



# River Currents

APBs with Boats alongside

Riverine Infantry leaving Tango Boat

A PUBLICATION OF  
THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 27, NUMBER 3  
FALL 2018

## MRFA Reunion at the Millennium Maxwell House Hotel, Nashville, TN

August 29 to September 1, 2019

Start planning now for the 2019 MRFA Reunion in Nashville, TN. We will be at the Millennium Maxwell House Hotel. Check in will start on Thursday August 29 and the reunion will end on Sunday September 1.

You will be able to begin making reservations on September 8, 2018. The number to call for reservations is 1-800-457-4460 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please make sure to reference the MRFA when making your reservations. The cutoff date for reservations is July 27, 2019. All members are responsible for their own reservations.

The room rate for all rooms will be \$125.00. All registered guests also will receive a great, breakfast buffet every morning at the hotel. As this is included with the room, it is only available for registered guests for free.

We have also arranged for an ADA accessible bus to transport our guests to the Opryland area,

which includes stops at the Grand Ole Opry, the Opry Mills Mall, and the General Jackson riverboat tour. The bus will run on the hour from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. only on Friday August 30, 2019. The hotel has a smaller shuttle every half hour to downtown Nashville from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m. every day. Opryland and downtown Nashville should be a great time! Lots of music and food.

The hotel will run a free daily shuttle service from the airport. A flight form is also included on the web site. To co-ordinate an airport pickup, you must submit a form. This airport shuttle is not ADA approved. Those needing assistance with wheelchairs or scooters will need to call 1-615-865-4100 or 1-615-256-7000 at least 2



days in advance to reserve a shuttle. We are sorry, but the ADA shuttles will have to be paid for by the members.

This is a no pets allowed hotel. Service dogs are the only animals allowed.

There will be a BBQ on the covered pavilion Friday and Saturday for lunch. This is a cash BBQ.

The hotel parking is free. RV parking is allowed on the outer edges of the parking lot in the designated area only. No AC power is provided. ★

## From the Radio Shack

Hello Everyone!!! Lots going on in the Radio Shack of the MRFA!!! Messages flying in and out!!!! Since the last River Currents, we have had a change in our Treasurer/Membership Chairman. Charlie Ardinger is no longer our Treasurer/Membership Chairman. Health reasons are why they jointly decided to give up that position. The organization appreciates everything that Charlie and Georgie have done from 2001 to 2018. Charlie Ardinger remains on our Board of Directors. Georgie also remains helping Albert Moore with the *River Currents*!!



Harry Hahn

So, our new Treasurer/Membership Chairman is Frank Jones! He and his lovely wife, Linda, are assuming these duties. Frank and Linda reside in the St. Louis, Missouri area. If you have not already noticed, the membership forms, renewals, applications, etc. have already been changed on the website to Frank and Linda's address. Frank has been and remains our Reunion Coordinator. I am certain you know Frank from the reunions. Speaking of the reunion, you will begin to start making your hotel reservations and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



## Veterans Day 2018, Washington DC

We have blocked 40 rooms at the Arlington Court Suites, a Clarion Collection Hotel, at 1200 N Courthouse Rd in Arlington, Virginia, from November 8 to 11 (check out on 11/12). Room rates are \$125.00 (plus tax) per night. More information is available at <http://www.arlingtoncourthotel.com/>.

For reservations, call 1-703-524-4000 ext. "0." Please state our group name as "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 8, 2018.

The MRFA and 9th Infantry Division will have a hospital room available on November 8 to 11. Come join us as we honor our fallen Brothers on Veterans Day 2018. We look forward to seeing you in DC.

The MRFA and 9th Infantry Division will be placing wreaths at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, on Veterans Day, Sunday, November 11, 2018. 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.

For more information, contact Vice President: Bob (Doc) Pries, (513) 659-4974, pries247@gmail.com. ★



Arlington Court Suites

# MRF Ambushed

The JACKSTAFF News, March 2, 1968

"From where I was standing, I could see the VC firing from spider holes and trees less than 100 feet from where we were beached. The troops couldn't see them because they were running up the ramp. I stood up with my bullhorn and started yelling at them to keep down, trying to tell them where Charlie was. All of a sudden, I felt like somebody had hit me in the back with a baseball bat, and I was thrown to my knees."

Boatswain's Mate First Class R.D. Sullivan shifted uncomfortably as he spoke. In the pale blue pajamas of the Navy sick bay, he looked strangely out of place. He had the tanned weatherbeaten face of an outdoorsman, and he was obviously uncomfortable in his confinement.

Sullivan the Boat Captain of Armored Troop Carrier (Tango)-111-10 attached to River Assault Flotilla One in Vietnam's Mekong Delta was describing the battle that had landed him in the hospital.

It was the afternoon of February 6, when Sullivan's boat in company of with six other assault craft, navigated the Rach Cai Cam Canal near Vinh Long. They had been called into the area as a reaction and reinforcement force following heavy enemy contact by other Mobile Riverine Force units in the area earlier in the day.

"The canal was only about a 100 feet wide," Sullivan recalled. "We were under fire as we



Boatswain's Mate First Class R.D. Sullivan

approached the beach, but that was nothing compared to what we were in for later."

Sullivan's boat, Tango-111-10, was carrying a platoon of Riverine infantrymen of the 2nd Brigade, Ninth Infantry Division, the ground unit of the Mobile Riverine Force.

The battle in which they were engaged was one of many in Operation Coronado X, a campaign designed to free the Delta area south of Saigon from the Viet Cong terrorism that had gripped the area for several years. As the boats moved down the narrow canal, it became obvious the Viet Cong were lying in ambush.

Sullivan shook his head. "They were waiting for us, closer to the beach than we expected." We beached the boat under fire from both banks. I was standing between the two .50-caliber-machine gun mounts, high above everyone else. The Army was running up the ramp into the fire and couldn't see what I could. While I was yelling at them, a rifle grenade bounced off the 20-mm canon mount right behind me and detonated.

As Boat Captain of a 56 foot converted landing craft, Sullivan's duty station is outside the boat above the conning station. Wearing battle gear, protective body armor and a helmet, he is able to direct his boat's activities while commanding an unobstructed view of the surrounding area.

"I give credit to my flak jacket and helmet for saving my life," Sullivan declared emphatically "As it was, I was able to walk below after I told the kids I was hit. They put battle dressings on me and took me to a medical aid boat. In 10 minutes, I was on a helicopter and on the way back to the Mobile



Riverine Base.

Sullivan moved stiffly as he talked, turning his whole body to look at people who walked by. He was still heavily bandaged and the doctors had not yet released him for duty. His back and shoulder were minor only because he was wearing his body armor.

The "kids" of whom he spoke are the members of his boat crew. Although he referred to them as kids, he certainly did not describe them as such. "They did well," he continued. "They learned fast under fire, there are no mistakes allowed here."

After taking the wounded Boat Captain to the medical aid boat, the crew returned to the battle area, beached the boat and resumed their mission. Before that day was over, 15 of their combat sailors had been wounded, but they along with the Riverine Infantry and the other crews routed the VC who left 86 dead, and 27 assorted weapons in their wake.

Unfortunately, Petty Officer 1st Class R.D. Sullivan Boat Captain of Tango-111-10 didn't finish his tour of duty. On August 21, 1968, Petty Officer Sullivan drowned while on duty in the Brown Waters of the Mekong Delta (Dinh Tuong Province). His body was recovered September 7, 1968. Petty Officer 1st Class Sullivan was from Centerville, TN. At the time of his death, he was 42 years old with 18 years in the Navy. R.D. Sullivan is on the Wall at Panel W47, Line 23.

## CONFIDENTIAL: FIRST ENDORSEMENT on Commander River Assault Squadron FIFTEEN Letter 3000

ser 02-69 of 20 JAN 69

From: Commander Task Group 117.2  
 To: Commander U. S. Naval Forces, Vietnam  
 Via: Commander Task Force 117  
 Subj: Combat After Action Report (MACV) 3-32) (U)

1. (U) Forwarded.  
 2. (C) This operation saw the first loss of a Program V river assault craft to the enemy. At 140940H, January 1969, T-151-5 was sunk by a command detonated mine at coordinates WR 438769 on the Rach Cai Nhut in Chuong Thien Province. Local intelligence indicates that the mine may have been a duded 750 pound U.S. bomb converted to a command detonated water mine. The degree of destruction of the boat indicates that a mine of considerable size must have been used. The area in which the explosion occurred had been swept prior to the passage of the MRC but it is apparent that the sweeping had not been effective. An analysis of the event indicates that sweep craft must be as close to the banks of the stream as possible in order to destroy the command detonation cables. The act taken by other craft of the transit group was instrumental in speedy evacuation of the wounded. The hull of T-151-5 was completely destroyed by an UDT/EOD element during the afternoon of 2 February. The hull no longer presents a hazard to navigation.  
 3. (C) In order to improve the communication

capabilities of the CCB action is underway to procure two AT-292 antennae for use by CTG 117.2. In addition, an effort will be made to position antennae used by embarked Vietnamese Marines in locations where they will not shield the installed antennae aboard the CCB.

4. (C) The fast action taken by Z-152-1 in coming alongside T-152-3 is noted. There is no doubt that the boat would have sunk as a result of flooding caused by a rocket hit had not it been expeditiously dewatered.

5. (C) The continued difficulties being experienced with Lister Generators aboard the CCB are noted. It has been proposed by personnel of CTG 117.2 that the starting circuitry which is in fact part of the attached generator be immobilized in order to prevent electrical derangement of the equipment. The prime mover for the Lister system can be started easily with a hand crank and it is felt that the proposed action will indeed prolong the life of the equipment and the associated radios which it serves.

David Alden Land and Jose Ballentine Campos were killed when T-151-5 was hit by the mine.

DOWNGRADED AT 3-YEAR INTERVALS  
 CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS

[This is typed from an authentic "After Action Report" by Mike A. Harris]

### River Currents Staff

Editor Albert Moore  
 Copy Editor Georginia Ardinger  
 Graphic Artist Robin Bartell

### Mobile Riverine Force Association Membership Application Form

- New Member    Associate Member    Renewal    Sponsor  
 Donation    CCB-18    Mobile Museum  
 Change of address below.

### NEWSLETTER DELIVERY

- Postal Delivery    Go Green with Email

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cell \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

- WW-II    Korea    Vietnam

Army Member  
 Unit (Division, Brigade, Battalion, Company, Platoon, Battery)

Navy Member  
 Unit (Ship, Boat Hull Numbers, Navy Activity/Detachment, etc.)

Dates Served in Unit (mm/yr - mm/yr) \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP RATES

- 1 Year \$20    3 Years \$50

### DONATION

\_\_\_\_\_

To become a member, mail your check or money order (payable To MRFA) to Frank Jones, MRFA Membership Chairman, 9 San Marino Pkwy, Fenton, MO 63026-7513

# 2019 Reunion Plan Of The Day

Dress Code: Dress is to be comfortable. Always wear a pair of comfortable shoes if you plan on visiting the local sites. Most of all just come and have a great time.

Individual Hospitality Rooms: Opening and closing of the individual hospitality rooms will be up to the different units.

We're hoping this will be the best reunion yet!

More detailed information to follow as we further develop the plan.

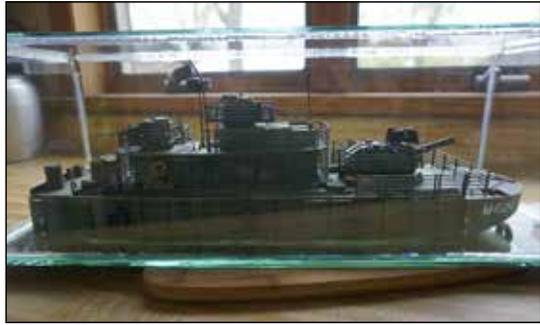
## Model Builder

**Rick Rasmussen** [rdrasmussen@mabeltel.coop](mailto:rdrasmussen@mabeltel.coop)

Rick Rasmussen is a model builder and he has assembled most of our boat models in our MRFA Memorial/Museum trailer. Rick belongs to the Zumbro Valley Scale Modelers, which is an IPMS (International Plastic Modelers Society) chapter located in Rochester, Minnesota.

The last model (Monitor M-152-1) he took to a show where he received the "Best Vietnam Subject" award at the IPMS show in Monticello, Iowa.

It takes about 60 to 80 hours to do one of these kits. Now it takes longer as they are getting at the end of their mold life. He did this for us more to thank our group for their service. ★



## RADIO SHACK

Continued from page 1

mailing in your application for the reunion (to Frank) in September!!!!

Chris, my wife and I, met Charlie Ardinger, Georgie and Bruce Graff for an enjoyable lunch before they set up the MRFA Memorial Trailer for the Great Lakes Naval Station Open House. This event was held over the Fourth of July. Our Memorial Trailer and Museum is a great tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice! Anyone interested in having the Trailer deploy to your area are asked to contact Bruce for more information. His contact info is on the website.

The information on the 2019 Reunion in Nashville is now updated on the website. You will be able to start making your reservations directly with the hotel in September. The registration information is also in this issue. Save the dates of August 29 to September 1, 2019! Any suggestions you may have for the reunion should be submitted to Frank Jones or me.

The sale of the Gear Locker New and Discontinued Items goes on. I continue to post OUT OF STOCK items and quantities. This will continue until this fall, so look at these deals NOW! There will be items in the Gear Locker that, as we are out of stock, we will not reorder. Be sure to look at what is available and place your orders.

We continue to look for new articles for this publication. If you haven't ever submitted an article, please think of doing it. Personal experiences of your time in Vietnam may be something you want to share with this audience. Please let Albert Moore know if you are interested.

Harry Hahn, President, [SparksRivRon13@aol.com](mailto:SparksRivRon13@aol.com)

## MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Reunion Registration Form

August 29-September 1, 2019

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Unit in Vietnam \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ or Cell \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): Spouse/Guest(s) \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Send my registration form by email?  
 Yes  No

No guests  
 First Reunion

Registration fee • Cost includes member and spouse/girlfriend **\$70.00**  
**(Does not cover lodging, food, bus trips, or shuttles)**

Total number of other guest(s) (\_\_\_ x \$25.00 each) \_\_\_\_\_

Guests under 16 are free.

Registration fee for Nonmember (\$80.00) \_\_\_\_\_

Late registration fee (\$75.00) \_\_\_\_\_

**Grand total enclosed** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send this form with your check or money order (payable to the MRFA or Mobile Riverine Force Association) to MRFA 2019 Reunion, c/o Frank Jones, 9 San Marino Parkway, Jenton, MO 63026 before August 15, 2019. Returned checks and cancellations prior to the reunion will be charged a \$25 processing fee.**

When filling out the form, please use one unit and one date, even if you have served in more than one unit. To provide the complimentary transportation to and from the airport on a prearranged scheduled basis, fill out the 2019 MRFA Reunion Flight Information Form and send to Diane Carroll as indicated on the form.

**If you do not send the form to Diane, you will have to find your own transportation to the hotel.** Note: You will still have to check in at the registration desk to receive your name tag.

## 2019 MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Reunion Flight Information August 29 to September 1, 2019

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date	Airline	Flight Number <b>INTO</b> Nashville Airport	Arrival time <b>INTO</b> Nashville Airport	# of People Needing Ride
Departure Date	Airline	Flight Number <b>FROM</b> Indy Airport	Departure Time <b>FROM</b> Indy Airport	# of People Needing Ride

**NOTE: Flight info due no later than August 14, 2019 to get on the hotel shuttle. No exceptions to this rule. If you do not sign up, you will have to find your own transportation to the hotel.**

Send this form back to Diane Carroll by e-mail [Diane.carroll@millenniumhotels.com](mailto:Diane.carroll@millenniumhotels.com); or fax to 1-615-254-8727; or mail to Diane Carroll, 2025 Rosa L. Parks Blvd., Nashville, TN 37228-1505, ATTN: 2019 MRFA Reunion Flight Info.

If you e-mail this form, you will receive a confirmation e-mail back within 3 days of arrival as to what your pick up times will be. If flights are delayed, call 1-615-259-4343, when you get into the Nashville airport and they will get you on the next shuttle.

Guests may be responsible for their own airport transportation if the hotel is given incorrect flight information or if flight changes and hotel was not notified.

Guests needing ADA transportation will be responsible for their own transportation. Call 1-615-865-4100 or 1-615-256-7000 to reserve a vehicle. Please call 2 to 3 days in advance.

# Cam Son Hit Again; 213 Enemy Die

By SP5 Joe Collins Assistant Editor

Ninth Infantry Division The Old Reliable September 27, 1967, Pages 1 and 8

Long Thanh—A bloody, 5-day thrust into a tiny wedge of Mekong Delta marshland ended Sept. 16 as elements of 9th Division completed mop-up operations after killing 213 Viet Cong.

American losses were 15 killed and 128 wounded.

The action occurred less than 2 months after Allied forces last struck the same area in a concerted attack, killing 285.

The checkerboard of grassing marshes and rice paddles, known as the Cam Son Secret zone of western Dinh Tuong Province, was hit Sept. 12 by elements of the division's 2d and 3d Brigades cooperating with elements of the Vietnamese Army's 7th Division.

The 3d Battalion, 47th Infantry and the mechanized infantrymen of the 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry moved into the area to entrap the 263d Viet Cong Battalion along the Ba Rai River about 50 miles southwest of Saigon.

Five days later in the Cam Son Secret Zone the bodies of 213 members of that VC battalion lay scattered where 13,950 rounds of U.S. artillery fire had pounded their positions and 102 tons of Air Force bombs had been dropped in 47 air strikes.



This is the Cam Son Secret Zone

... mvxomvctous slime; jungles tortured by air strikes

Air Force bombing missions accounted for 45 enemy deaths while supporting artillery fire from the "floating howitzers of 3d Battalion, 27th Artillery killed 42.

The mechanized infantrymen of the 5th-60th received credit for 76 enemy deaths, while the 2d-60th chalked up 31 kills.

The remainder of the enemy deaths were credited to helicopter gunships of the 9th Division, elements of the US Navy's Task Force 117, the 3d Battalion, 47th Infantry and the 2d Battalion, 60th Infantry.

Here's a breakdown of the action:

## September 12

The first day of the operation ended with only three confirmed enemy kills as the Viet Cong eluded preliminary probes by American

units. The pattern contained throughout the morning of the second day.

## September 13

Shortly after noon the chain link trap of infantrymen, armor and artillery snapped shut around the 263d.

Artillery bombardments and Air Force jet bomber strikes backed up ground operations of the 3d-69th as they tangled with guerrillas in numerous small clashes.

By late afternoon ground commanders in the battalion reported their units had killed or discovered the bodies of 36 Viet Cong.

Meanwhile, armored personnel carriers (APCs) from the 5th-60th were blasted by recoilless rifle fire. Two of the vehicles were destroyed, but as night fell the 5th-60th pieced together reports revealing the battalion had killed 26 enemy.

(Checks with other units confirmed three more enemy dead that day for a total of 65—the highest per-day body count for the operation.)

## September 14

On the third day, blanket sweeps of Cam Son continued to turn up bodies of enemy soldiers killed in fierce fighting the day before.

As the 5th-60th APCs churned

the weapons had been irreparably damaged.

As the mop-up operations for the day ground to a halt, the picture of a crushed enemy battalion emerged.

The Viet Cong death toll had risen to 138 as American units set up their night defensive perimeters. Vast enemy fortifications lay in smoldering ruins.

But the battle was not yet history. Another morning of furious fighting would follow.

## September 15

Before Friday's sun could soar away the night mists, 3d-60th soldiers scrambled aboard Armored Troop Carriers of the Mobile Riverine Force for another waterborne assault.

As the column of vessels advanced northward along the Ba Rai River, a maelstrom of enemy recoilless rifle, automatic weapons, and small arms fire burst on them.

Thirteen of the vessels were damaged or crippled.

Answering the fire, the boats continued their advance until at mid-morning the infantrymen assaulted the shores under a rain of enemy rifle and machine gun fire.

Artillery and Air Force jets pounded the entrenched Viet Cong as the American assault spread to the west. By afternoon, the 3d-60th infantrymen had stifled resistance and contact was listed as "sporadic."

Later, companies from that battalion assaulted a Viet Cong bunker system and once again encountered heavy enemy fire. An intensive attack on the fortifications by helicopter gunships, air strikes, and artillery shredded the remnants of enemy resistance.

Gunship pilots killed five enemy; air strikes accounted for 17. The infantry tallied 14 VC dead that day.

Late reports filtering in Friday night indicated the 263d Viet Cong battalion in the Cam Son Secret Zone had been devastated.

## September 16

As Operation CORONADO V entered its fifth and final day in Cam Son, the survivors of the mauled enemy battalion made their final attempts to strike back at the American force.

In the early morning darkness both the 5th-60th and the 3d-47th exchanged fire with enemy troops.

Enemy mortar crews fired 18 rounds into the fire support base of

the 5th-60th, killing one American and wounding four.

Shortly afterward, elements of the 3d-47th killed nine Viet Cong in scattered contacts.

After daybreak, the 3d-47th fanned out across the northwest boundary of the battlefield while the 3d-47th killed nine Viet Cong to the east to seal off possible avenues of escape.

The 5th-60th and the 2d-60th meanwhile combed the battlefield checking out blind spots and possible areas of enemy troop concentration.

But the enemy had been shattered in Cam Son. Methodical searches throughout the day added only 26 to the enemy death toll.

One automatic weapon of undetermined type, two AK-47 assault rifles, two .45 caliber pistols, nine rifle magazines, and 9,986 rounds of assorted small arms ammunition were uncovered by search parties on the last day.

An additional 244 enemy bunkers were demolished before the 9th Division forces withdrew late that afternoon.

Even as the Allied ground force mauled the 263d, the division's psychological operations machinery had swung into high gear, staging daily leaflet drops over the battle ground.

More than a million standard leaflets fluttered down to demoralize the enemy troops. Among them were warnings to surrender; demoralizing reminders of Allied superiority and safe conduct passes for those who chose to surrender.

When intelligence sources confirmed on the third day the identity of the VC battalion which it had trapped in Cam Son, 100,000 leaflets, especially addressed to members of the 263d, were dropped on the battle ground.

Half of the rapid reaction leaflets were dropped on the fourth day and half on the fifth day.

They stressed VC losses and the uselessness of continuing the fight in the face of overwhelming odds. ★





## Two Harrowing Days in June 1969

By Michael A. Harris (RM2), RAS 15 RAD 152 T-152-1 (July 1968-July 1969)  
www.riverinesailor.com, mekong152@99w.us

It was June 13, 1969. River Assault Squadron 15 had been relocated from enemy Base Area 480 in Chuong Thien and Kien Giang Provinces to the Dong Tam area because we were getting "short." I recalled only moving 9th Infantry Division troops on only three or four occasions. River Assault Divisions 151 and 152 had spent our year carrying out tactical operations with the Vietnamese Marines and ARVN. I found myself deeply fearful once again as our tour was coming to an end. A short RAD 152 operation near Ben Tre would be a "piece of cake" after what we'd been through down south.

I had returned from R&R in Australia during the first week of June. My T-152-1 boat was out on a long operation. RM2 Robert Buchanan from T-152-2 had gone home on Emergency Leave following the death of his mother. Since I was also an RM2, I was placed onboard T-2 until my boat returned.

The drone of our engines and the sweltering heat were accosting my senses as I sat on the ladder close to the ramp on the boat. Suddenly, I heard several rockets launched from the riverbank. I turned and saw Z-152-1 lurch to her side from the impact of multiple hits. Our column of nine boats began suppressing the intense fire as we attempted to maneuver through the well planned ambush.

After clearing the ambush zone, we learned that T-152-6 and T-152-11 had also taken rocket hits. The casualty rate was very high amidst Navy personnel and 3rd/47th Infantry troops. T-6 had four Army KIAs and many wounded. To successfully evacuate them, it was determined that we needed to reverse our direction in order to get to a safer landing zone. We suppressed yet another Viet Cong attack as we moved through the area of the initial firefight. Declassified reports state that we traveled to a fire support base to offload our KIAs and WIAs. There is mention of it being FSB Karen near Ben Tre. I have searched often, but cannot find any information on a FSB Karen. If anyone can help, please notify me.

Shortly after reaching a remote Fire Support Base, Army medevac choppers were arriving to ferry the dead and wounded out to evacuation

hospitals. In the aftermath, we learned that besides the four Army KIAs there were also 26 Army and Navy personnel wounded. A company of 3rd/60th grunts had to be airlifted in to replace those who were medevac'd. Charlie had served us a large "piece of cake" and it wasn't over yet.

On June 15th, our assault craft moved into position to extract troops that we had offloaded earlier in the day. Their search and destroy mission had not led to contact. As our ramp was being lowered, I heard a loud gunshot like noise followed by a thump. The winch cable had snapped causing the ramp to drop onto the muddy riverbank. I used my sound-powered phone to inform BM2 David Davey, our boat captain. Then I began to rig the chain hoist in order to raise the ramp manually. The other Tango boats were busy loading their infantry troops.

As I began releasing the chain on the chain hoist, all hell broke loose. The Viet Cong had seized the opportunity to launch another ambush. I frantically hooked up the chain hoist and began manually cranking up the heavy ramp. All of a sudden, I was almost knocked down by a muzzle blast. Glancing to our portside, I saw M-152-1 firing point blank into the jungle just ahead of our boat. She fired a couple of more rounds and then moved away. The adrenaline screamed through my body as I worked the large chain hoist. I could hear the battle raging behind our boat and some loud noises to our front. The jungle in front of me was being torn to pieces by our weapons. I yelled at our boat captain when the ramp finally locked into place and we quickly backed off the riverbank and joined the battle. As we moved out of the ambush zone, the last of our machine guns finally became silent.

Again radio reports confirmed many wounded. Z-152-1 had been hit once again along with T-152-7. M-152-1 had taken two recoilless rifle rounds that were shot from 200 to 300 yards down the Ben Tre River. We all scrambled to rig a Tango boat for medical evacuation. A report came in from M-152-1 that our Officer in Charge, LT Tom Kelley, had been seriously wounded. He had only been with RAD 152 for this one short operation having come over from RAS 9. The choppers arrived quickly and the wounded were whisked off.

I endured a few more harrowing experiences before our replacements arrived to take over

T-152-1. What a relief to finally be away from those deadly rivers and canals!

In 1984, I spotted a "Gung Ho Magazine" lying on a desk. As I glanced through it, I came across an article entitled "The Brown Water Navy in Vietnam." Much to my surprise, the author had written about the June 15, 1969, firefight mentioned above. It was then, 15 years after the fact, that I found out LT Thomas G. Kelley had become the recipient of the Navy Medal of Honor for his heroic actions that day. Here is a portion of his citation:

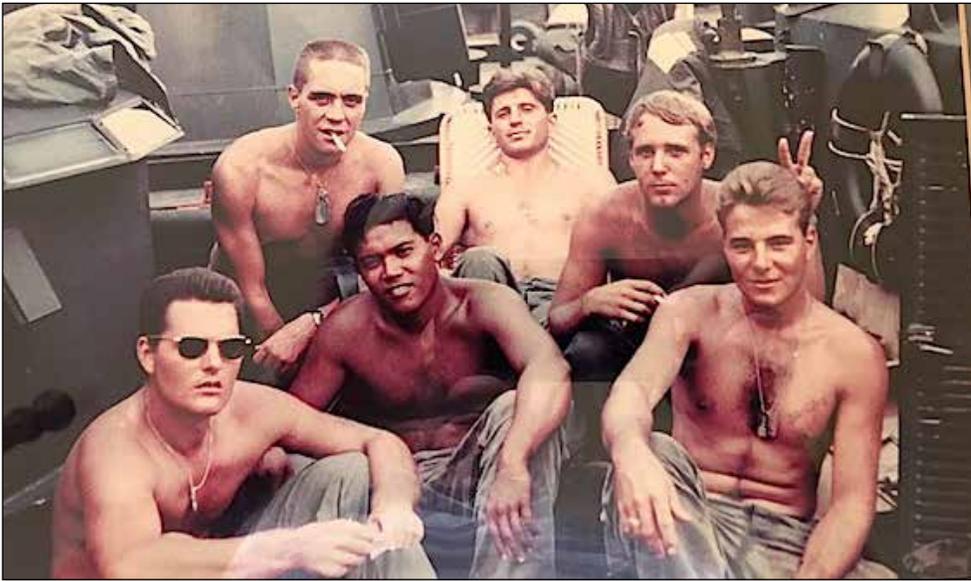
*"Sustaining serious head wounds from the blast, which hurled him to the deck of the monitor, Lieutenant Commander Kelley disregarded his severe injuries and attempted to continue directing the other boats. Although unable to move from the deck or speak clearly into the radio, he succeeded in relaying his commands through one of his men until the enemy attack was silenced and the boats were able to move to an area of safety."*

Captain (USN Ret.) Tom Kelley's citation and other information are here at <http://www.mrfa.org/valor-above-and-beyond-the-call-of-duty/navy-mobile-riverine-force-medal-of-honor-recipient/>.

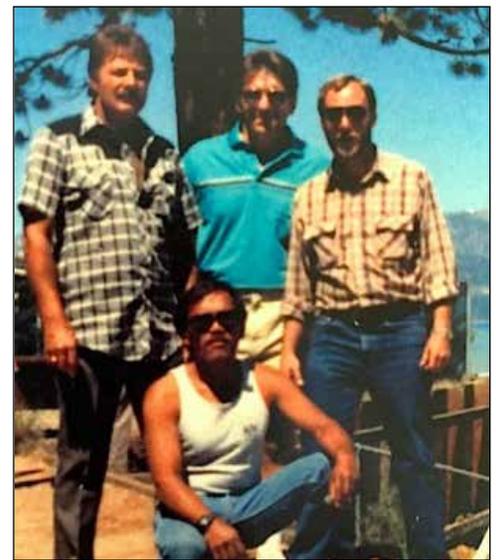
As we all know, it was not popular to be a Vietnam veteran for years following the war. That day, in the quiet of my own surroundings, I took great pride again in the fact that we all did our jobs and we did them extremely well under such adverse conditions. To know that we had a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient in our midst was the "icing" on the proverbial cake.

As a side note, I traveled back to that location in 2010. As I neared the peninsula between the Ong Muong and Ben Tre Rivers, I noted some kind of object on the point. When my guide and I got closer, I saw a VC/NVA Memorial. It has three uniformed soldiers. One has an RPG, one an AK-47, and the third a recoilless rifle. It honors those VC/NVA of the 516th Viet Cong Battalion who fought against us on several occasions in that particular area of Kien Hoa Province. The plaque also references our July 23 and 24, 1968 operations in the area. It irked me at first, but then I began to see it as a tribute to our troops who faced our enemy head on and came out victorious on every occasion despite our casualties.

Rich Lorman's related article in the Winter 2014 *River Currents* newsletter here at <http://www.mrfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/RiverCurrentsWinter-2014WEB.pdf>. ★



**Alpha 8 crew members: Boat Captain Pat Thrasher EN3, Bill "Fitz" Fitzgerald GM3, David Vicente SN, Ken Mories BMSN, and myself Jim Armstrong RM3.**



**Alpha 8 boat crew 1989 standing is L-R, Ken Mories, Jim Armstrong, Bill Fitzgerald, and kneeling David Vicente.**

## The Mining of the USS Westchester County LST-1167 and A-111-8

By Jim Armstrong

I presume this was during the period of "Vietnamization" because we also had onboard a Vietnamese sailor for training who we called Tom. I believe his name was spelled Tham but not certain. He hadn't been onboard very long, maybe a week or two but we got along well with our VN counterpart.

The evening of Oct 31, 1968, the MRB was outside of Dong Tam and we were assigned to tie up to the Westchester County. We were the outboard boat (about 8 boats out) and as I recall we were on the aft end of the pontoon. That evening Pat went aboard the Westchester County to try and get some real sleep, the rest of us set the watches, took care of the boat and settled in for the night. My rack was on the starboard side of the boat under the trigger shield. Mories was on the port side, David and Fitz were below in the forward compartment and Tom was aft under the canopy atop one of the engine covers. I don't remember who had the first watch.

In the middle of the night I was woken by what sounded like shrapnel hitting the trigger shield and the boat rocking pretty hard as if in rough water (I don't remember hearing an explosion). I threw on my pants and went to the coxswain flat. Fitz, who apparently had the watch, had already let go the stern line and was on the bow line waiting for someone to get the boat underway. I hit the start buttons but only one engine fired up. I don't remember which one but at least we were able to move. The time elapsed to do all of that wasn't very long, maybe a minute. During that time Mories who was asleep right outside the coxswain flat door shows up and asks me, "How in the heck did you beat me here?" He was standing there with only flip-flops on; after I stopped laughing I asked if he was going to get some pants on. (A few years ago when I saw the news of a young marine in pink boxer shorts and flip-flops on a battle line in Afghanistan I immediately thought of Mories that night in 1968). As we were getting underway it was immediately evident we had no electric power on the boat. I remember it being very dark that night. All the boats were milling around trying to figure out what was going on, and we were trying not to get

run over as we had no lights. Since we had no radios we could not report in our status nor could we receive information as to what was going on.

As we were driving we felt the boat was sitting lower in the water than usual. Mories went to check it out and reported that we were taking on water, since we had no power for the bilge pump we had to bail manually. The water was probably coming from one or both of the shaft packings but it was not severe so we were not in any immediate danger of swamping. Anybody who has served on an Alpha boat knows that there is only 12" of freeboard astern so it doesn't take much to get in serious trouble.

A few minutes later Fitz came up and told me that Tom (VN) was hurt. Mories grabbed the first aid kit and we headed aft to see what was going on while Fitz took over the helm. Tom was in major pain but other than a real nasty cut on his head we couldn't find anything wrong with him. We cut his clothes off then found that he had been hurt pretty bad. I won't go into detail but it was very bad. Mories gave him a morphine shot and I cleaned his wound, grabbed a battle dressing but got a 4" dressing instead of the 12" that I was looking for. I finally got the right dressing on him. We then headed for the hospital ship, which I believe was the Colleton, to get Tom some help. We pulled up to the pontoon, put him on a stretcher and sent David along with him to make sure he got help. We then went to the YRBM in Dong Tam to get repairs. We had to beach the boat to keep it afloat.

In the morning we found a large piece of wood lodged between the two engines. The chunk of wood was about 3 feet long and 2 foot square and took three of us to get it out of the boat. While we were there Pat and David had found their way back. We briefed Pat and asked David how Tom was. He said, "He didn't make it. Damn!!" We did our best to get him to a doctor as fast as we could. Of course it's hard to explain the mayhem and confusion of that evening but I had thought we had performed pretty well. It was a good boat and crew.

It turned out that the chunk of wood we found was a piece of camel that was part of the bumper



**November 4, 1968**



**USS Westchester County LST-1167**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

# Mike 6 Thrown Out of Dong Tam 9/70

By David G. McCann RM-3  
Monitor-6 (06/70-11/70)

It was monsoon season in the Plain of Reeds. When we arrived on the "Grand Canal" (Sept. 70), there were defined canal banks and a canal. I believe we tied up at the floating base when we first arrived and our chief and someone in charge there decided that we needed to be away from the base so we could fire the 105 without blowing them up but still close enough that they could keep an eye on us. So it was decided that we would go back downstream, spin around and face the base. We had two anchors so we just put a wooden plank over to the canal bank and while the cox'n kept the boat running and pointed into the current we were able to walk the anchors out over the plank and dig them into the dirt, fore and aft. That worked for about a month and it looks like we drove a post into the ground at some point near the bow and used it as an anchor point when the water kept rising.

The anchors stopped working as the water level kept rising so we used posts. The recoil from firing the 105 was, as you know, very big and we would fire 20-30 rounds at ambush points where the PBRs were in contact. If we pulled the anchor points out of whack it messed up the azimuth, distance and elevation for the gun. So we had to keep in one spot so the math worked. The PBRs moved to different locations each night. One thing you don't see on the base picture was the little sampan we pulled behind us when we left the repair base in Dong Tam. There was a Navy SEAL detachment there and in My Tho and for some reason we hooked up with some of them while we were there getting refitted and ammoed up. One day one of us mentioned to the SEALs that were on the boat that "it would be nice if we had a little boat of our own to take to villages and such." Be really careful what you ask for around SEALs, especially if they like you. The next morning when we woke up in Dong Tam at the pier to go back to work on the boat, there tied up alongside us on our starboard side was this neat little 3-person sampan, complete with paddles! Later when some of the SEALs came down for a cold beer they asked us, "How we liked the boat." When we asked them where they got it, the one SEAL said, "The folks that were using it last night would not need it anymore."

We rigged up a sail and went boating in the basin at Dong Tam until the base commanding officer

saw us and put a stop to it, party pooper. It didn't matter all that much, we were getting bored anyway and it was not long before we got our rebuilt 105 and turret lifted back into position with a really big crane. John Watson, our E-6 Gunners Mate, decided that he needed to fire the rebuilt 105 to see if the breech worked right.

“...We rigged up a sail and went boating in the basin at Dong Tam until the base commanding officer saw us and put a stop to it, party pooper...”

So since we were the only boat tied up to the pier, we turned the boat around so the gun faced away from the base and out towards the bad guys and John let a round fly one afternoon. The chief wasn't there to stop him but that round got the attention of both the Army side of the base and the Navy side and the entire base went to General Quarters that afternoon! Man to say there was hell to pay is no exaggeration. When the smoke cleared and the base commanding officer (Navy) figured out what happened, he and others came down to the pier and caught up to the chief and all of us. The base usually got mortared at night and when that happened we all ran back to our boats and got away from the base but this time we didn't get away but all of us had assembled back on the boat anyway.

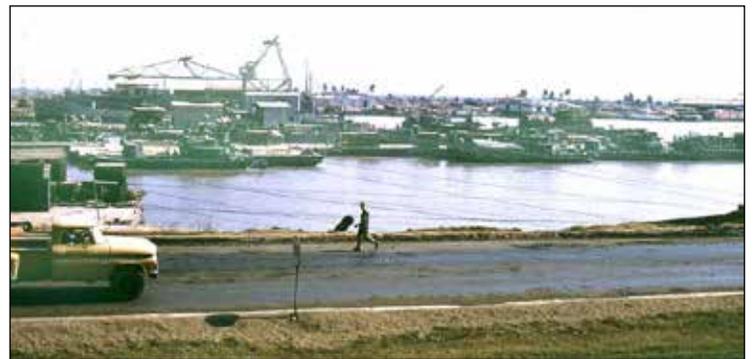
It was the last straw with the crew of Monitor-6, we had overstayed our welcome and were ordered to leave the base! There had been two or three minor infractions already with the crew and the base guys and we were ordered to go to our next duty station, Phuoc Xuyen. No more cold beer for 3 months. We loaded up C-rations and 300 rounds of 105 ammo and within a day or two we were gone.

Just before we left we decided we needed a few cases of beer for our long ride to Phuoc Xuyen so my buddy Nick and I borrowed a Honda motorcycle from a VN officer we had been working with who lived on the base. We basically paid him money to use it. So Nick and I went through the back gate between the Army side of the base and the Navy side out by the blown up ammo dump. The Navy base commanding officer had recently ordered that no American personnel were to be driving motorcycles

on his base anymore because of the high rate of accidents that his guys were having. We had decided that we needed 10 cases of beer and we could only get them from the Army Post Exchange, so Nick and I headed out the back gate and purchased five cases and loaded them up on the little motorcycle. I had three cases on my lap in back and Nick had two on the handlebars and gas tank. We decided to sneak back to the boat pier by going way around the outer perimeter of the Navy side of the base on our return trip with the beer to avoid the base overhead. As we were heading around the big repair warehouses and towards the pier we rounded a corner and to our surprise there stood, in ranks,



feet. He asked Gary, "What are you doing?" and before Gary could reply he looked up and saw me hanging onto the climbing pegs on the pole about 20 feet up and he said, "And what the Hell are you doing up there?" Needless to say I had to do some quick talking and when he



Harbor Dong Tam

almost all of the Dong Tam base enlisted men and officers. The enlisted men were facing towards us but the officer's had their backs to us and as we whizzed by I saw the base commanding officer spin around and look directly at me and lift up his hand and point at us. I think I just shut my eyes as Nick sped us away as fast as the little overloaded bike would go. Somehow we got the other five cases of beer that day and by morning we were gone.

I knew the commanding officer well. He had recently caught me up one of the power poles "borrowing" some TV antenna wire that someone had left up there. We also borrowed the antenna earlier. I was sure surprised after I cut that wire that my "lookout" Gary Vandelloo was caught stuffing the wire into his big jungle pocket as I was climbing down and I heard out of the dark the commanding officer's voice. He had caught Gary with his pocket half full of a few feet of wire lying at his

asked if we had asked the bosnmate chief who lived in the shack next to the pole if we could have the wire. I said, "Yes." Hoping the guy was not in there. The commanding officer knocked on the door of the shack and as luck would have it, the chief was not there. The commanding officer took all the wire and told us to leave his base but as we walked away I turned around and said something like, "You have to admit sir that it was pretty funny catching me up that pole with all that wire?" Even in the dark I saw a faint smile come over his lips and I asked if we could keep the wire? He threw the bundle of wire at me and told us to get back on the boat. So we rigged up a little TV one of the guys had purchased at the Army Post Exchange and watched Hee Haw at night using electricity from the pier and of course drinking cold beers, until John fired off the 105 one afternoon. You can't make this stuff up. ★

# From Member David G McCann Monitor 6 (06/70-11/70)

Good morning, I thought I would share this article with you guys. I never flew on a helicopter in Vietnam, but I saw lots of them flying around; my older brother was an Army helicopter pilot in Vietnam. We saw one "Eagle Flight" coming in and dropping off troops on our starboard side as we transited down the Vam Co Tay from Thuyen Nhon PBR base where I was dropped off to crew on Monitor 6, Rivron 15. I arrived in Thuyen Nhon in June 1970 with chief "Pat" after a very long and hot ride from the USS Benewah on a PBR after my boat class was assigned to the different boats when we arrived in-country. Most of us went down to Dong Tam to receive our assignments, but some guys were sent in different directions. Most of my boat class in June 1970 were all standing on the Benewah's ammie barge in

the pouring rain for some kind of an inspection and our boat assignments. "Welcome back to Vietnam," David I thought, "and who in their right mind would have us standing in the rain in ranks?"

On our last transit with all the ATCs from Phuoc Xuyen, on our way to Dong Tam to turnover our boats in November 1970, an Army Loach helicopter came up from behind our boat column and strafed the starboard side of it in the water. It then pivoted at the head of the column in front of the lead Tango boat and flew down the port side of the boats blazing away in the water next to all of us with his 60-caliber machine gun. The helicopter was maybe 50 or so feet off the deck, our boat Monitor 6, was on the end of the column with the 105 turned to the closest river bank. Anytime we

moved the boat, there was a beehive round set up for use. One of the guys on the Tango boat ahead of us, maybe T-49 or T-50, came up on their landing pad with two Budweiser beers in his outstretched hands holding them above his head. The helicopter guys had turned around behind our boat and spotted the guy holding up the two cans of beer and decided to stop screwing around and actually came in and landed on that moving boat for cold adult beverages. That pilot was good, not sure how many guys could land on a moving little deck without some practice?

Late that afternoon, our boats docked in Ben Luc for the night before proceeding to Dong Tam the next day. We found more cold beers that night and talked about the Army helicopter event. The pilot told our guys on the Tango boat that they were "just screwing around." On our way down that river to Ben Luc, our progress was marked by the enemy. I was in my aft 20-mm turret with the hatch up and my eyes peeping over the lip of the turret and I could hear a single "pop" of an AK-47 every now and then coming from the jungle as we moved slowly downstream. We had an AK-47 on our boat and we shot it at snakes a lot so I knew what one sounded like. I thought it interesting that we were being tracked on our way out with most of River Division 153; primitive but effective.

We were in for repairs and loading up for our trip to Phuoc Xuyen where we



*My 21st birthday sitting on my 20-mm mount on Monitor 6, August 22, 1970.*

would provide indirect fire support for the next 3 months. We tied Monitor 6 up a couple 100 yards upstream from that base on the "Grand Canal" on the same side as the base. We had loaded up to 300 rounds of 105 ammo for the trip, and lots of C-rations. That is all we ate for 3 months, we did not go down to the base but the chief did. Somehow he worked it out with someone down there and a PBR would come up and get him and bring him back in the late afternoon. Once the chief came back to the boat with a monkey on a rope! No one wanted it down in the sleeping compartment so the chief tied it up to the rebar on my 20-mm mount where it proceeded to pee and poop all over it. It was a nasty creature and we hated it. One morning when I got topside, there dangling from the rebar on my gun mound was an empty rope noose. Mind you it was monsoon season in the Delta and we

were surrounded by square miles of flooded land. The canal banks were even under water and every so often some of us had to wade out there and reset the anchors to keep us in one place so we could shoot the 105. To say the chief was upset is an understatement; he chewed me out as being the person of interest in the loss of his beloved pet. To this day, the guys on Monitor 6 still believe that I was the guy who threw the monkey overboard in the middle of the night. Don't know if monkeys float, but that one had too.

I still think about how our little convoy was tracked by those single shots coming from the jungle as we passed downstream. At first I thought it was a sniper but there was no rounds hitting our boat or the others. We stayed tucked in with our heads down until we got to Ben Luc that afternoon. ★

*These three pictures tell the story of the last transit of the boats from that base to turnover.*



*The actual last transit of Monitor-6 and the four or so Tango boats from RAS 15 on our way to Ben Luc from Phuoc Xuyen in November 1970. We were headed to Dong Tam to turnover the boats.*



*The last known picture of Monitor-6 with an American crew. We had left Ben Luc where we had spent the night and now we were out on the big river headed upstream to Dong Tam. That is Chief Pat with a beer that we must have got in Ben Luc and brought along? We didn't have any beers up at Phuoc Xuyen for 3 months. We were glad to be out on a big river where we were a bit more safe.*



*The base at Phuoc Xuyen where we served for 3 months. You can see the flooded landscape and one of our anchor points off the bow to keep the boat anchored. The snakes loved that grass and if we were lucky we could see the grass moving, during the days, as the snakes tried to climb up our rebar and get onboard. We must have looked like an island in all that water? Not much of a base, PBRs, some STAB boats, and Tangos. Not sure if anyone else has pictures of that base.*

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## From the Membership

My fellow River Rats and Raiders from 2001 to July 2018 Georgie and I have been doing the Treasurer and Membership. What a ride! Health reasons are why we have turned the job over to Frank and Linda Jones. They will do just fine. Thank you, Albert Moore for all of your assistance over the years. Please keep up your membership to ensure the MRFA survives another 20-25 years. Again thanks to all you River Rats and Raiders.

*Charlie and Georgie  
T-151-11 (1968-69)*

Anybody with a new e-mail address or home address or who is receiving the River Currents by snail mail and would like to switch to e-mail please let me know.

*Frank Jones RivDiv 152 T-48 (07/69-07/70)  
Membership Chairman  
popsaroni@sbcglobal.net  
314-303-2730*

## About the MRFA Online Guestbook

Riverine Boat Crews, Support Ships Crews 9th Inf Div, and Miscellaneous Personnel have signed our MRFA Guestbook.

I am going through the MRFA Guestbook to see if I can help folks answer some questions. Their emails do not show in the Guestbook, but I have access to them via back channel using the new WordPress software.

My purpose is to ask your assistance as Members of the MRFA. Perhaps jointly, like our joint Army-Navy unit in Vietnam, we can work together to answer some of their questions and even encourage some to join the MRFA. Others may simply be looking for fellow soldiers/sailors for some camaraderie.

Assisting Family Members of our former sailors and soldiers are very special.

This initial list includes Army units and miscellaneous posts.

I am working on a list of Support Ships and Riverine Craft.

I list whether the posters are MRFA Members or Non-Members.

Our Officers and Board Members truly appreciate any assistance that you all can provide to the requests of these people who are reaching out for answers and contacts!

If successful it would be great for you to share your results here so we can all enjoy them.

You can contact Mike at mekong152@99w.us

The MRFA Guest Book can be located on the MRFA web site [www.mrfa.org](http://www.mrfa.org).

*Warm Regards*

*Webmaster Mike Harris*

## WESTCHESTER

Continued from page 6

landed on Tom—A distance of 100 feet or so. That was a bad night.

It didn't take the guys at the maintenance barge long to repair our boat. I think we were only there for a day or two. I guess the Navy decided not to put anymore VNs on our boat because shortly after the mining we left the MRB for duty with an Army Ranger group up in III Corp under the "Parrots Beak" in the Kien Tuong Province.

After we served our tours in mid-1969, we all went our separate ways and lost contact with each other. In 1988 my wife somehow found Fitz's mother's telephone number, called her and got me in touch with him. We then found Mories and David. We couldn't find Thrasher (I think he stayed in the Navy). We got together in 1989 over at Mories house in California where he was living as a bachelor.

One night over a couple of beers we talked about our time in Vietnam and the question came up to David of what happened with Tom that night. David told us that he got Tom up to triage where he was waiting for a corpsman or doctor to come get him and take him into surgery or something but no one came despite David's pleas for help. He said he was holding onto Tom and he died in his arms. "WHOA!! Man, David why didn't you tell us that?" He said simply that we had enough problems.

I know from conversations with David and his wife that he didn't do well after he returned from Vietnam and I believe that this incident contributed to his difficulty in adjustment to civilian life. Can we consider him another casualty of the mining of the USS Westchester County? ★

## Old Reliables Occupied on Combat, Civic Fronts

**Ninth Infantry Division The Old Reliable April 24, 1968, Page 8**

LONG THANH—Old Reliables of the 9th Division killed 519 Viet Cong and detained 75 known enemy during March.

Division elements also seized 127 individual and 30 crew-served weapons during last month's operation

On the non-combat front, 9th Division engineers and support units repaired 253 miles of road, cleared 325 acres of jungle and constructed four bridges.

At Medical Civic Action Projects, 21,667 Vietnamese were treated by 9th Division doctors. ★

## Ten Wounded in Dong Tam Attack

**Ninth Infantry Division The Old Reliable September 27, 1967**

DONG TAM—Between 31 and 34 rounds from 81-mm mortars hit this 9th Division camp in the early morning hours September 16 causing light damage and injuring 10 men.

The Dong Tam base camp tactical operations center, here said the rounds were fired from the northwest and landed in a line along the west side of the post next to the airfield.

The 1st Logistical Command was hit first by the incoming rounds. They reported eight casualties—two of them serious.

Three rounds were reported landing in the 709th Maintenance Battalion area. One vehicle took a direct hit demolishing it; nine other vehicles were lightly damaged, and three trailers took light hits. One man in the area was slightly wounded.

One casualty was reported from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2d Brigade.

Dong Tam retaliated by pounding the suspected enemy mortar position with artillery and gunship fire. ★

## Viet Cong Attack Xom Cau after 5-60 joins Coronado V

**Ninth Infantry Division The Old Reliable September 27, 1967, Page 7**

**By SP5 Mike Renshaw, Staff Writer**

XOM CAU—The Viet Cong returned.

It was a brief encounter and the enemy was beaten back, but the attack proved to the villagers here that the VC have not conceded defeat in the fight for control of this hamlet.

Soldiers from the 5th Mechanized Battalion, 60th Infantry had wrested the village of Thanh Phu Long from a Viet Cong stranglehold and 2 months ago elements of the battalion moved right into the hamlet of Xom Cau to provide security so residents could live and work without the continual threat of enemy terrorism.

Villagers returned. The market reopened. Commerce increased.

The mechanized infantrymen moved out temporarily to take part in Operation CORONADO V.

Two days later (Sept. 15), the VC attacked the village. Hamlet security during the absence of the Americans had been left to the Vietnamese 848th Regional Forces Company.

When the enemy probed the small outpost on the outskirts of the village at sundown Friday, the Regional Forces soldiers returned a heavy volume of fire. After 30 minutes, the enemy withdrew.

One RF soldier died in the encounter and another was seriously wounded. Enemy losses are unknown.

Army of the Republic of Vietnam officials estimated the enemy force at platoon size.

Captain Richard L. Weber of Sharon, PA, Intelligence Officer for the 5th-60th, speculated that the platoon was part of the 313th Viet Cong Company that has been reported working in the Xom Cau area.

Analyzing the action, Captain Tommie G. Copeland, Battalion Civil Affairs Officer, said, "I'm sure the VC realize that even though we weren't physically in Xom Cau, we certainly don't plan to let them take it back. The RF soldiers sure gave the VC a fight they weren't expecting."

Copeland said the 5th-60th will return to the hamlet as soon as CORONADO V mop up operations are completed.

"Sure, the VC have more sabotage and harassment plans," he continued. "We're finding various types of enemy propaganda leaflets on the road to Xom Cau and even in the hamlet; but whenever they try again, we'll be ready for them." ★

## TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One

Member **Jay S. Brown** passed away June 2015. Jay served on the USS Washtenaw County LST-1166 (02/71-02/72). You may contact the family c/o Judy Brown, 10500 Cascade Falls Ct, Owings Mills, MD 21117-5844.



**Donovan**

Member **David Donovan** passed away June 27, 2018. While in Vietnam, he served with Headquarters & Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 47th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division from January to December 1967. You may contact the family c/o Janice Donovan, 7266 Sunset Ave, Jenison, MI 49428-8955, 616-457-9016.



**McNeal**

Member **Hugh Nathan McNeal** passed away July 22, 2018. Mr. McNeal served in the U.S. Navy until he received his Honorable Discharge on July 31, 1970. From May 1968 to June 1969, he served in Vietnam with the Mobile Riverine Force on Boat T-151-4, as Boat Captain. You may contact the family c/o his wife, Pamela McNeal, 486 Old Church Road, Bennington, OK 74723, and his daughter Natalie Carlgren at ncarlgren@hotmail.com.



BM2 **Lannie Doyle "Slim" Wiggins** passed away January 19, 2006. While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Squadron 15, River Assault Division 151 as Boat Captain of T-151-1 (T-28) beginning in March 1969. At the time of his passing he lived in Durbin, Georgia.



**Coulson**

Member **James Paul Coulson** passed away March 16, 2018. James served on USS Coconino County (LST-603) and the USS Outagamie County (LST-1073) (02/68-03/70). James was a resident of Columbia Falls, Montana, at the time of passing.



**Good**

Past member LT **Larry R. Good** passed away June 23, 2018. Larry served as Dental Officer at NAS An Tho (06/68-06/69). LT Good was living in Hays, Kansas, at the time of his passing.

Member **Thomas B. Kail** passed away from heart failure July 30, 2018. Thomas served on the USS White River LSMR-536 (06/69-06/71). You may contact the family c/o Nancy Kail, 6330 Paseo Descanso, Carlsbad, CA 92009-1900, 442-244-5150.

Member **Michael J. Redding** passed away in 2016. Michael served on the USS Washtenaw County LST-1166 (1969-72). He was residing in Atascadero, CA, at the time of his passing.



**Watson**

Member **Marty Watson Jr.** passed away August 6, 2018. Martin served on the USS Colleton APB-36 (1967-1968). You may contact the family c/o Linda Watson, Courtyard Apartments, 777 Orleans Blvd Apt 308, Coldwater, MI 49036-1795, 517-279-7216.



**O'Dowd**



**O'Dowd**

Member **Ross Francis O'Dowd** passed away August 2, 2018. He fought a courageous battle against a rare soft tissue sarcoma related to Agent Orange exposure. While in Vietnam he served with the MRF on T-92-7 and T-131-4 (12/68-08/69). Ross was a resident of Apache Junction, AZ, at the time of his passing. You may contact the family c/o Rossie O'Dowd, the eldest son, 1883 Teakwood Dr, White Lake, MI 48383, 248-766-0877, grumpy454@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.

A fellow veteran, Harold & Beverly Bailey, David Blossom, Kimberly Butler, Delmar & Diane Cable, Robert & Barbara Crowley, Dean & Karen Despelder, Dick & Lisa Dorato, Steve & Leah Futch, Godfrey Lee Education Association, Lois J Host, J. H. & S. L. Nauta, Mrs. Artel Scheid, Gabriel S Snyder, Karen & Mark Vander Vliet, John F. Williams, David & Lavonne Yoder, and Connie L Young in memory of David Donovan HHC 3rd/47th Inf (01/67-12/67)

Wendell Affield for Buddha Ed Thomas, Boat Captain Tango 112-11 (02/68-02/69)

William Blausler for Thomas Gaudet, David Land, and Jose Campos our 151 Division brothers that were KIAs

MajGeneral Lucien Bolduc, Jr. USA (Ret) for Guy Tutwiler

Donald P. Brosnan for Col George E. Bland, CO 2nd Bde (06/68-01/69), WIA January 1969, Evacuated to Convs, Died 12/20/03

Brothers of the 2nd/47th Inf for all Army and Navy KIAs

Bill Buffie in memory of Lyle Parin USS Floyd County LST-762 (Vietnam)

Craig "Doc" Champion in memory of KIAs 3rd Pitt D Co. 3rd/47th (1968)

John and Doris Chrzanowski in memory of SP/4 Humberto Ruiz Santiago Jr. Grenadier A Co. 4th Bn 47th Inf. Rgt 9th Inf. Div. Died of wounds 06/27/69, Kien Hoa, South Vietnam (DC Wall Panel 21W Ln 025)

Mike Clark in memory of Laurence Welk (KIA May 1967) and Lydes Gardner (KIA Sept 1967) 4th/39th 9th Inf Div

Janice Dahlke for son Cpl. Randy R. Mueller D Co. 2nd/47th KIA 03/03/69

Orville Daley for my good buddy Merle Haggard, one of the greatest names in country music, 1937-2016 Fran Dibelbiss for Cdr. Dave Dibelbiss, Supply Officer on Staff COMRIVFLOT ONE, USS Benewah APB-35 (1966-68)

Ron Easterday for Marco Serrano Jr. HHC 2nd/47th Inf and LTC William Cronin HQ 2nd/47th Inf (Mech) KIA 04/27/67

Sgt Robert Flaige for SP4 Robert "Bob" Jenks E Co. 3rd/60th KIA 03/03/68

From your Brothers B Co. 2nd 39th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division in memory of Monte Marten B Co. 2nd/39th (04/68-04/69)

From your Brothers B Co. 2nd 39th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division in memory of John Nielsen B Co. 2nd/39th (04/68-04/70)

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

Leo Haynes for my fellow plank owner and buddy Don Grier GM2 USS Benewah. He died in a car crash in 2003

James Henke and Dave Nelson for James Callan, Sgt Tony Spradling, Sgt Gerald Thurman, 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

Gordon Hillesland for Pat Lawson NSA Dong Tam (1967-68)

Joe Hilliard for Joe Benack from Florida and Donald Hartzell from Pennsylvania

Sally Jackson for Paul Nace USS Colleton APB-36 (09/68-11/69)

Bruce Jensen in memory of Frederic Peers Webb A-111-4 KIA 12/21/67

J. R. Johnson Recon 3rd/47th (01/67-01/68) for Walker, Paredez, Gotch, Hayes, Nelson, and Howard Dave Justin for Robert "Bobby" Scharpnick A Co 2nd Platoon 3rd/60th and Dennis McDougal A Co 3rd/60th

Bob Land, Rich Lierman, Jim Zervos, and Pete Oakander for Frank Dettmers, our boat captain on CCB-131-1 (May 69-May 70). We do this in his honor and remembrance.

Richard MacCullagh for John (Doc) Phillips, HMC, USN (Ret) RivRon 15

Richard MacCullagh for Chaplain Rene L. Petit, LT, CHC, RC, RivRon 13 and 15

Stella Gayle Malone for Timothy Neary USS Jamestown AGTR-3 (01/69-12/69)

Kaye Marten, Travis Marten, and Tristen Marten in memory of Monte Marten (husband, father, and grandfather) B Co. 2nd/39th 9th Inf Div (1968-69)

H. Bruce McIver for HM1 Zeph Lane who was severely wounded 03/31/69 and unfortunately killed in a private plane crash 05/20/85

Adam Metts for Donald L. Bruckart T-111-2 KIA 03/31/69

Major J. D. Nichols III CMDR C Co. 3rd/60th Inf (12/66-11/67) for Alfred Cornejo, Anthony Galeno,

Richard Lasher, Rudolph Melendez, Sigfredo Pinto-Pinto, and Garrett Reid KIAs 08/20/67

Albert Moore for Ralph Tresser CS3 USS Benewah APB-35 (1966-67)

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Albert and Sara Moore for Capt Gerald Saucier CO USS Benewah APB-35 (09/66-02/68)

VP Roy Moseman for Oscar Santiago C-2 4th/47th (10/67-10/68)

Herman Murphy EN2 for USS Benewah shipmates: John Long EN2, Craig Bronish MR3, and George Schnieder MR2

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)

Luis Peraza for SSG Michael K. Lewis KIA 06/13/69, SGT Harold H. Hunter KIA 01/27/69, and brothers of D Co 3rd/60th KIA during 1968-69

Aaron R. Spurway for Chief Ray

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

Okey Toothman in memory of Major General Lucien "Blackie" Bolduc

Okey Toothman in memory of Sgt Dick Arnold A Co. 3rd/47th, Max Delacruz and G. P. Jones C Co. 3rd/47th

Okey Toothman in memory of Judy Wallace

Steven Totcoff for my brother CPL Dennis S. Totcoff B Co 3rd/47th 9th Inf Div KIA 5/2/68

USS Benewah 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

CPT Steve Williams and MAJ Bob Bischoff in memory of 2LT David George Williams, Co A, 4/47th, KIA 9/21/67

David Wilson 2nd/60th KIA 08/05/69, Timothy Shelton 4th/39th KIA 06/25/69, Steven Murray 4th/39th KIA 05/26/69, Harvey Crabtree 2nd/4th Arty KIA 06/19/69, and Dennis Mattox 1st/501st 101st Airborne KIA 08/23/69



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