call sign broke the air. "Red Hawk One, this is Angel One-Niner, four klicks northeast. We have been monitoring your situation and request permission to approach from the south for a rescue approach."

"Roger, Angel One-Niner. Permission granted," replied the lead OV-10. "We have had occasional small arms fire. Your assistance is appreciated."

"Phoenix One-Six, this is Red Hawk One. Continue scouting north of the area. Rattler flight will provide support. Red Hawk Two will cover the approach of Angel One Niner."

James replied, "Wilco, out."

A massive Sikorski CH-53 helicopter gracefully swooped over the wreck and stopped in a high hover. Moments later, a jungle-penetrator descended from its belly with a specially trained airman holding on. The airman's camouflaged face looked down as he hugged the heavy base of the penetrator. He had lots of gear hanging around him.

The airman hit the ground within the gorge upslope of the wreckage. He skillfully drew a machine pistol and looked around carefully for danger. Sensing none, he made his way along the creek to the aircraft in the trees. Trees were bent from the crash, delicately holding the wreckage above them. He climbed twenty feet into the damaged trees to reach the crash site. The airman carefully sprung his lean body onto the wing. Anxious bloody faces looked out to him for help.

The airman said, "We will get you out of here, like real quick." He quickly but skillfully examined each soldier. He assured them all was okay.

He pulled out a small radio from his belt and said, softly, "One Niner, Zero-Six here. We have multiple broken bones; I need the penetrator with litter and assistance. Aircraft in trees seems stable; suggest you send penetrator down over us."

"Roger Zero-Six, One-Niner, out."

The jungle-penetrator descended this time directly over the broken wing of the aircraft. Another warrior in camouflage got off on the wing of the crippled Bird Dog. It moved uneasily under the additional weight. Another soon had a wounded pilot strapped into a stretcher and hoisted up. The second survivor came up in a sitting sling. On the third trip up, both Air Force medics came up together, sitting on small metal seats straddling the jungle-penetrator. They each held their weapons ready and searched below for danger.

"Red Hawk ONE, Angel One-Niner is outbound for Chu Lai hospital."

"Thanks, Angel, we appreciate your help."

"Roger Red Hawk, ditto from us."

The Loach climbed to a safe altitude and joined several circling helicopters breaking off to return to Chu Lai. The Red Hawk flight headed north to Da Nang.

"Phoenix One-Six and Rattler Flight, thanks for your help, guys. Good work."

"Roger One," replied James. He continued, Rattlers, "Thanks for covering our butts."

"Roger, Rattlers are always ready to strike. Call anytime. We are in the yellow pages listed as have gun will travel."

After landing at Ky Hai, Lieutenants Duffy and James were ordered to report to Major Fulton in Operations. Fulton was a lean, tall Texan greatly respected by the unit.

The Major looked into the faces of the two men braced before them and said, "Duffy, just what in the hell were you guys doing in an unarmed Loach, in webbed seats hovering over the trees in Indian country with what, four hours each in that egg beater?"

Duffy kept his mouth shut. Figuring it was better to say nothing.

"Did you guys know what in the hell you were doing?"

Duffy answered this One, a bit sarcastically. "Yes, Sir. We were using hunter-killer-team tactics taught to us at Hunter."

"That's the biggest bunch of bullshit I heard today. They don't teach that in Flight School."

"James, what do you think? What was going on out there? What tactics do you think you were using?"

"Well, sir, we kind of made them up as we went along."

"That's what I mean; you guys didn't know what the hell you were doing, had an unarmed aircraft that neither of you were signed off to fly. You could have gotten your asses shot off."

"Tell me," he said quietly, "Why did you do it?"

Duffy answered, "Sir, we were there, and they needed us. And Sir, I thought we flew pretty damn well."

"Well, guys, the CO from the Rattlers called me. For some reason, unbeknownst to me, he thinks you two no-counts deserve a citation. I can't imagine why. Get out of here, gentlemen!"

The pilots turned, but the Major then raised his hand, stopping them in their tracks. "Wait One." He lets out a shit-eating grin. "Tell you what, Girls. I'll buy you each a scotch at the club."

"YES, SIR," they replied.

The two of them quickly left. Leffert was waiting for them outside the OPS shed and gave them each playful shoulder blocks. "How did it go?" he asked.

"No problem," Duffy said.

The three of them headed to the officers club as James said, "Lee, did I ever tell you how the Duff-man got his name?"

"Oh, let me think," replied Leffert as he continued with an old, familiar routine. "Hmm, does his name have something to do with a low frontal assault on a pretty woman with a full gainer in the layout position, and does it rhyme with a covering to keep a pretty girl's hands warm in the winter?"

"Yes," replied James as Duffy smiled. He loved his nickname.

[Editor's Note: Darryl James is the author of the book titled *Phoenix 13*. It details stories of flying with Americal Division artillery Air Section in a scout helicopter in 1968 and 1969. The book has an introduction by Four Star General Tommy Franks, who served in Americal Division Artillery in 1967 as a 1LT.]

**Dear editor,**

My name is Bill Harris. I served from March 26, 1968 to March 23, 1969. For most of the past 53 years I have tried not to think about my experiences. Recently I have and I found a bunch of old letters and pics from my service. I decided to try to make a video out of all of it and I did. There are of course many pics and stories of guys who I have no idea where they are or if they are still alive. If anyone who served in these units is interested I posted the video on YouTube. Vietnam Letters and Pics March 1968 - March 1969 Infantry 5/46/198th & 4/21/11th Americal Division

**Bill Harris:** [REDACTED]

**Dear editor,**

I served in Delta Co. 1st of the 20th Inf. 11th Infantry Brigade, Americal Div (23rd Infantry Division). I was in Nam 1970/1971. Search "Wolfie the Grunt" to see my tribute to last Chaplain to be killed in combat.

**John Wolf:** [REDACTED]

**Dear editor,**

I wanted to report that Father Robert E. Gariepy, 91, affectionately known in 3/21 Infantry as "Sky Pilot", passed on 12 February 2022. He was born 16 May 1930 in Leominster, Mass. He served with 3/21 Infantry and other units of the 196th LIB in 1968-69. He retired as a Lieutenant Colonel from the US Army with 23 years of service.

**Chuck Horner; C 3/21 68-69**

**Dear editor,**

I have a flag that was brought home from Vietnam. It says drinking time with 23rd S & T BN and the Americal Division crest. Also has the letters BGDSATBITWFA. I was always told it meant Best God Dam Supply And Transport Battalion In The Whole Fuckin Army. My cousin who brought it home has passed, and I am concerned that when I go it will be thrown out. Is there anyone who can tell me about this flag, and perhaps somewhere I can donate it where it will be treated with respect? Can send pictures.

**Perry Coleman:** [REDACTED]

**Dear editor,**

Colonel Ronald R. Richardson, former commander of 5/46th Infantry, died in Florida on January 19, 2022. He was a great man. I had the chance to talk with him for a half hour last fall. He was a gracious gentleman and overjoyed to talk with me, even though we were on opposite ends of the chain of command.

**Gerald Fox**

**A Real Horse Manure Story**

By Edward E. Wziatek



**Specialist Edward Wziatek in rear area next to homemade shower, 1969.**

This happened on several occasions. I never questioned who may have bought us the beer. I was just grateful for a warm beer or two. Just figured it was the C.O. or one of the lieutenants or maybe even the battalion commander. Well I know who bought us the beer. The source is someone who had no connection to us other than being in Vietnam and in the Army the same time we were. I met this gentleman 50 years later. I guess somewhat by accident.

My youngest daughter raises Quarter horses. Of course horses eat a lot and they shit a lot. We used to throw it away. Then I purchased a hydraulic dump trailer. My daughter thought why throw it away- lets see if it can be repurposed for compost. Well we started to deliver horse manure to people within the vicinity. One day we were at a gentleman's home in a cul de sac, not much was said. Small talk, chit chat, but he did say he would want a couple more loads.

The next time we delivered by him. He said to me, "You know I was with with that outfit." On the back of the window of my truck, I have a C.I.B., 198th LIB, and Americal decals. I asked him what brigade he was with. He answered, "Oh no, I wasn't infantry. I was a helicopter pilot. I did the resupply and combat assaults for you guys." Then he asked what was my forward L.Z. I answered, "Stinson." He said "Oh yeah, I resupplied your battalion quite a bit. I would sometimes go to the P.X. the night before or morning of and buy four to five cases of beer and bring it out to the field." Now I know who was footing the bill for those beers in 1969.

Unfortunately, I recently found out he passed away on November 4, 2019. His name was Larry K. Webb. His wife didn't know his rank or unit, but he flew out of Chu Lai.

**Dear editor,**

I truly enjoyed your homecoming article in a past issue of the Americal Journal - especially the part about wanting to shoot that guy but only in the foot. We all had similar experiences coming back from Vietnam, it's too bad yours was from a fellow soldier- who I assume had not been deployed to VN, and seemed only concerned about his own personal comfort.

Below is an article I wrote several years ago for our Far West Chapter newsletter contrasting my homecoming from Vietnam with that of my son Rodney returning from Iraq. I like to believe that because society finally recognized the shabby treatment that we received, this is an atonement for the need to honor the war fighters serving this country.

**Rick Ropele**

**Homecoming Celebrations for Returning Servicemen**

By Rick Ropele

My son Rod, is serving in the Army in Iraq and is due to return to the United States after his tour ends in August. Before I tell you about his experience returning home for R & R, let me frame it in context with a small episode from my homecoming.

I came back as a medevac patient as a result of the TET Offensive of 1968, ultimately ending up at the hospital at Fort Ord. You hear the stories about returning soldiers being castigated by crowds of people calling them names and spitting, I never was overtly set upon by anyone, but when opportunities arose for assistance, no one bothered:

I remember returning to Fort Ord after my first convalescent leave. I was in my Class A uniform, on crutches and the plane landed at San Jose so that I could get a connecting flight to Monterey and get back to the post hospital. Well, it was raining in San Jose, the flight was late and I missed the last connecting flight to Monterey.

I'm crutching around the San Jose airport trying to figure out how to get back to Fort Ord before my leave expires at midnight. A cabbie says he'll drive me there for \$100. Crap, I don't have that kind of money. I finally connect with a train and for \$20 it has a stop directly across from the main gate.

It's still raining, it's dark, I get off the train, crutch my way across the coast highway, get on post, but I can't get a cab to the post hospital. So the only alternative was to crutch my way down the road back to the hospital. I'm absolutely soaked through my uniform. Fortunately, some other soldier stops and gives me a ride.

It's hard to believe that it still bothers me that no one at San Jose would go out of their way to assist an obviously wounded soldier.

Now, in contrast, read my son's experience when he came home on R & R.

Rod left Kuwait with all the others going on leave where they were routed to Germany and divided into an East Coast group and a West Coast group and put on commercial airliners.

After leaving Germany, he landed in Dallas to get his connecting flight to California. The picture is a postcard, but this is just the first indication of how the returning troops are first greeted upon returning to American soil.

The caption on the postcard reads:

**Dallas/fort Worth International Airport**  
**Welcome Home Our Troops**

**Each day, the DFW Airport community welcomes home U.S. troops returning from the Middle East for Rest and Recuperation. Upon arrival, DFW Fire and Rescue officers salute the arriving flight with its traditional 'Shower of Affection'. The water salute consists of two water turrets with nozzles that discharge 1,500 gallons of water per minute arcing over the plane.**

Rod said that after going through customs and leaving the International Terminal and moving through the main airport to their various gates, all the other waiting passengers stopped what they were doing, turned, and applauded the troops as they walked through the airport. He said that all throughout the airport along the way there were groups of people, men, women, teenagers, children, scouts, were applauding and cheering for them.

I know it was hard for them to be the center of attention, but I also know they appreciated the recognition for their service. Rod said something to the affect: 'Man, those people in Texas are the real Americans'.

I guess I'm jealous that the country recognizes and acknowledges their service and contribution, but our same contribution was pushed to the side as though everyone was ashamed. It's hard to believe that after 40 years, I can still let these things affect me.

I think it's great that the country recognizes that the contribution and sacrifice the men and women of the military make to the peace and stability of our country and to other countries throughout the world. I'm proud to have worn the uniform and represented the United States of America in time of war. I'm proud and stand with my fellow Vietnam Veterans and say to those returning from Iraq, Afghanistan, and other places, 'Thanks for your service, you are my heroes'.

Since the first gulf war, troops returning from the Middle East have been hailed as heroes and given the recognition they deserve for their world wide peace keeping efforts.

How grateful I am for these experiences for him.





Roger Gilmore

Richardson, TX 75080

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### 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  
American 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:

World War II	1942-1945
Panama	1954-1956
Vietnam War	1967-1973

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

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

Annual Dues: \$15.

Life Dues by current age:

Age 75: \$50, Age 74: \$60, Age 73: \$70,

Age 72: \$80, Age 71: \$90, Age 70 or younger: \$100.

No dues for World War II Veterans.

Change of address notifications should be sent to:

Mr. Roger Gilmore

Send applications and dues to:  
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If changes are seasonal please provide dates.