



# River Currents



General Fulton/Omar Bradley  
Last 5 Star General Dong Tam 1967

Honoring Army KIAs on the Benewah

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## From the Galley

Hope this finds everyone well and okay and having some nice weather after all the bad weather we have had the last few months; it was a wicked winter that went into the spring.

Not much going on—the association is up and running on all cylinders with no problems.

Some of you have asked how you can get on the base at Coronado to see the CCB and other boats, and the memorial wall as well. Member Tom Mason explains below.



Al Moore

### Update on the Unit Memorial and Boat Visitation Requirements

As we work daily and weekly on the Memorial, we are always complimented on its appearance. The site is right next door to the Amphib base housing and those folks utilize our spot daily. Since the Navy has cut way back on basic grounds maintenance, our site is referred to as the real green oasis amongst a sea of



brown, dead grass.

The tenet commands utilize our site weekly for retirements, commissionings, picnics, changes of command, and graduations. It would be hard to give a number of visitors but there are folks there every day, if they can get on the base.

For people who ask for guidance, they have to go to our web site for direction ([www.vummf.org](http://www.vummf.org)). A guide has to be someone with the proper ID (retired serviceman, DEA, etc.) in order to vouch for the visitors. For instance, since I did not retire from the service, my ID only covers me and NOT my wife or 2-year-old granddaughter. Security is very sticky on that.

Take care, Albert, and thanks again. Tom Mason COS RivRons 9 and 13 (1968-69)

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### Doing The River Currents

Folks, I think you will enjoy the newsletter. Some of you may think I do the newsletter all on my own. That's

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Tom Lively



## Fire Direction Control

by Tom Lively 3rd/34th Arty  
([Gabriel@consolidated.net](mailto:Gabriel@consolidated.net))

Albert—Of all my experiences and now stories about the RVN, this is the one that is most difficult for me and causes me the most problem even today. I guess I just need to get it out there to purge my mind or something like that.

Like I said, I was one of the RTOs for Charlie Battery at a fire base called KLAU some miles south of Ben Tre. We were a 105-mm Battery located in the middle of a rice paddy and set up on platforms just to get us above the water line. For a period in 1969, we ran a number of split missions and kind of followed the infantry wherever they might be operating with three of our guns staying at KLAU and the other three moving further out into the field (and into some pretty spooky locations). My one disclaimer is still the same—my memory is not always real clear on what happen back then, but this is the way I remember it.

The way we worked in Fire Direction Control (FDC) there would be one RTO

on call at all times with two guys on mapping charts. If we got a call from a unit that needed some help, I would take the basic info including grid location and what contact had been established (ambush... taking fire from bunkers... sniper, etc.). My job was to get things started and offer them immediate assistance. The two guys on the charts would identify their grid location and verify the same on both charts and then plot distance, etc. I would be on the radio to battalion in Dong Tam requesting clearance to fire and giving them the info the forward observer had given to me. At the same time, I would get the guns up and moving with "Guns, Battery Adjust, Fire Mission, and Contact." Once we got clearance to fire, it became strictly between us and the guys out in the field. We controlled the amount and type fire (high explosive [HE], air burst, or ground explosion), but the FO could request whatever he thought necessary since they were the ones on the ground and taking fire. And we always

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## Veterans Day 2014 Washington, DC

The MRFA and 9th Infantry Division will be placing wreaths at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, on Veterans Day, Tuesday, November 11, 2014. We will be gathering at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial at 8:30 a.m. and proceed to The Wall at 9:00 a.m. on November 11.

We have blocked 40 rooms at the Arlington Court Suites, a Clarion Collection Hotel, in Arlington, Virginia, from November 8 to 11 (check out on 11/12). Room rates are \$119 (plus tax) per night.

For reservations, call 1-703-524-4000 ext. "0." Please state our group name "MRFA" and give your dates of arrival and departure. If you plan to attend, you

must make your reservations under our group code prior to the cutoff date of October 15, 2014.

The Arlington Court Suites is located at 1200 N Courthouse Rd, Arlington, Virginia 22201. For more information on this hotel, go to <http://www.arlingtoncourthotel.com/>.

The MRFA and 9th Infantry Division will have a hospitality room available November 8 to 11. Come join us as we honor our fallen Brothers on Veterans Day 2014. We look forward to seeing you in DC.

For more information, contact Board Member Bob (Doc) Pries, (513) 659-4974, [priesr1@att.net](mailto:priesr1@att.net).

# The Smallest Flight Deck

... "It's like driving on an expressway with your eyes closed." said Warrant Officer John Held, in explaining his first reaction to night landing operations aboard what is considered to be the smallest helicopter flight deck in the world, aboard a craft only 56 feet long ...

A U.S. Army UH-ID "Huey" helicopter lands on a U.S. Navy Armored Troop Carrier (ATC) in the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam. The ATC, part of the joint Army-Navy Mobile Riverine Force, has been equipped with a detachable flight deck—probably the world's smallest.

The Army pilot was testing a newly developed night landing system aboard the flight deck installed on an ATC. His landing the 200th aboard the boat since the Helo deck was added last August. The occasion was celebrated later when the boat captain Boatswain's Mate Second Class Lloyd Dillavou invited the pilot to cut a special cake commemorating the event aboard the boat.

"You have no idea what's it's like" Warrant Officer Held said, "to bring a Helo down on something that small especially when you're 500 feet up and it's pitch dark. It can be difficult in the day time; but in the dark you lose sense of perspective when you near the flight deck. It's the last 50 feet that count," he added "when you lose sight of the landing area. Then it's up to the Navy crewmen below to get us down and they have become real experts at it. I'll say one thing; it's a lot better than trying to slip into some unlighted hole in the jungle."

To increase the effectiveness of night landing aboard the small carriers, the Navy installed an electric fluorescent lighting system around the sides of the flight deck making the light visible only from the air.

Boatswain's Mate Dillavou said that aboard the floating landing pad is sometimes more hazardous than when he was serving on the Fleet carrier Valley Forge in the Atlantic. Aboard the Valley Forge," he said "we had a little more margin for errors on the flight deck, but the Helo pilot here in the delta are good

and we have never had any serious problems."

Now that helicopters can use the recently conceived Helo pad on the ATC at night, it gives the Mobile Riverine Force an around the clock capability for medical evacuations, resupply, and troop lifts. *Boats Lloyd Amos Dillavou passed away in 2005; he was living in Lakeside, CA.*

Albert Moore [mrfa35@charter.net](mailto:mrfa35@charter.net)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
I never landed a Helo on an ATC flight deck but I was on a Helo that did. I landed as a passenger on a Tango "Flight Deck" once in a Huey ... it was like taking a crap and not really knowing if your butt was over the toilet or not; all landings required the help and directional assistance of the boat crew. Until the skids made contact with the deck, I was positive we would wind up in the river. The terror of a landing, however, was experienced equally by the boat crew: a slight miss caused by a puff-of-wind and they'd have some WHOPPING terror descend upon them; it was a no-miss and no second-chance situation. *Courtney Frobenius Bravo-26 B CO 3rd/60th Riverine Infantry 9th Inf Div courtneymfrobenius@yahoo.com*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
Albert, Good luck on this latest quest of yours!

About the only thing I have to add is that the very first landing of a Huey on our T-152-6 boat was in bright daylight, the flagstaff had been lowered, and I sat like "Kilroy Was Here" on the lip of my Mk-19 open mount. Luckily, as the bird gingerly descended to our boat's flight deck, I saw that the two long antennas were still up; so we got that quickly cured at the last minute.

Also, the Hueys' tail rotor had always looked "small" to me before that day, but from 20' away, it looks as impressive as its actual length of 8' 6" commands it to be.

*Thanks for listening, Rich Lorman T-152-6 (1968-69) richlorm@comcast.net*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
I understand that there was a 'plan' in the early '60s to convert

the Terrell County (LST-1157) into a Helo Support Vessel, with the tank deck being refit like a fuel tanker.

Now that would have been an 'interesting' ride . . . X # of gallons of fuel while bouncing around in a typhoon or, in some instances, those Ts would be a rough ride if you were 'riding the swells.' *George O'Connell USS Terrell County (1960-62) groconnell@Lst1157.com*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
Amidst all of these serious life and death matters, we always seemed to find some kind of humor to get us through the hard times. I'd like to share a personal story regarding the 100th Landing. Uh . . . or was it the 101st Landing? I'll let you be the judge. First, here's a recent quote from Bill Janes who piloted Hueys for the U.S. Army 191st Assault Helicopter Company: "What did you guys call them boats that had the elevated helipad installed on 'em? We called them 'Hell to land on' because we figured that somebody had gone out and measured the skids on a Huey and gave us 6 inches on each side. It took both pilots, the crew chief, and the door gunner burning up the intercom to get us down on one of 'em without falling in the water."

To read more about the "100th Helicopter Landing" on our RAD 152 Medical Aid Boats, T-152-2 and T-152-5, check out this link (<http://www.riverinesailor.com/100th.htm>). It is quite a story complete with a cake that was baked by the support ship's cooks. *Warm regards, Mike Harris (T-152-1) mekong152@99.w.us*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
Albert, Several years ago my wife and I attended a special presentation at the Boeing Museum of Flight in Seattle, Washington, called "Vietnam Pilots" that consisted of four Vietnam Veterans. One was a B-52 pilot, two were fighter jockeys, and the fourth was a Huey pilot who served in the Delta. When the



Photo by PH2 E. P. Shinton U.S. Navy ComRivFlot ONE

question and answer period arrived, I asked the helicopter pilot if he ever landed on a Tango boat. He said that yes, he had, many times. He said that the thrill wasn't just landing on a postage stamp he couldn't see, but of taking off again. He explained that the flight decks on the Tango boats were not big enough to give the rotor enough lift for flight so pilots basically had to nose their birds off the decks and over water to get airborne again. He said that could be a real problem if the boats were grouped close together. *Dave Raybell M-111-3 (11/66-02/68) dwwraybell@aol.com*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
In a recent "River Currents" article, the membership was asked for info as to how many helos actually landed on the USS Benewah. MRFA member Richard Pettit (USS Satyr ARL-23) sent an article that appeared in a November '70 issue of "Stars and Stripes." The article, *Benewah Bids Goodbye to Vietnam*, stated that the Benewah landed 16,800 helos during her time in-country with the Brown Water Navy and Army. Vic Campbell, the Benewah's last XO, sent the Benewah's decommissioning brochure. The Benewah was decommissioned for the last time on February 26, 1971.

During the June 1998 San Diego Reunion, MRFA member George Schneider (USS Benewah 1967-68) presented an American Flag to MRFA President Albert B. Moore. The flag flew over the Benewah during TET of 1968. That's a lot of Helo landings in any man's Navy.

*Thanks to all, MRFA President Albert B. Moore ★*

## FROM THE GALLEY

Continued from previous page

not the case. Some of the articles in the newsletter are from you the membership, and if I need more suitable articles for the newsletter, I have to go on our web site or on the Internet.

Once I go through this stage, I send what I have collected to Georgie Ardinger who proofreads

the newsletter and puts it in a newsletter format. Then Georgie sends it to our graphic designer Robin Bartell who then does her magic and we come out with an excellent newsletter. After Robin has it ready, she ships it to our printer who prints the newsletter and sends it out to our members. Mike Harris posts the newsletter on the web site and Don Blankenship sends it out to all who like to receive the newsletter by their

e-mail address. So it's more than just me.

We are always seeking articles from you the members. Now that's the hardest part—we have a few members who send articles quite often, but we would like to hear from you, the members who have never sent an article in to do so. If you need help, we can assist.

Don't forget we have a reunion in 2015 at the Indianapolis

Marriott East, Indianapolis, IN. There were a couple of glitches at the hotel for the last reunion. Frank Jones is working with the Indianapolis Marriott East to make sure we won't have the problem with the Individual Hospitality Rooms in 2015.

Folks stay well and take care of one another. I'll be talking with you in the next newsletter.

*Albert mrfa35@charter.net ★*

## FIRE DIRECTION

Continued from page 1

started each fire mission with one round of Willie Pete (WP) in the air. This initial round would normally occur within 1 to 3 minutes from the initial call. The idea was for the FO to adjust the fire off of that first round depending on where they thought Charlie was at the time (add 100, drop 100, left or right 100, etc.). That's the way it was supposed to work, but that's not what happened in this story and we did have all six guns available.

When this call came in, I can't really identify the unit that was under attack, although I don't believe I would name them if I really could remember. The time was in the spring of 1969 and it was during the early hours of the morning. The call came in and I could hear the shouting and screaming as well as the sound of the incoming and outgoing fire. The FO was obviously in a bind and was screaming into the radio.

We got clearance and put the marking round out in maybe 3 minutes or less, and the FO immediately called for a battery 6 - HE on the ground; so six guns with six rounds each for a total of 36 rounds of HE on the ground. Our guns were calibrated for overlapping fire with each round covering an area of about 50' so six guns would cover about 300' x 50' and in that area we were putting 36 total rounds.

And when talking to these guys in these type situations, my attempt was always to keep things cool, letting them know to keep their heads down and just adjust fire and we'd get them out of the fix they were in. Be positive; keep talking them through it until the danger was over. I got the guns up and ready and gave the order to 'fire' and our six guns went off almost at the same time and then I had the FO on the line to let him know 'rounds in the air, danger close'. Our guns would automatically fire the next five of six rounds as quickly as they could get them in the tube. I could still hear the firing and screaming when the first volley began to impact their location and the FO began to scream 'short round . . . short round!' The mic down to the guns was already in my hand and I gave the command 'guns, check fire, check fire, check your fire', but the second volley was already on the way. Before I could get the mission stopped, we had put 12 rounds in or on their location. And then there was silence. I just couldn't raise anyone at all.

Now, today, I just can't remember what happened after that. I know we put a check fire on the entire Province and I'm sure there must have been an investigation. We didn't have any more fire missions that day but I just have no memory of anything else. It's been 40+ years and I still have dreams about the RVN and this one particular mission. I don't dream about the actual mission, but I hear their screams and it never fails to wake me. There's a price to pay I guess. In the heat of battle, I think the FO just failed to adjust fire away from his position or didn't give us the correct grid coordinates to begin with, but lots of bullets were flying and his people were dying. I never found out how bad it was, but it was bad. Today it's called friendly-fire, but back then we just said somebody f---up! Today, I can't change it and I can't forget it. I do know that we were back doing what we could do to keep our guys alive the next day. And I made extra sure it never came close to happening again. My call sign was Charlie 2-9 . . . in a land far, far away and when we were young and trying to find our way back home. ★



## History of the USS Askari (ARL-30)

USS Askari (ARL-30) was laid down on 8 December 1944 at Seneca, Ill., by the Chicago Bridge & Iron Co.; launched on 2 March 1945; and sponsored by Mrs. Patricia Ann Jacobsen as LST-1131. She was then ferried down the Mississippi River to New Orleans, where the landing craft repair ship was commissioned on 15 March 1945, Lt. Charles L. Haslup in command. On 28 March, she got underway for Jacksonville, Fla., where she was decommissioned on 9 April 1945 for outfitting for her role by the Merrill-Stevens Drydock & Repair Co. The ship was recommissioned as USS Askari on 23 July 1945.

Early in August, the ship voyaged from Jacksonville to Norfolk where she remained until putting to sea on the 20th, bound for the Pacific Ocean. After transiting the Panama Canal and steaming north along the Pacific Coast, she reached San Diego on 21 September. At the beginning of October, Askari shifted north to Seattle, and remained in the Puget Sound area at various locations until the spring of 1946. Early in April 1946, the ship headed south and arrived back at San Diego on the 10th. She operated in that vicinity until sailing for the Marshall Islands on 12 December 1947. Steaming by way of Hawaii, the repair ship arrived at Eniwetok in the Marshalls on 11 January 1948 and spent the next 4 months providing maintenance services to the landing craft operating in support of Operation "Sandstone," nuclear bomb tests conducted there late in April and early in May. After the experiments ended, Askari left Eniwetok on 29 May and headed back via Pearl Harbor to San Diego. She reached that port on 25 June and resumed local operations.

Her service at San Diego continued through the outbreak of fighting in Korea late in June 1950. The vessel sailed for the Far East on 10 August of that year and arrived in



Kobe, Japan, on 6 September. Four days later, she was underway to participate in the amphibious landing to be carried out on the 15th at Inchon on South Korea's western coast. Askari served at Inchon for slightly over a month before moving to Wonsan on the eastern coast of North Korea late in October. Chinese communist forces entered the conflict toward the end of November and sent the United Nations forces reeling southward. A portion of those troops converged on Hungnam, located due north of Wonsan about 40 miles distant, for evacuation. Askari shifted north from Wonsan to Hungnam to support the ships and craft engaged in bringing out the troops. During December, she fueled, repaired, and provided other services to the amphibious craft and ships transporting the troops. The evacuation ships embarked the last infantrymen about mid-afternoon on Christmas Eve, and Askari departed Hungnam with them. Steaming via Pusan, she arrived in Yokosuka, Japan, on the last day of 1950.

She remained in Japan until departing Yokosuka on 9 February 1951 to return to Pusan. There, the ship tended amphibious ships and craft until mid-April when she headed home. She spent 10 days in Yokosuka before resuming her voyage to the United States. Askari arrived in San Diego on 26 May and remained there until she moved to the Mare Island Naval Shipyard during the second week in July for overhaul. She

completed repairs in mid-September 1951 and returned to amphibious repair duties at San Diego on the 20th. On 31 July 1952, she stood out to sea and proceeded to the western Pacific. Except for a brief visit to Kobe late in February 1953, Askari spent the entire deployment at Yokosuka performing repair work in support of the amphibious ships and craft attached to the 7th Fleet. The ship departed Yokosuka on 6 April 1953 to return to the United States and reentered San Diego Bay on 3 May. After an overhaul at Mare Island that occupied most of the summer of 1953, Askari again took up repair duties at San Diego at the beginning of the second week in September. Just over a year later, on 20 September 1954, she headed back toward the Far East.

This time, however, she charted a course for a new trouble spot—the coast of Southeast Asia. France's withdrawal from Indochina fragmented the peninsula into Laos; Cambodia; and two Vietnams: a communist state in the north, and a democratic one in the south. The new political arrangement prompted a massive migration of people in which the United States Navy was called upon to carry out the seaborne portion of the movement. Askari arrived at Henriette Passé in Along Bay near Haiphong in the north on 29 October and began providing repair and other support services for the transports, tank landing ships and landing craft that would carry refugees from what would be communist North Vietnam to democratic South Vietnam in Operation "Passage to Freedom."

The ship ended her service on the Vietnamese coast on 18 November and promptly got underway, via Hong Kong, for Japan. She arrived at Yokosuka on 4 December 1954, and 4 days later, moved to Sasebo to conduct repair operations until 1 February

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# The River of Death

*continued from the 2014 Spring edition of River Currents*

Here's the story upon which the Men in the Boats poem was based. (Rerun by request Albert)

For the second attempt to run the gauntlet and get ashore on the White Beaches, Col. Doty directed that Capt. Bothelo's Company C, 3/47 replace Davis's Company B, 3/60, which as lead company had been hit the hardest in the first try. Company B, 3/60 would serve as the brigades ready reaction force. To support the fresh effort, a light fire team of two armed helicopters arrived overhead. Doty arranged for the artillery to begin firing as the task force neared the southern edge of the ambush zone and then walk its fire up both banks of the river just ahead of the boats as the convoy sailed northward. Both soldiers and sailors were to reconnoiter by fire against the banks, but because American troops were moving overland from the east, the 20- and 40-mm guns and 0.50 cal. machine guns were to be used only against the west bank. While the boats were still forming for the second try, the first of 16 air strikes were ordered for the rest of the operation to begin. Three F-4C phantoms came to drop bombs and napalm on the ambush zone, a 100 meters in from the east bank. Just after 1000, the second attempt to run through the enemy force began. This time no element of surprise existed for either side; the battle would be settled by fire power alone. But the Americans now possessed considerably more firepower. In addition to the three batteries of artillery walking shells up the banks, the helicopter gunships and the jets would add their fire. Their combined fires were expected to keep the enemy from effectively engaging the passing boats.

The convoy entered the ambush zone with every weapon in action, aided by the helicopters and artillery. Yet again the enemy opened fire, and the fight raged all along the ambush line. If any of the VC had withdrawn, it failed to show in the volume of firepower. From the earth covered bunkers, heavy weapons fire poured onto the boats, but they kept moving up the river. As in the earlier run, one of the two minesweepers was hit first: T-91-3 took two rockets, one in the coxswains' flat, one on the port 0.50 cal. mount. Then a tango boat was hit and five of the replacement crew were wounded. Again a small boat atop the troop carrier caught fire. Although the other minesweeper was

hit seven times by rockets, only three of the crew were wounded. Rocket after rocket passed inches over the tops of the crew compartments of the tangos, the men inside certain that the VC gunners were trying again to explode their rockets so that they would scatter deadly fragments into the troop compartments. Again, in one case, they succeeded.

A rocket detonated against the starboard canopy of Tango 111-10, spewing fragments on the men below. Two Navy crewman and 18 soldiers were wounded. Miraculously, only one soldier died. In one blow Company A 3/47, 3rd Platoon was struck down; only five men of the platoon would leave the boat to fight on the beach.

The first boats reached White Beach Two and the Navy crews were soon nosing their crafts against the muddy banks. As they dropped their ramps, the men of Companies A and C 3/47 dashed ashore, followed by Company B 3/60 as the brigade commander released the company from its role of reserve. Hardly had the men landed and a few feet in from the river when fire from individual VC riflemen began to fall among them, punctuated at a few points by automatic rifle fire. The troops returned the fire, relying chiefly on M-79 grenade launchers with canister ammunition. As the men hugged the ground, artillery shells fell ahead of them, stopping only when three F-100s roared in to drop bombs and napalm a short distance in front. Then a second flight followed to drop bombs and strafe with 20-mm guns. Once the aircraft had finished their run, artillery quickly returned to the fight.

The three company commanders meanwhile checked by radio to determine the losses incurred in running upriver. Company B 3/60 had made the passes with only a few slightly wounded, this was the same for Company C 3/47. Company A 3/47 was the hardest hit, had lost 18 wounded in one platoon alone, Captain Orth expressed doubt to Col. Doty that his command could accomplish the mission. Doty replied: "You haven't much choice; you've got to continue on." Orth answered: "We're moving out."

The biggest problems the troops on shore faced at the moment were a lack of visibility. They could see neither the enemy that occasionally taunted them with fire nor many of their own number; for soon after leaving the river bank they were swallowed up by dense scrub jungle. The thick foliage also prevented supporting fire from those Navy boats that stayed behind from the mission of patrolling the river in order to aid the ground troops. Although the companies were within 150 meters of each other, an hour passed before all three had established physical contact. Meanwhile, the companies cleared

drop zones to facilitate aerial supply and evacuation of the wounded.

Overhead, Col. Doty observed artillery fire, coordinated air strikes, and assisted his companies in linking up. Around noon, as the companies at last had established contact, he received a message from brigade headquarters directing a change in mission. Instead of serving as a blocking force while the 5/60 moved overland from the east, the 3/60 was to drive south, while the 3/47 pushed north. The 5/60 mission to push to the west was remained, but the battalion was to be augmented by the 2/60, brought in by helicopter. Thus, four battalions would press against the enemy from three sides. About 200 meters from the river, the men at last emerged into more open ter-

***A rocket detonated against the starboard canopy of Tango 111-10, spewing fragments on the men below. Two Navy crewman and 18 soldiers were wounded. Miraculously, only one soldier died. In one blow Company A 3/47, 3rd Platoon was struck down; only five men of the platoon would leave the boat to fight on the beach.***

rain, Company C on the left in a field of high grass and cane and Company A on the right in a dry rice paddy. Yet leaving the jungle behind was a mixed blessing, for the enemy immediately raked the fields with small arms and automatic weapons fire. As soon as the men hit the ground, few had any idea where the enemy was hidden. Most were content to hold their fire while forward observers with the company commanders called in support. The artillery did the job. When the fire stopped the companies resumed their advance. Companies A and B could see each other now, Company C was still lost from view. Passing through a wood line that had only moments before sheltered the enemy, Company A's forward observer saw three VC run into a cluster of huts. As the infantrymen fired M79s against the huts, the forward observer called in artillery. At about the same time Spec. 4 David Hershberger a machine gunner in Company A, spotted one of the VC, brought his heavy weapon to his shoulder, and dropped the enemy with a short burst. When a second enemy soldier ran toward his downed partner, Hershberger grabbed an M-14 from a

sniper trained rifleman and dropped the second man with one round at about 250 meters. Slowly, for much of the rest of the afternoon, the southward advance continued. From time to time enemy fire increased sharply, forcing the infantry to cover, but air strikes, artillery, and the riflemen's sheer determination to move ahead kept the advance going. As the afternoon waned, the battalion was nevertheless only about 500 meters south of Beach White Two. When at 1700 Col. Doty reported to brigade that his units were heavily engaged, Col. David deemed it better to risk the VC escaping the area than to have the troops face the night disorganized. He instructed Col. Doty to break contact and pull back into a night defensive perimeter. Leaving patrols behind to cover the withdrawal. The companies pulled back to a position near Beach White Two, in the process eliminating by passed snipers as they went. By late afternoon the companies had linked in a semicircular night defensive position with the river and the Navy boats at their backs. Capt. Davis of B Company, being the senior company commander took charge. As darkness fell, even sporadic sniper fire ceased. Through the night the command stood at 50% alert, a Spooky flare and gunship overhead kept the area constantly illuminated and artillery dropped on suspected enemy locations. The enemy made no effort to penetrate the perimeter, and the next morning the reason became apparent. He was less interested in fighting than in slipping out of the closing trap.

That many of the VC succeeded in escaping became clear as patrols of converging battalions, moving only against infrequent rifle fire, established contact. The rest of the morning the men checked approximately 250 enemy bunkers, discovered 79 enemy bodies, victims of small arms fire, artillery, and air strikes. Presumably, many more of the enemy had been wounded. The American Forces—all four battalions and Navy crews—had a total of 7 killed. But the fighting had exacted a toll of 123 wounded. Many had not required evacuation, however. Four of the enemy were detained, and one surrendered under the open arms program, using a safe conduct pass picked up in the area.

From the first shot of the ambush, the fighting had been almost continuous and much of the time, heavy. Both sides had been hurt, the 263rd Main Force VC Battalion by far the worst. Although it had left the field badly mauled, it was by no means destroyed.

The 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry, the U.S. Navy Task Force 117, and the 263rd VC Battalion would meet again. ★

# Vietnam Tour from April 1968 to April 1969

## With the 9th Infantry Division 2nd of the 39th (First Recondo Battalion) B Company 2nd Platoon Air Mobile in IV Corps (tactical zone or more commonly known as The Mekong Delta)

By Monte T. Marten, Spec 4, MOS 11 Bravo (Light Weapons Infantry), United States Army 11/14/67-11/14/69)

The 9th Infantry Division lost a lot of men during the Tet Offensive earlier so I was one of the many replacements. There were still a lot of North Vietnamese in the South so 1968 became "the bloodiest year of the war."

We were ambushed my first night on patrol near fire base Lambert at an old schoolhouse, later known as "the night at the schoolhouse." I will never forget the intensity of the two rocket explosions and the crack of the AK-47s as well as the tracers that zipped through the darkness. All kinds of things go through your mind in a millisecond. Have I been hit? Will I be taken prisoner? The machine gunner asked me to feed the 60 for him so we moved toward the direction from which we were fired upon. While we were low crawling to the front, I turned my head and in the moonlight was face to face with a guy in a pool of blood. He was either hit with small arms or blown half way out of the door from the rockets.

There was no movement so I assumed he was dead. We continued to the front and cut loose with the 60 till we ran out of shells. It was all over like that. I remember Mike the gunner was shaking all over while I'm thinking "Where am I going to wash this blood?" I crawled through weeds and grass to get the blood off my hands.

As we rounded the corner on the back side of the schoolhouse, Doc was frantically wrapping what was left of a guy's leg with a poncho to stop



Monte T. Marten

the bleeding. It appeared to be at least two thirds gone. I took one end of the liter and we headed for the dust-off chopper while he was screaming "watch out for my leg." Shoot, the poor guy didn't have a leg but he was in such shock and loaded with morphine he didn't even know it! Could he have been the guy I came across in the doorway? Did he survive? I probably will never know. Such is the chaotic nature of war.

I remember later that night lying in a rice patty, looking up at the stars thinking "my odds of surviving this are not very good with over 11 months to go." I wrote home to my parents the next day to expect the worse and hope for the best.

As the year ground on, we were involved in frequent contact with the Viet Cong and large units of North Vietnamese Regulars along the Parrot's Beak and the Plain Of Reeds near Cambodia. During the period of March 7 through June 22, our unit distinguished itself in fierce fighting and received The Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism signed by President Richard Nixon. I have never considered myself a hero, a very grateful survivor is more like it. After all, I'm only here because of luck or the grace of God; seven of my guys didn't come home and many received life-changing wounds. Now they to me are the real heroes.

Upon returning home, I was overwhelmed by how good we have it here. Was given my old job



*I'm on the bottom row third from the left with the machine gun I got after the firefight. (That picture was taken at Rach Kien about August 13, 1968, if I remember correctly.)*

back and immediately threw myself into it trying to bury the war experience. A lot of the success I achieved in life I contribute to the discipline I received in the military, determination to make good use of the gift of life, and the need to bury that which I could not deal with. I've had a lot of trouble accepting it (and probably never will) that the North took Saigon.

If anyone should read this that happen to be there, I have always wondered how many casualties we took that night and if the guy we took to the dust-off survived. It was in May of '68 I believe and on Highway Four. ★

### ASKARI

Continued from page 3

1955. Askari departed Sasebo on the latter date to provide support services for the ships engaged in another humanitarian effort, the evacuation of Nationalist Chinese from the Tachen Islands. She returned from that mission to Sasebo on 14 February and operated there for the remainder of the deployment. On 5 March 1955, she stood out of Sasebo on her way back to the United States.

The ship reached San Diego again on 4 April and worked at that port for about 6 months. Late in October 1955, she moved north to Astoria, Oregon, and began preparations for inactivation. Askari was decommissioned there on 21 March 1956 and was berthed with the Columbia River Group, Pacific Reserve Fleet.

Askari remained in reserve for slightly more than a decade. During her repose, she was berthed first at Astoria; later moved to Stockton, Calif., and ended up at Mare Island. In 1964, the United States began to intensify its involvement in the war between the South Vietnamese Government and communist insurgents Operations in the swampy Mekong Delta called for the use of a large number of river assault craft and their attendant support ships.

Accordingly, Askari was taken to the Willamette Iron & Steel Co. at Richmond, Calif., late in November 1965 to prepare for service in South Vietnam. She was re-commissioned at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard on 13 August 1966, Lt. Commander John F. Campbell in command.

The ship spent the next 4 months fitting out, conducting shakedown training, and preparing to deploy to the Far East. She stood out of San Diego on 12 December 1966, bound for the western Pacific. However, an engineering casualty to her main propulsion plant caused her to remain in Pearl Harbor longer than anticipated. She finally pulled into Subic Bay in the Philippines on 6 February 1967. There Askari loaded provisions, stores, and spare parts for 5 days before heading on to her permanent assignment in South Vietnam. She steamed into Vung Tau Harbor on 15 February and reported for duty with River Assault Flotilla (RIVFLOT) ONE.

Askari spent the remainder of her Navy career providing repair and other support services for the river monitors, motorboats, and amphibious craft attached to Allied Riverine Forces in the Mekong Delta. She stayed at Vung Tau until the second week in June when she moved into the Delta proper. The repair ship arrived at Nha Be on the Soi Rap River about 5 miles south

of Saigon on 13 June. The mobility of the riverine forces was greatly enhanced by the fact that their base consisted of ships like Askari that could move with them throughout the Delta and be close at hand to provide support services. A permanent base ashore would not have afforded such immediacy. During 1967 and most of 1968, Askari moved from location to location in the Delta as the Mobile Riverine Force's zone of operations changed. On 1 November 1968, Westchester County (LST-1167), one of the ships that comprised the riverine force's mobile base, suffered severe damage and lost a number of crewmen as a result of the explosion of two mines attached to her hull by enemy swimmer-sappers. While continuing with her responsibilities to the rest of the riverine force, Askari put forth most of the effort required to salvage and to repair the tank landing ship.

At the end of 1968, the Mobile Riverine Force began to focus its attention on communist logistic routes coming into the Delta from Cambodia. During the second week in December, Askari moved to the vicinity of the Song Vam Co, Song Vam Co Dong and Song Vam Co Tay Rivers to support friendly vessels in their prosecution of Operation "Giant Slingshot." Her labors in behalf of the interdiction

effort continued through the first 8 months of 1969. At the beginning of September, the ship departed Vietnamese waters to undergo repairs at Sasebo, Japan.

When she returned to Vietnam at the end of October 1969, Askari resumed repair duties, this time at Chau Doc, and south of her previous base of operations. She remained there until 9 November when the base ships relocated to Long Xuyen their station for the remainder of 1969 and most of the first quarter of 1970. Late in March 1970, she and the other support ships moved to Dong Tam and provided repair services at that point until early May. On 9 May, she returned to the upper reaches of the Mekong near the Cambodian border to resume support for efforts to stop the flow of communist supplies. Early in June, the ship arrived back at Dong Tam to serve as the primary support ship for River Assault Squadrons 13 and 15 until those squadrons turned over their responsibilities to South Vietnamese Forces later that month. Between 25 June and 31 August, she operated successively in the upper Mekong at Binh Thuy on the lower Mekong and then back at Dong Tam again. Except for a round-trip mission to deliver boat engines to Song Bo De between 31

# MRFA E-mail List; Questions and Correspondence Welcomed

The MRFA e-mail list is a good thing to have for the members. They hash out things that happen in Vietnam; some have questions answered that they have wondered about for many years. The list is coordinated by Don Blankenship. Don does a good job of maintaining the list, although at times someone will go off the deep end. Don has to give them a warning. No politics are allowed on the list. All it does is turn members against one another. The list was put together for the members to ask questions or send info on what's going on with the VA and so on. No profanity allowed on the list either. Below is just an example of what the list is all about. If you want to be on the list, contact Don at [rivervet@cox.net](mailto:rivervet@cox.net). Albert

## E-mails of Interest

Today is the 46th anniversary of the battle of The Crossroads 4 April, 1968. My boat captain Chief Sam Chavous and E4 John Woodard were KIA, radioman John Watery nearly lost his arm, coxswain Charles Lubbs was wounded, and myself wounded. I can't remember the rest of my crew that were WIA that day on M-92-2 (zippo); it was a bad day for all of us. We lost a lot of good soldiers and sailors that day. God bless them all!!!  
*Joe Lacapruccia M-92-2 zippom2@yahoo.com*

**[Reply]** Joseph, Tet was a terrible time for all of us. I never realized until years later that the communists had actually broken the offensive into three phases. (I cut and pasted these dates from the Wikipedia site.): Phase 1: January 30–March 28, 1968; Phase 2: May 5–June 15, 1968; and Phase 3: August 17–September 23, 1968. *Wendell Affield T-112-11 affirm@paulbunyan.net*

**[Reply]** In reference to your earlier message, I never realized all the Tango 7 crew came over together but that certainly makes sense. I don't know if you knew Buddha Ed Thomas, my boat captain, but he felt terribly guilty because we were supposed to lead the column that morning but Hagl had more time in-country—more experience so the Officer In Charge put him at the head because we expected trouble. Also, Buddha always felt bad about Chief Chavous—I think he and Buddha were pretty close. *Wendell Affield*

**[Reply]** The latest Vietnam magazine (June 2014) has a feature article titled "Valor At DaiDo." There is only one mention of a MRF "Monitor" but much of the battle took place within a few hundred yards of where Tango 112-11 was mined and destroyed on 14 March 1968.

We've just passed the 46th anniversary of six Brown Water Sailors dying in a flash of muddy water. They were Edward J Hagl BM1, Boat Captain, 37 years old; Frankie Ray Johnson EN3, 23 years old; Ernest W. Wigglesworth Jr. BM3, 21 years old; Robert W. Cawley SN, 20 years old; Eugene

Nelson FN, 20 years old; and Joseph Salvatore Perysian SN, 20 years old.

**[Reply]** Whenever I mention the Cua Viet River, most MRFA members have never heard of it. From March 1–July 2, 1968, River Division 112 (less the ASPBs) operated on the Cua Viet River—about 6 miles south of the DMZ. NVA battled the Marines and, at times, Army units, on the north side of the river.

We were initially sent up there to help keep the river open because it was an important conduit for supplies to reach Khe Sanh.

The Magnificent Bastards: The Joint Army-Marine Defense of Dong Ha by Keith Nolan is an excellent historical narrative of the Tet 1968 Battles in that area.

Earlier we were talking about Chef Lang's video. There are many close-in air strikes recorded and I'm sure they document some of those battles. *Wendell Affield*

**[Reply]** This is some very good discussion concerning the crew of T-112-7. Maybe I can be of help with some information.

In Sept of 1967 after completing SEER at Warren Springs, I went to Mare Island for ATC training; I was a BM3 at the time. I was assigned to a boat with six other guys, Ed Hagel, Ron Pierce, Ernie Wigglesworth, Frankie Johnson, Phillips, and another whose name I don't remember: Hagel was the boat captain and I was the coxswain. In November I made BM2 and for some reason I was made boat captain and Hagel went to the class 2 weeks behind us. I have no idea why he went to a different class and not me. We did train together as a crew and went over as a crew. When we got to Dong Tam, we were assigned to replace Bob Durrett's crew on T-112-7. Since I was one man short (a radioman), it was decided that Durrett's crew would go on the Dec. 4 Operation. Durrett's coxswain went to sickbay to have a boil removed and I was assigned as coxswain for that operation. Ron Pierce and Frankie Johnson also went along as 30 gunners in the well deck to get some experience. Early in the afternoon of the 4th after having fought our way through a VC Main Force Batt ambush, T-112-7 and two other Tangos were ordered to pick up our troops and assault the main bunker complex. Shortly after dropping our ramp, we took three B-40 rockets hits, two in the coxswain flat and one between the gun mounts. Bob Durrett took serious wounds to the left arm, I received shrapnel wounds and burns, the radioman lost his left leg, the 20 gunner lost a knee cap, both 50 gunners received minor wounds, and Durrett's engineman was up top between the gun mounts and was not injured. Pierce and Johnson in the well deck were not injured. I was sent to Japan and then to Great Lakes, my war was over.

After I was hit, Hagel was assigned to T-112-7 as the boat captain. Ron Pierce was transferred to T-112-11 as a 20 gunner, Phillips was transferred to T-111-4, Wigg and Johnson remained on Tango 7. I don't know what happened to my other crewman. He may have been the one who was blown off the back while taking a leak. Does anyone remember his name? I think the records show that the rest of Hagel's crew either came over with him or at a later date.

My birthday is March 13. Little did I know that while I was home enjoying my 21st birthday on the evening of the 13th my crew was dying; 12-hour-time difference the evening of the 13th was the morning of the 14th.

I have spoken to Ron Pierce several times over the last few years and I believe he has struggled with the loss of our crew as much as I have. Around

2001-2002, I was in contact with Wigg's brother Jim, I had some letters from Wigg. I thought his family would like to have. They sent my contact info along to Wigg's wife. I had the opportunity to speak to her on several occasions. She remarried but never forgot Ernie (they did not have any children), and she now writes children books. She did share with me that after Wigg's body was recovered he had to be identified through dental records. For all of you Survivor fans out there, Wigg's brother Jim told me that his daughter Kelly (Wigg's niece) was the #2 finisher on the very first Survivor show.

I did wonder for a very long time what had happened to T-112-7 that March morning and through this organization I have been able to put together a lot of the pieces. I had a very long talk with Chief Lang at one of the reunions that helped along with Wendell's book and talks with Ron Pierce and Wigg's family. I know that Ron made it back OK. Does anyone know about Phillips who went to T-111-4 or who the seventh crew who lived that day? What was his name and what happened to him?

When we were going through NIOTC, we were told that the causality rate for our class would be 3-5% killed, 70% wounded. As for one boat T-112-7, the KIA rate was much higher.

*Thanks to all for sharing and for listen. Stan Krzesinski tango7@centurytel.com*

**[Reply]** For T-112-7 on occasion, this list really comes through Stan and your post is one of them. I'm sure glad people can connect the dots through this list. *Wendell Affield*

**[Reply]** Stan, It's eerie to see T-112-7 below your name. You share powerful information. I too have often wondered about the man who was blown off the fantail. You well know the confusion of combat. When Tango 7 got mined, amazingly there was no ambush but still there was confusion. One of the first questions was how the mine had been detonated? If it had been command detonated then there would have been NVA in the immediate vicinity. Most of the riverbanks up north were barren—no jungle vegetation for concealment so ambushes weren't such a threat. I just recall a medevac arriving very quickly and taking him away. *Wendell Affield T-112-11*

**[Reply]** I went through training with Wigglesworth, Perysian, and I believe most of the rest of them and if my memory serves me correctly we came over in a group of about 90 and replaced whole boat crews. I was assigned to M-92-2, and we replaced the whole crew at once and those unfortunate guys got assigned to T-112-7, but my memory is not what it used to be. God rest their souls.

*Joe Lacapruccia M-92-2*

★★★★★

## Mark 19 gunner, T-152-6, 1968-69 says:

The Honeywell technician/trainer, who was paid \$200.00 per day, introduced me to our boat's brand new grenade launcher which I would be married to for the next many months. This nitwit left only a small tube [1 once?] of the unique extreme high pressure and high temperature lubricant; immediately when this supply ran out... the marriage went on the rocks. Yes, Malfunction City is a good way to put it. There was no resupply to us at that time; might have been in the same shipping container that carried our tropical boots.

However, I took a "constructive stroll" around either Binh Thuy or Nha Be, where PBRs got patched up, found a loose quart of the Mark 19



Tango 112-7 Mined 14 March 1968

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

**MRFA Email List**

Continued from previous page

lube that “cured” the 19 until supply caught up with demand. Yes, I shared it and others had similar results.

This is yet another example of military might that made my feelings of being expendable grow each day . . . each firefight.

Our critical bilge pumps needed special thick wax-like bearing grease; other heavy grease substitutes would allow air to be sucked into the works, making the pumps nearly unusable. Had to request my Dad, worked at Boston Navy Shipyard, to send us the correct grease quickly. He did, and finally, later, again the supply caught up with needs.

*Thanks for listening, Rich Lorman richlorm@comcast.net*

**[Reply]** On Apr 12, 2014, Mike Spight (mgs.1911a1@gmail.com) wrote

Honeywell and a Mk 19 Mod 1 high velocity GL. I did not care for the Mk 19 . . . every single one we had on our boat would fire two or three rounds and the . . . malfunction city. The good news is that the newest versions of the Mk 19 have been bringing the “Good News” to the enemies of Western Civilization in Iraq and Afghanistan for over 10 years. The newest variants of the Mk 19 run very, very well.

**[Reply]** On Fri, Apr 11, 2014, Jerry Weston (riverratt.91.7@gmail.com) wrote

40 mm . . .

*Jerry molon labe*

**[Reply]** On Fri, Apr 11, 2014 at 8:27 AM, Mike Spight (mgs.1911a1@gmail.com) wrote:

Honeywell 40 mm Grenade Launcher! They worked great, as long as the vinyl belt that held the grenades was tight, and kept them in place. Excellent weapon!

**[Reply]** On Thu, Apr 10, 2014 Quin Sommer (QuinB15@comcast.net) wrote

I just wanted to show you all what I carried after I “Found” it at the Dong Tam Navy Ammo dump. It was one of your Ithacas. I had the same weapon and hunted with it before Nam. After Nam I gave all my weapons to my younger brother.

I also “Found” one of 40 mm Grenade Launchers and mounted it on one of my tracks. I had two 50 mounted and ready on each of my four track. “If I liked it I took it.”

*Quin Sommer, Vietnam (5/68-4/69), 9th Inf 2/47 (Mech) B Co 1st Plt*

**[Reply]** I have been invited to speak at this program, “Making Meaning of Vietnam.” After reading the messages below, I would like other MRFA members opinions as to whether I should or not. *Thanks Wendell Affield*

**[Reply]** A great response below from Jack Kitchura Boat Captain RivDiv-153

Jack, your comments were a welcome read. They are exactly the way

I feel, but said in a much better way than I could have. *Thanks, Bud D. USS Nueces Supply Officer*

**[Reply]** On Apr 2, 2014, at 13:48, JACK KITCHURA (kbkcc@hotmail.com) wrote

Wendell, My thoughts. Maybe they can be helpful.

I would encourage your participation. I have had the privilege of speaking and being part of discussion groups a number of times and always found it rewarding and surprisingly uplifting, especially with younger people. My objective has always been to keep it positive and not get bogged down in the dogma. Tough sometimes to do as most gatherings love to dwell in the negative, but that doesn't mean you have to buy into all of it. Statistically, as I have read, no more or less of our Vietnam-era in-country vets suffered problems than those before or after us. Our difference was of course the reception on returning home. But our generation did this to themselves as we were split between doing our duty and running from it. Vietnam in fact was but one part of a near 45-year war with communism, starting at the end of WWII and being won with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Along the long chain of years was Korea, Berlin, the enslavement of Eastern Eu, Mao, China, Taiwan, Laos, Cambodia, Parts of Malaysia and the Philippines, Parts of South America and Central America, Cuba, Angola, Afghanistan, Iran and many more. It was all real, fought on many levels and hard won. We did our part. In hindsight, it can be questioned and it is ok to do so (or for the ensuing generations to do so) but viewed in the time these events occurred we had few choices and choose the ones we, at all level, thought best. Even today there may be no perfect responses or answers, but the discussion is usually worth the time. If it turns out to be a gripe session, it doesn't have to be yours.

In a somewhat similar discussion a few weeks back at a major university, a young woman asked me and several other Vietnam-era vets if it was OK to support the soldiers but object to the war. One vet said no it was all or nothing (some feel this way, and it is ok). I suggested to her it was not just ok but that she should question everything in life, make up her own mind and come to her own conclusions. In doing so, all I asked was she then be prepared and willing to engage in an open dialogue to support them and then willing for others to hold differing opinions.

Vietnam had an impact on all of us, but then so does life. The vast majority of us learned, shared an adventure unlike few others, made friends, saw tragedy and moved on with our lives. The best anyone can hope for and maybe in part living a little for those that didn't. If you attend the program, hope that you find it worthwhile and would like to hear.

*Best regards, Jack Kitchura*

## Go Cong Secret Zone Up River from Snoopy's Nose

by Bob Davis M-112-2 (1967-68)  
rdavis@marsars.com



**CPO Bob Davis USCG  
(Ret.) M-112-2 with one  
of four grandsons**

There were about 105 naval casualties from the battle of September 15, 1967. Admiral Veth or Zumwalt flew down from Saigon and awarded Purple Hearts to 67 men left standing. This battle took place in what I believe was the Go Cong Secret Zone up river from Snoopy's Nose. Over time there were a number of additional battles in that river. During Tet of '68, Riv Div 112, drove up the river deep into this contested area without troops. I would imagine it was more a “show the flag” operation. We entered a heavily tree canopied area of that held large robust hutches. In the front of each hutch/building, there appeared a Viet Cong flag displayed on a placard. I was told this was the site where the Charlie's National Liberation was founded. Many men fought hard to enter this area but never succeeded. This time, however, there was no resistance. We were told not to fire. I spotted a comm wire up the tallest tree. Clearly this was the command center. The well maintained grounds looked like General's Officer Quarters. At the time, I wondered why after all this fighting we didn't blow the crap out of the place.

## Five Star Generals & Admirals of WWII

*Generals:* George C. Marshall (Dec 16, 1944), Douglas MacArthur (Dec 18, 1944), Dwight D. Eisenhower (Dec 20, 1944), Henry H. Arnold (Dec 21, 1944), and Army Air Corps Omar Bradley (Sept 20, 1950)

*Admirals:* William D. Leahy (Dec 15, 1944), Ernest J. King (Dec 17, 1944), Chester W. Nimitz (Dec 19, 1944), and William F. Halsey, Jr. (Dec 11, 1945)

*Of note is the grade of “General of the Armies of the United States.” A position held by only two persons in American history—George Washington and John J. Pershing. Of the two, only General Pershing held the title while still alive. Pershing held the title in 1919 after his service in WWI and held it until his death on July 15, 1948. Washington being posthumously bestowed the honor by President Gerald Ford in 1976. Albert mrfa@charter.net*

## Riverine Assault Force Units

On 4-5 March at Dong Tam, the 4/47th Infantry Battalion replaced the 3/47th Infantry Battalion as one of the two afloat battalions. The 4/47th Infantry Battalion embarked in USS Colleton (APB-36) and Washtenaw County (LST-1166).

The ASPB salvage operations for A-112-4 and A-91-1, sunk in the Can Tho River on 27 February and 2 March, respectively, were completed when the two boats were towed into the basin at Dong Tam at 2200 on 8 March.

On 25 March, USS Tom Green County (LST-1159) relieved Washtenaw County as the MRF supply ship.

## Civilian Hospital Admitting Policy

This is something else you may want to remember; it may come in handy. If you are on Medicare and you should have to be hospitalized, pay attention to these two words. This is going to be a trap for many people unaware of two words: “**Under Observation**”!

If the hospital uses these words for your admittance, you will be responsible for the hospital expenses. Medicare will not cover them. You should insist that the hospital admit you as “**In-Patient**”

In review, do not let the hospital admit you with the words, “Under Observation.” Insist on “**In-Patient**” designation. It might be wise to inform family members too. Reference: <http://www.nbcnews.com/video/nightly-news/54026469/#54026469>. ★

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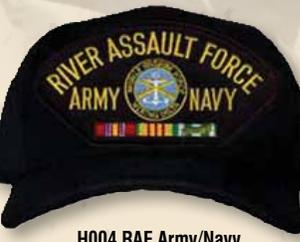
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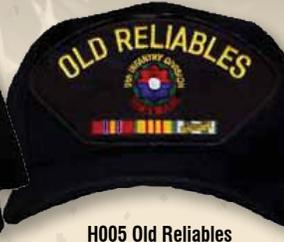
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# The Cooler

by Barry Stevenson EN2 USN M-111-2 TF-117 (1968-69) [veganman@wildblue.net](mailto:veganman@wildblue.net)

In 1968 I found myself on a tour of duty with the U.S. Navy in South Vietnam on river boats in the Mekong Delta and neighboring waterways. This duty involved living on a 60-foot monitor gunboat day and night on inland rivers, rivers that ran brown rather than the azure blue of the oceans; consequently, we were commonly referred to as the Brown Water Navy. It is from this backdrop that the following true story was born.

If someone would have asked me upon arriving in Vietnam what one thing I would miss more than any other, I know without a doubt my answer wouldn't have been accurate. I wasn't astute enough to realize that more than family, sports, music, fishing, and hunting, I'd miss the hell out of anything cold: ice cream, iced drinks, or chilled air blowing on me from a grumbling window air conditioner on a smoldering Illinois afternoon in mid-July. It didn't take long till most of the crewmembers shared that realization, because our boat had no refrigeration, no air conditioning, and no means of keeping us or our food cool and comfortable.

Our water source was a 200-gallon tank perched in the corner of our sleeping quarters. It was periodically treated with chlorine to hammer the microscopic critters that would otherwise grow in it. There was a spigot on the bottom, so a sailor with big gonads or one hell of a thirst could pour himself a cup. It took a brave and desperate man, though, because it tasted akin to dipping a cup straight out of the rich neighbor's swimming pool. Presented between the choice of dying and drinking of it, I would have grabbed that spigot and poured myself just enough to sustain me, but thank God I never had to make that choice.

The previous crew on our riverboat had creatively solved at least a measure of the problem prior to our arrival. They salvaged a piece of Styrofoam from a passing supply ship on the Mekong River and from it fashioned a cooler that was massive enough to hold a Volkswagen. That cooler resided on the stern of our boat where it was lashed to a bulkhead. We soon enough learned that blocks of ice could be obtained from friendly villagers along the river. Nothing was too precious to trade for ice. Nothing because once that sucker was stocked with ice, we could load it down with canned drinks obtained from supply ships or priceless care packages from the States. We'd be in a state of chilled bliss for several days to come.

None of us could have imagined that something as seemingly benevolent and comforting as our cooler could lead to such emotion and outrage . . . I'll take the blame. I'm man enough, now, after 40 some years of character improvement, but I sure as hell didn't step forward to confess my transgressions at the time.

One morning I arose from another tortured night of heat and humidity-impacted sleep. I awoke with a powerful thirst and wandered back to see what treasure remained in our cooler. The lid opened with a "pop" and I bent over to peer inside. There, on a diamond of ice, sat one forlorn jewel: a 6-ounce can of pineapple juice. It didn't belong to me, but most of the crew had pilfered from others before. I snatched it, straightened up, slammed the cooler's lid, popped the top, and inhaled its contents in one quick slurp. A soft burp escaped as I briefly admired the can, and then I reared back and pitched the evidence into the turbid waters of the Mekong River. It canoed alongside our boat for a brief time before taking on water and disappearing into the depths. Evidence destroyed, I wandered back to the 40-mm mount, leaned against



*The Scoundrel*



*The Chief*

its bulkhead where my wife's name was stenciled in blue for luck, fired up a foul-smelling cigar, and considered the day.

The next several hours passed with nothing much for the crew to do. We were tied up to a waterlogged dock at an army base and were awaiting our next transport assignment. Junior and I spent time playing a game of chess, or at least our pathetic version of chess. Others were reading or eating or napping.

By midday the sun was heating up, the humidity was wretched, and the sweat was pooling in my bellybutton. That's when Chief Brown decided to head back to the cooler for his pineapple juice. We heard a roar and a barrage of expletives soon pierced the air; the Chief was loaded up and firing. He stormed up to our band of misfits loosely gathered in the bow of the boat. He fired again, "Which one of you sorry bastards drank my can of pineapple juice?"

Silence. Heads swiveled from side to side as crewmembers examined their comrades for a confirmation of the sin. Suddenly, I felt like a 10-year-old kid who'd just been caught red-handed with a copy of *Playboy* under his mattress. Only I wasn't back in Rockford, and the Chief was definitely not my mother. I knew a real man would stand up and face the tribunal, raise his hand and boldly say, "I drank that pineapple juice, Chief, and I sure do apologize!" but I didn't much care for the crazed look in the Chief's eyes, so I stood pat. He looked us over for a few seconds and shook his head at the collection of toddlers who only moments before considered themselves men.

The Chief about-faced and flew back to the cooler. Some of us were inclined to follow, but with intense trepidation. I chose to peek around the 20-mm machine gun mount, so I could surmise the situation without putting myself too close to an unpredictable Chief, sort of like a curious mouse watching a cat rip apart a bag of catnip.

Without a moment's hesitation, the Chief grabbed the red-handled fire ax that was strapped to the bulkhead just a step away from our cooler. He stepped back, took aim, and then commenced chopping that sucker into Styrofoam smithereens. Hunks of white foam soon covered the deck as if it were a sidewalk in Rockford in late December. Only it wasn't, and this was no Christmas celebration, because the Chief wasn't handing out gifts to his boys. He was taking them away.

Once the deed was completed and the last vestige of ice lay melting in the sun's rays, the Chief tossed the ax, slumped his shoulders, and began to quiver. And viewing the scene from afar, even an imbecile like me realized the man had succumbed to the emotions of nearly 300 days in Vietnam.

A puny six-ounce can of pineapple juice was merely the fuse. *Chief Brown passed away in 2003; he was 72 years old.* More under Taps.★

## ASKARI

Continued from page 5

August and 8 September, Askari performed her support functions at Dong Tam until the middle of December.

Thereafter, the ship continued to serve at various locations in the Mekong Delta for 9 more months. In mid-August 1971, she proceeded from Vietnam to the Marianas on her last voyage for the United States Navy. On 1 September 1971, Askari was decommissioned at Guam and turned over to the Indonesian Government under the terms of the Military Assistance Program. The Indonesian Navy re-commissioned her that same day as Ri Djaja Widjaja. Because of her status as a loan, Askari remained on the Navy list until February 1979. At that time, her name was struck from the Navy list; and she was permanently transferred to the Indonesian Navy by sale.

Awards earned during the Vietnam War: Combat Action Ribbon, (2) Presidential Unit Citation; (5) Navy Unit Commendations; RVN Gallantry Cross with Palm; RVN Civil Action Medal, First Class, with Palm; RVN Campaign Medal with 60s device; and the Vietnam Service Medal with (12) Battle Stars. ★

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### MEMBERSHIP RATES

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To become a member, mail your check or money order (payable to MRFA) to Charlie Ardingler, MRFA Membership Chairman, 1857 County Road, A14, Decorah, IA 52101-7448.

**Your membership  
 expiration date is printed on  
 your River Currents just above  
 your name and address.**

# MRF Operations in I Corps

Info furnished by Mike Harris  
mekong152@99w.us

On 3 March COMUSMACV directed that elements of one river assault division be deployed for a period of about 30 days to provide heavy escort services for waterborne logistic convoys of the Cua Viet and Perfume rivers. The deployment of these 14 riverine craft from RAD 112 decreased the MRF troop lift capability by about 25%. For the period of the deployment to I Corps, RAS 9 was tasked to support both infantry battalions while RAD 111 augmented by the RAD 112 boats that were left behind, provided base defense and close support for Task Force SIX GUN.

The riverine unit, under command of CTG 117.2 and comprised of 1 CCB, 3 monitors, and 10 ATCs arrived in I Corps on 9 March and commenced operations under the operational control of Commander Task Force CLEARWATER.

On 10 March, TG 117.2 commenced its first sweep and clear transit of the Cua Viet River from Cua Viet to Dong Ha. Four ATCs, one monitor, and a CCB escorted two Landing Craft Utility (LCU) boats and six LCM-8s up the 8-mile stretch of river and returned escorting a similar group of resupply boats without incident.

About 1345 the next day, a command-detonated mine was exploded astern of an LCM minesweeper in an area that had been swept four or five times. The command wire and part of the detonator were recovered by ATC-112-2 on the south bank of the river near a resettlement village.

The following day the riverine assault craft detached was subjected to an enemy artillery attack that completely destroyed the maintenance, messing and berthing facilities at the Cua Viet Naval Support Activity Detachment loading ramp. There were no casualties to either the personnel or craft of TG 117.2; however, as a result of the attack, the assault boat crewmembers were required to berth on their craft.

On 14 March at 0719, ATC-112-7 was sweeping close to the west bank of the Cua Viet River 2 miles southeast of Dong Han in Quang Tri Province when the boat hit an estimated 900-pound water-mine. The force of the explosion was so tremendous that it flipped the 72-ton troop carrier upside down causing extensive damage to the bow and starboard side of the craft. There were six crewmembers killed and one seriously wounded in the mining. Due to the extensive hull damage, the boat was deemed unsalvageable.

Task Group 117.2 assault craft continued to keep the Cua Viet River supply route to Dong Ha open and, on 18 March, commenced enforcing a 1630-0830 curfew against sampan traffic on the waterway. Sporadic enemy harassment continued throughout the following week as evidenced by one 60-mm mortar attack on the assault boats, which failed to cause any personnel or material damage. These continuous patrols were most instrumental in enabling the logistic craft from Naval Support Activity Danang to maintain their independent transits of the Cua Viet River.

On 28 March a monitor, M-112-1, on a routine sweep patrol operation on the Cua Viet River, experienced a near miss when an estimated 200-pound water-mine was command-detonated about 10 feet astern of the craft. The monitor lost steering control but did not suffer any personnel casualties.★

Charlie & Georgie: I want to thank you and Albert for the best magazine ever published. Every issue brings back memories of places I saw and boats I worked on. I am just saying thanks a lot. *Ronnie Fontenot YRBM-17 fishin4cars@netcommander.com*

*Let's not forget Robin our Graphic Designer. Ron thanks for the kind words. They are much appreciated. Albert*

★★★★★

It's all good. In the last *River Currents*, Spring Issue *War Widow* by Harold Payne, struck home to me. I was at the location on the Vam Co Dong. I was on the Douche Boat T-32. We put the fire out in the truck that the Seabee was killed in. That was one of my lowest days in Vietnam. It just should not have happened. I'm glad his wife was informed and commend Harold for contacting the widow. *John Wulff RivRon-15*

★★★★★

*Member David Pratt T-111-6 dpratt3928@gmail.com*

I can think of some interesting stories, but I cannot remember locations and names. I was assigned to T-111-6 as a GMG3 when we installed the first water cannon in the well deck. During trial tests, we were tied up to an LST anchored in a small river as far as it could go. There was a bridge that was blocked it going further up the river. There was a civilian from Washington who came along to report back how things went. He was assigned a bunk on the LST way forward. It was too hot for him to stand and so they

let him sleep in the air-conditioned wardroom on a couch. The wardroom was below the Bridge. At night a rocket was fired aimed toward the Bridge. It hit low and put some shrapnel into the wardroom. He must have been sleeping on his stomach. He got shrapnel on his backside; not good, but he lived. He had serious but no life-threatening wounds. As he was on the stretcher waiting to be helicoptered off, he was quickly giving us instructions. Wonder what happened to him?

★★★★★

*Member Ronald Mercurio Co D. 4th/39th Inf 9th Inf Div ronmerc25@aol.com*

Hi, I am from 9th Inf. Div. 4/39th Co. D, later went to Co. E and was in the Delta and in the rivers for a while. I was a Bat/Sniper—on the boats with the Navy and doing night missions that no one wanted to do. And before that I did all river missions, such as guarding bridges, checking all the sampans, and watching who goes where and what goes where. I am very glad to be associated with the MRF and of course, the River Rats. My stories are the same as yours posted, nothing different, just a lot of—explosions and killing—but I am glad to be with the team of all good guys—no matter what—togetherness. So just wanted a chance to say something and I did: Thank you! P.S. I am glad that I have a vest and wear all the patches with pride. Keep up the good work. ★

## Seeking Information

### Do you Know this Man?

On August 18, 1968, Sergeant Thomas, in the middle of an ambush, stuck his head up through the hatch leading to the cox'n flat on Tango 112-11. "Do you need any help?" he shouted. I was driving the boat and pointed to our unmanned Port 50 cal. Without hesitation, Sargent Thomas crawled into the turret and began shooting. Moments later he took a direct hit from a B-40 that had burned through the armor. I was medevaced that day and for the past 46 years, I have been troubled about Sergeant Thomas. I learned his name from Cleve Chick at the 2013 MRFA Reunion. Thanks to the article titled "Ambush Survivors Reunited 45 years later" in the winter edition of *River Currents*, I just received another clue. In visiting with the other survivors at the Reunion, they all agreed, Sergeant

Thomas had just been transferred to 3rd platoon, Co. D, 4/47th Inf Bn.

Loren Salzman, another MRFA member who was an infantryman with Delta/Echo Company, 4/47th, Ninth Infantry Division, from Dec. 1967 to Dec. 1968 just emailed me, "I have attached my photo of Sgt. Thomas who was our senior NCO or First Sargent as I recall. I remember him being out in front of our formations, calling us to attention, etc. I will double check with our CO Echo Six."

There was so much chaos on that day in the well-deck of Tango 112-11 (1 KIA, 27 WIA) that I believe Thomas's act of heroism



Thomas

went completely unnoticed. I've checked the Wall and do not find him so I am assuming he did live.

Sergeant Thomas deserves proper recognition. If he is gone, his family deserves to know of his actions.

Anybody who might be able to add to this information, please contact me. If you want to read about the ambush,

go to <http://www.wendellaffield.com/war/ambush-survivors-reunited-45-years-later-memories-from-august-18-1968>.

Thank you, *Wendell Affield affirm@paulbunyan.net*

*Member David Pratt T-111-6 dpratt3928@gmail.com*

## TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One



Jones

Member BMCS **Everett Jones** U.S. Navy (Ret.) passed away March 10, 2014. Everett was the Boat Captain of CCB-151-4 and CCB-152-5 and served in Vietnam from

April 1969 to April 1970. He survived a lot of fire fights and missions to return home to his wife Teruko, son Ray and daughter Terry. You may contact the family c/o Teruko Jones, 1947 Gotham St, Chula Vista, CA 91913-2710, 619-421-3721.

On August 27, 2000, Everett, Don Blankenship, Jim Steffes, and Bob St. Martin met the USNS Sioux that was carrying the CCB-18 from the Sacramento River Delta to San Diego and its final

resting place on the Naval Amphibious Base at Coronado, California. From the time it arrived until the time of Everett's death from brain cancer, he was a key coordinator of the restoration of the CCB-18, the last known remaining boat of the Mobile Riverine Force. Everett spent countless hours doing whatever was necessary to see that the boat was restored to pristine condition. The boat is the proud backdrop of many Navy ceremonies. Everett's

video discussing the boat is found at <http://youtu.be/xHi5pCrGfBU>.

Everett also served on the USS Mars (AFS-1) and coordinated many reunions for that ship. His hobbies, other than the restoration of the CCB-18, included Bonsai and Coin Collecting.

*Everett was a super husband, great father, proud grandfather, and I'm happy to say he was a good friend. We will all miss him*

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

**TAPS**  
Continued from  
previous page

and his contributions to  
the MRFA.

Don Blankenship  
A-111-3 and A-152-21



**Siebert**

Member GMG3 Richard "Sieb" Siebert Sr. passed away March 23, 2014. While in Vietnam he served with IUWG-1, Unit 3, Qui Nhon from March 1967 to January 1969. Sieb was a good man and good shipmate and will be missed by all who knew him. May our Brother rest in peace. You may contact his widow Claire Siebert, 34 School St., Bayfield, MA 01922.



**Reiblein**

Member Raymond Reiblein passed away March 2, 2014. While in Vietnam, Ray served as a helicopter pilot with D Troop 3rd/5th Cavalry (07/67-07/68). You may contact his widow Loretta Reiblein, 4757 Marigold Rd, Mentor, OH 44060-1135, 440-257-3778.

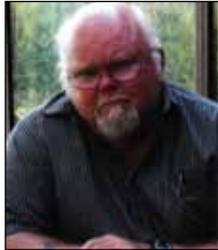


**Aiello**

Member Richard Charles Aiello passed away April 26, 2014. Richard served on T-152-1 and T-151-6 (07/68-07/69). He enjoyed the MRF Association and all the members. You

maycontact the family c/o Marylyn Aiello, 2937 Heather Bow, Sarasota, FL 34235-7202, 941-377-6050, rcanfla@comcast.net.

*My heart is broken and I am trying to remember only the good times. Love, his wife, Marylyn Aiello.*



**Parin**

Member Lyle W. Parin passed away April 21, 2014. Lyle served on the USS Floyd County (LST-762) in 1965-66. He was very proud of his service. You may contact his widow Judith Parin, 559 W 8th St, New Richmond, WI 54017-1535, 715-246-6306.

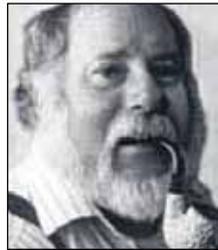
*Albert, I'm sad to inform you that Lyle W. Parin one of MRFA's Plank owners has passed away with stage 4 lung cancer, Agent Orange. One of my best friends! Thanks, Bill Buffie USN Vietnam 1966-1967*

Lloyd A. Dillavou passed away May 1, 2005. Lloyd served in the Navy during the Vietnam War. Boats served as Boat Captain of R-92-1 MRF TF-117. You may contact the family c/o Paula Dillavou, 8859 Lakeview Rd, Lakeside, CA 92040.



**Brown**

BMC Allison E. Brown USN (Ret.) passed away in 2003. Allison was Boat Captain on Monitor 111-2 (1968-69). Last known address was S Pecos St., Coleman, TX 76834. *Thanks to everyone who has helped me with the search for Chief Allison E. Brown. Apparently he is deceased, which I was very sorry to hear. Barry Stevenson, EN2, M-111-2*



**Barnes**

Dennis Raymond Barnes passed away because of an unfortunate work accident on June 14, 1996. While in Vietnam, Dennis served with Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division in 1968. You may contact his family c/o his daughter Alicia Ballew (Barnes), 303 Edgewood Cv, Leander, TX 78641-7808, alameydia@gmail.com.



**Jordan**

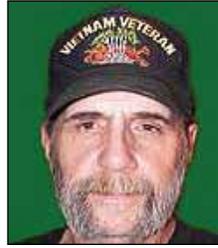
Member James Francis Jordan, Captain USN (Ret.) passed away on May 2, 2014. He served in the U.S. Navy for 34 years from 1957 until 1991. After receiving a Fleet Appointment to the United States Naval Academy, he graduated with the Class of '62. His service included command of three ships: the USS White River (LSMR-536), USS Newman K. Perry (DD-883), and USS Sumter (LST-1181). He will be fondly remembered and greatly missed. You may contact the family c/o Dorothy L. Jordan, 3408 Misty Dawn Ct, Virginia Beach, VA 23456-2570, 757-689-3740.



**Neuleib**

Member Norman Neuleib passed away

January 24, 2014. Norman served on the USS Askari ARL-30 (1952-53). You may contact Lenore Van De Voord, 409 S Spring St, Geneseo, IL 61254-1563, 309-944-4085.



**Robison**

Member Russell Glen "Delta Blue" Robison, also known as "Robbie," passed away February 24, 2014. While in Vietnam, he served with the Naval Support Activity, Saigon-Detachment Dong Tam repairing battle-damaged riverine craft from February 1968 to May 1970. Russell was a wonderful poet who was working on his sixth book of poems when he passed away.

*Russell participated on the Brown Water Navy and Delta Army Vietnam Yuku Board a lot throughout the years. He was extremely proud of repairing our riverine craft following our battles and many of his poems were about us. We Boat Sailors dearly loved "Delta Blue" (<http://mrfa.org/Russell.Robison.htm>), which was his pen name.*

Mike Harris



**Ambrozy**

Joan Ambrozy passed away after complications from a heart attack, May 5, 2014. Joan was married to member Raymond Ambrozy. Ray served in C Co. 3rd/60th (02/67-02/68). You may contact Ray Ambrozy, 7366 Menge, Center Line, MI 48015-1270, 586-759-5717, rayambrozy@gmail.com.

# In Memory Of

This section is for members who wish to sponsor the MRFA by placing a notice in memory of one of their fallen comrades. In some instances, the name of the sponsor will precede the name of the person who was KIA, or has passed on since Vietnam. It's \$25 for four issues.

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- Orville Daley for Merrill Davis USS Askari ARL-30 (1952-1953)
- Ron Easterday for Marco A. Serrano Jr. and Franklin D. Hite HHC 2nd/47th Inf (Mech) KIA 03/13/67 and William B. Cronin (LT) HHC 2nd/47th Inf (Mech) KIA 04/27/67
- Dennis D. Erlanson for Verlyn H. Hanson Co D 3rd/47th (1968-69)
- Ted Fetting for Eloy "Stevie" LeBlanc, Roy Phillips, and Fred Jansonius B Co. 2nd/60th KIA 02/02/68
- Bob Flaige in memory of SP4 Robert "Bob" Jenks E Co. 3rd/60th died of wounds 03/02/68
- Nan Fulton for LtGen Bill Fulton Cdr 2nd Bde Asst Div Cdr 9th Inf Div (1966-68)
- Tony Garvey for Wes Sade, Billy Olsen, and Staff Sgt James Williams C Co. 4th/47th 9th Inf
- John W. Gerbing for Noel T. West A Co. 4th/47th KIA 06/19/67
- Regina Gooden for Sgt Lloyd Earl Valentine B Co. 3rd/47th KIA 09/05/68
- Mrs. Elizabeth M. Hayes for LTC Daniel P. Hayes HQ 3rd/34th Artillery (06/67-01/68)
- James Henke, Tony Spradling, Dave Nelson, James Callan, and the Band of Brothers for Sgt Gerald Thurman and Spec James B. Johnson, and all our Brothers lost on June 19, 1967, from A Co. 4th/47th 9th in AP BAC, Long An Province
- Joe Hilliard for Joe Benack from Florida and Donald Hartzell from Pennsylvania
- Bruce Jensen in memory of Frederic Peers Webb A-111-4 KIA 12/21/67
- J. R. Johnson 3rd/47th 9th "Recon" (05/66-01/68) in memory of Walker, Gotch, Paradez, Nelson, and Hayes
- Dave Justin for Tim Doty A Co 3rd/60th
- Willie B. Lloyd for Capt Walter J. Riedemann USN (Ret.)
- Richard MacCullagh for John (Doc) Phillips, HMC, USN (Ret) RivRon 15
- Richard MacCullagh for Chaplain Rene L. Petit, LT, CC, RC, RivRon 13 and 15
- Adam Metts for Donald L. Bruckart T-111-2 KIA 03/31/69
- A R "Monti" Montillo for William "Bulldog" McLaughlin B Co 3rd/60th KIA 10/03/68 and Barry "Butch" Copp B Co 3rd/60th KIA 10/28/68
- Albert Moore for Ralph Tresser CS3 USS Benawah APB-35 (1966-67)
- Albert Moore for Tom Bityk CS3 IUWG-1 VC-Hill/Ha Tien (1969-70)
- Albert and Sarah Moore for Capt Gerald Saucier CO USS Benawah APB-35 (09/66-02/68)
- VP Roy Moseman for Oscar Santiago C-2 4th/47th (10/67-10/68)
- Jasper Northcutt for SSGT Henry T. Aragon B-2 2nd/47th KIA 08/23/67, SGT James E. Boorman B-2 2nd/47th KIA 08/27/67, SP4 James D. Bronakoski B-2 2nd/47th KIA 04/27/67, SP4 Michael G. Hartnett B-2 2nd/47th KIA 04/27/67, SGT William D. Mize B-2 2nd/47th and 5th/60th KIA 10/28/67, CPL Harold K. Southwick B-2 2nd/47th Inf KIA 03/02/67 (first KIA in B Co. 2nd/47th in Vietnam), and PFC Robert C. Voltz B-1 2nd/47th Inf (Mech) KIA 03/11/67 (first KIA 1st Platoon B Co. 2nd/47th in Vietnam)
- Chet "Gunner" Stanley for all the USN and USA KIAs of the MRF (1967-70)
- Ken Sundberg for Michael David Sheahan 5th/60th KIA 02/25/68, Robert L. Conley 5th/60th KIA 02/01/68, and Glenn Dean Taylor 5th/60th KIA 02/01/68
- Robert Sutton for LT James F. Rost Jr. Vin Te Canal Chau Duc KIA 11/69
- Robert Thacker for SFC Earl T. Pelhan, Jr., 15th Eng, 9th Inf Div, KIA in Delta Lo
- Steven Totcoff for my brother CPL Dennis S. Totcoff B Co 3rd/47th 9th Inf Div KIA 5/2/68
- Edward Toth for Norman Neuleib USS Askari ARL-30 (1952-53)
- USS Benawah shipmates: John Long EN2, Craig Bronish MR3, and George Schnieder MR2
- USS Guide MSO-447 for Shipmate and Brother Harold Foster
- Henry Velez for my fallen brothers, B Co. 2nd/39th Inf
- Ron and Judy Wallace for all those lost from 3rd/47th Inf
- Gary Williams for Dale Winkler C Co. 3rd/60th 9th Inf (01/68-01/69)
- CPT Steve Williams and MAJ Bob Bischoff in memory of 2LT David George Williams, Co A, 4/47th, KIA 9/21/67



# Mobile Riverine Force Association

1857 County Road A14  
Decorah, IA 52101-7448

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 Dale Ashley USS Monmouth County LST-1032 (11/66-11/67)  
 Christian Bachofer Jr. ComRivDiv 92 (07/68-06/69)  
 "Doc" Barber USS Hammett County LST-821 (1968)  
 William Belfort B Co. 1st Pli 4th/47th (02/66-09/67)  
 Bob and Sara Bischoff  
 Richard Bittle USS Nueces APB-40 (06/68-04/69)  
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 Robert B. Blair USS Clarion River LSMR-409 (1966-68)  
 MajGen Blackie Bolduc USA (Ret.) Cdr 3rd/47th Inf  
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 William Brennan USS White River LSMR-536 (02/66-10/67)  
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 John and Pamela Carlin in honor of Erol Tuzco  
 RADM William Carlson CO USS White River  
 LSMR-536 (10/65-03/68)  
 Jim Carter RivRon 15 T-52 (12/69-12/70)  
 LtG Robert Conaty XO RivDiv 131 (05/68-04/69)  
 LTC Richard Crotty HHC 3rd Bde, 9th Inf (07/67-07/68)  
 William Currier HSB 3rd/34th Arty (11/68-08/69)  
 William Dabel C-1 3rd/39th (01/69-10/69)  
 Orville Daley USS Askari ARL-30 (1967-68)  
 Peter Danchuk USS Windham County LST-1170 (02/72-02/76)  
 Robert Dockendorff NSA Dong Tam YRBM-17 (03/67-04/68)  
 William Duggan RAS 13 M-131-2 (08/68-08/69)  
 Paul Eastham T-132-11 (05/69-07/69)  
 Virgie Eblen Associate Member  
 Leon Edmiston B Co. 3rd/60th 9th Inf (06/68-05/69)  
 Dennis Erlanson D Co. 3rd/47th Inf (1968-69)  
 Ron Easterday HHC 2nd/47th Inf (04/66-09/67)  
 and 659th Div (09/67-01/68)  
 Edith Ethridge Associate Member  
 Larry Gunner Ethridge USS Askari ARL-30

Cdr Kirk Ferguson USN (Ret.) ComStabRon-20 (11/69-11/70)  
 Terrance Fetters HHQ 3rd/47th Inf (04/69-07/69)  
 Ted Fetting B Co. 2nd/60th Inf (10/67-02/68)  
 Bob Flaige E Co 3rd/60th Inf (05/67-05/68)  
 Dennis Frank D Co. CMDR 3rd/60th Inf (07/68-07/69)  
 William B. Fullerton USS Benewah APB-35 (1970)  
 Nan Fulton Associate Member  
 Richard Gallagher USS Mercer APB-39 (1968-69)  
 Gamewardens of Vietnam Mid-Atlantic Chapter  
 Ron Garcia USS Windham County LST-1170 (1966-68)  
 Tony Garvey C Co. 4th/47th 9th Infantry Div (1968)  
 John N. Gavin USS Satyr ARL-23 (1971)  
 John W. Gerbing A&E Co 4th/47th Inf (1966-68)  
 Ronald Gillespie TF 115 USS Krishna (1965/66)  
 Regina Goodman Associate Member  
 Ron Gordon T-91-10 (01/68-12/68)  
 Gary Grahm A-111-7 (05/68-05/69)  
 Roger "Grossie" Grossinger D Co. 3rd/47th 9th Inf (1968-69)  
 Frank Gubala A Co. 3rd/47th Inf (02/68-07/68)  
 Tom Hagel B Co. 2nd/47th Mech Inf (01/68-02/69)  
 Robert Halloran USS Hammett County LST-821 (12/67-12/68)  
 Roger Hamilton, Jr. USS Mark AKL-12 (08/68-08/69)  
 Jeffie Hanks USS Benewah APB-35 (01/70-01/71)  
 Joseph Harper USS White River LSMR-536 (12/66-12/68)  
 Leo Haynes RivDiv 594 PBR-8120 (04/69-02/70)  
 Charles Heindel C-91-1 (11/67-12/68)  
 RMC Jerry Howard USN (Ret.) USS Askari ARL-30 (11/68-10/69)  
 GMGSN Bernard Howlett USS Carronade IFS-1 (12/65-08/67)  
 James Hoyer 1097th TC (MB) (08/68-07/69)  
 MajGen Ira A. Hunt Jr. HHQ 9th Inf Div  
 Alan G. Hyde 9th Signal (1966-68)  
 David Jarczewski C Co. 4th/47th 9th Div (05/66-05/68)  
 Bradley Jenkins HHSB 3rd/34th Arty & 2nd/47th Mech (09/68-10/69)  
 Bruce Jensen T-111-3 (1967-68)  
 Gerald Johnston USS Hye County LST-1067 (01/66-01/67)  
 David Jones Z-111-7 (10/68-10/69)  
 Everett Jones CCB-151-4 and CCB-152-5 (04/69-04/70)  
 Frank B. Jones RivRon 15 T-48  
 John L. Jones 1st Pli, A Batt 84th Arty (10/66-11/67)  
 Mackey Joyner USS Krishna ARL-38 (1946-49)  
 Jerry "Hollywood" Kawecki B Co. 3rd/47th 9th Inf (07/68-12/68)  
 Harry & Judy Kawamura  
 Dan Keller RivDiv 532 PBR 121 (05/69-05/70)  
 LTC Nick Laiacona USA (Ret.) C Co. 3rd/60th Inf (1968-69)  
 Bob Lennon USS White River LSMR-536 (1966-68)  
 Roger Lewis IUWG-1 Unit 2 (06/68-06/69)  
 Walter F. Lineberger III XO RivDiv 91 (1968-69)

Tom Lively C Battery 3rd/34th Arty (10/68-09/69)  
 James Long Sr. ComRivFlot One Staff (11/67-11/68)  
 Steven Loomis Naval Advisory Group (VNNSY) (06/70-06/71)  
 Richard Lorman T-152-6 (06/68-06/69)  
 Corrado Lutz PCF-23 (03/68-03/69)  
 Michael Marquez A Co. 3rd Pli 3rd/60th Inf (07/68-07/69)  
 Frank O. Martinovich D. Co 3rd/47th 9th Inf Div (09/68-07/69)  
 Terry Mason RM3 RivDiv 132  
 Cratis McLaughlin D. Co 3rd/47th 9th Inf Div (09/68-07/69)  
 Sgt E-5 Ken McLean B Co. 4th/47th Inf 2nd  
 Bde USS Colleton (11/68-01/69)  
 Thomas L. "Mac" McLemore T-112-7 (12/66-12/67)  
 Adam Metts T-111-2 (08/68-10/69)  
 MilSpec Tours Inc  
 Capt Lawrence K. Monahan USNR (Ret.) YRBM-20 (1970-71)  
 A R "Monti" Montillo B Co. 3rd/60th Inf (04/68-09/68)  
 Albert and Sarah Moore USS Benewah (APB-35)  
 J. Russell and Alice Moore A-91-5 (11/68-06/69)  
 Roy and Lynn Moseman 4th/47th Inf  
 Tom Muench Korea Era Vet SAC  
 Co Van My TF-115.3.7 Cat Lo  
 CWO James T. Natividad HHC 3rd/60th (1966-67)  
 CSM Joseph M. Natividad B Co 3rd/60th (1967)  
 Naval Advisory Group  
 Nha Trang (1967-68 and 1970-71)  
 MAJ Joseph D. Nichols III, CO Co. 3rd/60th 9th Inf Div (12/66-11/67)  
 Jasper Northcutt B Co. 2nd/47th Mech Inf (11/66-05/67)  
 James Noyes C Btry 3rd/34th Arty (06/67-06/68)  
 George R. O'Connell USS Terrell City LST-1157  
 Charles Ostrov HHC 2nd/47th Mech Inf (01/68-12/68)  
 John C. Oxley Recon E Co 3rd/47th Inf (11/65-11/67)  
 Capt Jerry Pape USN (Ret) Staff COMRIVFLOT ONE (01/68-12/68)  
 Dwayne Parsons M-111-1 (Zippo 1) (11/67-11/68)  
 Robert Pawlicki T-111-11 (03/67-12/67)  
 Luis F. Peraza D Co. 3rd/60th Inf (11/68-08/69)  
 John "Ron" Perry T-132-11 (06/68-09/69)  
 Col Pete Petersen USA (Ret.) Cdr 3rd/60th Inf (11/68-08/69)  
 Michael Howard Phillips D Co. 15th Combat Engineers (08/68-06/69)  
 BM1W. R. Posey Craft Master YTB-785 (1967-68 1970-71)  
 LCDR Leonard Previto CTF-117 (08/67-08/68)  
 Richard Pubanz A Co. 4th/47th Inf (01/69-03/69)  
 Kevin Rafferty Honorary Member  
 Bryan and Dolly Rasco USS Indra ARL-37 (09/67-01/69)  
 Paul Ray M-151-5 (06/69-07/70)  
 Capt William Renton USS Askari ARL-30 (10/68-09/69)  
 Donald and Marjio Robbins USS Benewah (APB-35)  
 William Robinson Jr. CO USS Mark AKL-12 (06/70-05/71)

Robert Roth USS Benewah APB-35 (08/68-09/69)  
 Matthew F. Rovner USS Colleton (09/66-12/67)  
 James Saboe C Co. 3rd/47th Inf (02/69-07/69)  
 Billy Sanders RivRon 11 RAD 112 T-112-1  
 & CCB-112-1 (Vietnam 1967)  
 Norman Saunders B Co. 3rd/39th Inf (01/69-08/69)  
 Dave Schell RivRon 15 Tango 49 (07/69-07/70)  
 Joe Schladweiler HHC 2nd/47th Inf (Super Scouts) (01/68-09/68)  
 F. George Schuster LTJG USS Indra ARL-37 (1968-69)  
 Col Sam L. Schutte USA (Ret.) B Co. 4th/47th Inf (VN)  
 Bob Shawen Friend of the Ardingers  
 Jerry Shearer C Co. 3rd/60th 9th Inf (04/67-04/68)  
 Richard Simpson C Co. 3rd/47th 9th Div (05/67-06/68)  
 Thomas Slater USS Hampshire County LST- 819 (1967-69)  
 Terry Sloat RivRon Assault Squadron 11 (12/68-04/69)  
 BrGen Douglas Smith USA (Ret.) Cdr 2nd/47th (Mech) Inf  
 Jim Solar USS Mercer APB-39 (1968)  
 Chet "Gunner" Stanley C-111-1 and M-111-3 (1966-68)  
 Robert Sutton RivRon 9 M-92-2, Z-92-11, and R-92-1 (11/68-05/69)  
 Bryan Swisher B Co. 3rd/47th Inf (12/68-06/69)  
 John Tatch Jr. A Co. 2nd/47th Inf (08/69-08/70)  
 Jack Terry USS Colleton APB-36 (1966-68)  
 Thanks to 155 mm (Mech) Arty  
 Charles Thompson 9th Admin Co. (02/66-11/67)  
 Edward Toth USS Askari ARL-30 (1952-55)  
 Harley Timmerman T-132-10 (06/68-06/69)  
 Milton Turnage M-151-1 (07/66-06/69)  
 LCDR Lewis Turner CO USS Nueces (06/68-06/69)  
 Erol Tuzco A Co. 3rd/60th Inf (1968-69)  
 USS Terrell City LST-1157  
 Roger Valentine USS Askari ARL-30 (07/67-05/68)  
 Bob and Nancy VanDruff T-91-5 and T-92-4  
 GMGI Ricky Vice USN (Ret.) T-131-7 (03/68-  
 05/69) and NAG (01/71-06/72)  
 Ron Wallace B Co. 3rd Pli 3rd/47th Inf (05/66-08/67)  
 Hank and Becky Washburn USS Colleton APB-36 (01/67-09/68)  
 Gary Weisz A-91-4 (10/67-07/68)  
 David H. White USN (Ret) USS Satyr ARL-23 (08/69-08/70)  
 Edward Whitmarsh A Co. 2nd/60th Inf (03/68-03/69)  
 Norm Wilkinson B Co. 4th/47th Inf (03/67-03/68)  
 Robert P. Williams 1097th TC (MB) (01/68-01/69)  
 Jeffrey L. Withers RivRon 11 A-112-8 and M-112-12 (06/68-06/69)  
 William H. Ziebarth 9th Signal, 34 Arty (1966-68)  
 Richard Ziemba CS3 USS Whitfield County LST-1169 (02/65-12/66)  
 James Zieminski EN2 Boat Captain RivDiv  
 153 ASPB 6854 (04/69-04/70)  
 Admiral Elmo Zumwalt ComNavForV