



River Currents

Bravo 6 last operation
2nd/47th (Mech) Infantry 1970



Troops Boarding Tango Summer 1967

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THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

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From the Galley

Hope this finds everyone having a nice summer and not receiving any of the crazy weather. The Association is running smoothly, no problems. Folks are preparing for the Gathering of the Troops in San Diego in September. Looks like we may have a good turn-out, at least we hope so. You never know when dealing with the West Coast. It's so much different than working with the hotels back East. Mike

Harris has stayed on his toes out there and I believe it's going to be a good one. Now you, the West Coast folks, need to show up. The last gathering we had out there, 80% of the attendees were from back East and those with the reunion in their own back yard didn't bother to attend. Well we did have one member who brought his whole neighborhood (10 families). No way this can or will happen again.

We have a board meeting June 14-15-16 at the Indianapolis Marriott East in Indy where we will finalize our plans for the 2013 reunion. The Indianapolis Marriott East has been remodeling and adding to the hotel. The couple of board members who have checked it for us said it was much nicer than the one we recently used and more military oriented.

They do have more handicap rooms and they also have the motorized scooters our disabled members can rent. We will have a meal of some kind and we will figure this out when we're at the board meeting. Most of you like the picnic style like we had with the pig outs so we will try and go this route. If weather permitting, we will have it by the pool. The hotel is

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Mobile Riverine Force Association Celebrates 20 Years

In the early part of 1992, Albert Moore, a former cook on the USS Benewah, had an idea to get some old shipmates together for a reunion. Albert made a few phone calls, sent out a few letters, and placed an advertisement in the VFW, American Legion, and several other veteran magazines. I think that Albert was a little surprised at the number of replies and telephone calls that he received. He was also surprised that he got calls from former 9th Division soldiers that were also on the USS Benewah.

The reunion was held at the Days Inn in Hickory, North Carolina, on April 2 through 5, 1992. About 200 former Navy and Army guys, spouses, and girlfriends showed up. A formal meeting was held and officers were elected.

Albert Moore was elected President of the Association and John Iannucci, a former grunt from the 3/60 Inf., was elected Vice President. The new Mobile Riverine Force Association was formed. I don't think anyone who attended this reunion would have ever guessed that a small group of former Navy River Rats and Army River Raiders would turn into one of the largest individual unit Vietnam Veteran groups in existence today.

It's hard to believe that it has been 20 years. I personally joined the MRFA about a year later. I ran across a notice in the VFW magazine for a



Herb Franklin, Bob St'Martin, Bob Martin, Ralph Tresser, Chief Corbitt, and Albert Moore

Mobile Riverine/9th Infantry Division reunion to be held in Chattanooga, Tennessee. I called the number listed and got in touch with Albert Moore. He told me about the association and

I was very excited since I had almost no contact with fellow 9th Division veterans since leaving Vietnam. Since, I was Army, Albert gave me John Iannucci's number and I gave him a call. We talked for a few minutes then John started asking me if I knew certain people. I

didn't recognize any names until he mentioned Oscar Santiago. When he mentioned him, I said, "Hell yea, I remember him, he was in my squad." John told me to stand by my phone and within 5 minutes Oscar called me. It took a little while and we had to mention a few names and things that happened in Nam before Oscar could

remember me, but soon we were talking about old times.

It just so happened that Oscar was coming down to Ashville to see John. They were going to Washington, DC, for Veterans Day. After a few more phone conversations, John asked if I wanted for him and Oscar to come visit me in Athens, Georgia. I said I would love to have them come.

On the day they were to visit, my wife and I were excited but a little apprehensive. I was going to have two Vietnam Vets visit our house.

I had not seen Oscar in over 20 years and I didn't know John Iannucci at all.

I had no idea what to expect and Lynne sure as hell didn't know what to expect either. John and Oscar drove up in a big Cadillac and I watched as this New York Italian and a Puerto Rican with long black hair and a long black mustache got out of the car and started down my driveway. I will have to say I was a little intimidated. I went to the door and Oscar was standing there with a big grin on his face and was holding a bouquet of flowers that he had brought for Lynne. We shook hands and gave each other a hug but it took a little conversation and looking at some old photos before Oscar could really remember me.

We left the house and went up the street to a little steak house to eat lunch. Several hours and a lot of alcohol later, Oscar was entertaining the entire waiter staff, bartender, and manager of the restaurant with his stories and antics. John and Oscar mentioned to me that they were going to Washington, DC, in 2 days. John said

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I have always wondered but have never asked either a Navy boat crew member or an Army Infantryman, how it felt going down a small canal at 8 or 9 knots. Those in the gun tubs and those in the well decks knowing you were going in harm's way and shit was going to hit the fan... The RC Staff would like to do an article on the subject for River Currents. Don't worry about the wording or words used; we can always clean it up. Just say what you want and fill in your own words... I would very much appreciate your doing this... or if you have a personal story you want told, send it my way mrfa@bellsouth.net.

In Brotherhood, Albert

I will never forget the feeling I had before and during a tango boat ride down the rivers and canals. On the morning of a mission, we were awakened around 0300 to 0400 depending on how far we had to travel. The company would assemble on the mess deck and if we wanted it we could eat breakfast. Most of us never wanted to eat as our stomachs were in knots from the fear of the mission. When it was time, we would go down to the pontoon, gear up, and load into the Tangos. If it was a tango with no seats, we would just lay down on the steel floor of the boat. There was very little room and we were packed in like sardines. I think I can speak for everyone, the smell of diesel fuel and the sound of the engines in the Tangos is something we will never forget. Most of us had no idea where we were going or how long it would take to get there. We might be able to get a little sleep but mostly our minds were on the mission ahead. It was usually very quiet and little conversation was had between us; just blank expressions and looks of fear on our faces. As long as we were on big rivers, we weren't too scared but once we got on the small canals we worried about an ambush. There were places on some of the canals that one could reach out and touch the vegetation on the side of the canal; not a good feeling at all. After some time on the boat, we could hear and feel the engine back off and know that the Tango was making a sharp turn to let us off at the river bank. The ramp dropped and we got off the Tango as quick as possible, although most of the time we stepped off into waist deep mud that was impossible to walk in.



Only with help from a fellow soldier could we get out. In a way it felt good to get off the Tango that was just a big target for the VC but then we were in the jungle with Charlie. I don't know which was worse.

**Roy Moseman VP MRFA C C0 4th/47th
9th Inf. Div. (10/67-10/68)**

We did not worry about getting hit on the way to an ambush in day light or the next morning returning to base camp. I don't know of anyone that was hit during these times. Charlie did not like the day light, but when the sun went down it was time to look sharp. How much did a 56-ft long boat stick out on the 90-ft canal? We were sitting ducks, and a fire fight was pretty intense and up close for a few minutes as we could slug

it out on a Tango boat...Grande Canal 1969 to 1970. If you need some humorous stories on the canal, let me know.

Gerald Burleigh T-27 (05/69-05/70)

Thoughts on "Going up Snoopy's Nose"

After the first time the MRF went up Snoopy's Nose, we all knew it was going to be a shooting match on subsequent trips. My recollection is after awhile we "accepted" that fact and put faith in our guns, boats, God, and most of all, our troops and shipmates. I believe the first time anyone came under fire, they "hardened"

themselves to the situation. No one looked forward to it, but we accepted it for the most part. I can say, there was a calming feeling once the troops were discharged from the boats and on the ground. We felt we had a definite layer of protection around us.

Also, specific to Snoopy's Nose—our confidence in our chances of making it through the ambush was bolstered by artillery fire that walked up the banks as we advanced. On other occasions, we had Helo Gunship support, or USAF jets strafing the banks.

On other areas that were new to us, we just pushed through, being vigilant and looking for "the fight." If it didn't come, that was great.

In summary, I believe I adapted the attitude that I could only do so much. If I was going to get hit, it would happen—it wasn't in my hands. This was a result of my first fire fight in which I was one of two people on a monitor that did not get wounded in Snoopy's Nose. There was no rational reason why certain people got hit, and others did not. It was just a matter of circumstances.

Al Breininger CSO RivDiv 91 (10/66-12/67)

Hi Albert. Hope all is well there. I sent you an e-mail yesterday, and I hope you received it. My e-mails from you were going to my son's house lately, from you, and the correct one is henkes@optonline.net. The "s" was left out of the e-mail address. I was wondering why I was not hearing from you and did miss it, I must admit. My mind started wandering, the moment I read your piece, on what we felt, as we navigated up the rivers and canals, in the well decks of the tangos. My thoughts run wild for sure, but the 19th of June, will stay in my mind forever. It was the operation of Concordia I, while we navigated up the rivers of the Delta, not knowing what was in store for us. The new boats had just arrived for our Navy brothers, and they were taking good care of us, while we sat in the belly of the tangos. It being my first big operation with Alpha Co

Fish in a Barrel; you got that right!—especially if the canal was "Snoopy's Nose." Any time you were headed to Snoopy's Nose, it made good sense to empty the ammo locker and stack it next to the weapons because chances were good that you would use more than usual. And "The Crossroads" was another location where you might want a backup weapon for your backup weapon.

— Ed Gorczyk, Dragonfly A-91-3, 1967-68

4th of the 47th, I had no idea what was coming. Guys around me were either silent or preparing their gear and weapons. Some of us said our silent prayers, and some had that thousand-mile stare that I will never forget. Throughout the year, I learned to live with it as many others did. Tony Spradling used to say, "Hang in man." Our Navy brothers had their hands full being up on the decks, while the VC had full view of them, and could fire at will at the boats. They saved the day for many of us that year, taking casualties of their own, while keeping us safe

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MRFA Gathering of the Troops in San Diego Sept. 6-9, 2012

The Mobile Riverine Force Association will be holding a "Gathering of Troops" get together this coming fall at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 2270 Hotel Circle N, San Diego, California. It will be another great time to enjoy our unique camaraderie in between our bi-Annual MRFA main reunions.

Reunion dates are from September 6 to 9, 2012. Room rates are \$99 a night plus tax with a maximum of four persons per room. Check-in time 4 p.m. and check-out time is 12 p.m. This rate is good for 3 days prior to the Gathering and 3 days following the Gathering. Reservations can be made immediately either register online (<https://resweb.passkey.com/go/MobileRiverineForceAssociation>) or call the toll-free number 1-888-233-9527 between the hours of 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., 7 days a week EST time. Be sure to mention the Mobile Riverine Force Association for the group rate. Note: There will be a \$35 charge for any early departures that are not considered emergencies.

Shuttle Service

There is no airport shuttle available to the hotel. It is recommended that hotel customers can (1) contact Cloud 9/Super Shuttle to make an advanced reservation (<http://www.supershuttle.com>, use 7J379 as the "Group/Discount Code" or call their 24-hour reservation line at 1-800-974-8885 and provide the "Group/Discount Code" 7J379). Our group can save \$3 to \$6 off the regular price of \$12 each way from the airport. The rate is lowered to \$9 one way or \$18 round trip or (2) Taxi—The going rate from the airport to the Crowne Plaza Hotel is \$22. If four people share a cab, the price for a one way fare is \$5.50 per person.

Parking

The hotel has agreed to free parking for everyone who registers and occupies a room.

RV Parking

RV parking is extremely limited. The hotel requires those who park an RV on the premises must stay in a hotel room and NOT in the RV.

FROM THE GALLEY

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really reaching out to us. If you live in the area and would like to drop in and say hi, you're more than welcome. We will not have a hospitality room or any other festivities so we can sit by the pool, socialize, relax, etc.

It's a working meeting for the officers and board members, but again you're more than welcome to stop in.

Hotel Features

All rooms have balconies or lanais overlooking adjacent golf course or swimming pool area. The hotel has (13) handicapped rooms. If you need one, then be sure to register early to secure it. Room Wi-Fi service will be complimentary to the MRFA. Usually the hotel charges a fee for this service.

Islands Restaurant; Islands Sushi and Pupu Bar; Outdoor heated pool Fitness room; Be Good to Yourself Massage Company on site; Business Center; Oversized guest rooms

Hospitality Room; The Paradise Cove (2,380 sq ft) will be available for MRFA use from 8:00 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily, September 6-8.

Lanai Suites

Two poolside complimentary suites will be provided by the hotel. The MRFA will be allowed to purchase snack food and beverages and serve them from these suites, September 6-8.

Dining

The Crowne Plaza is providing a complimentary 10% discount in all food outlets at the hotel.

Poolside Lunch

On September 7 and 8, luncheon food will be provided by the hotel on a "Cash & Carry" basis. This means that our reunion personnel will pay for their own lunches.

Local Attractions

SeaWorld Adventure Park, B Street Pier, Balboa Park, Belmont Park, The Big Bag, Gaslamp Quarter, La Jolla, Maritime Museum, Mission Bay, Museum of Photographic Arts, Old Town San Diego, San Diego Zoo, Seaport Village, Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, and Whale Watching.

USS Midway Tour (#1 Tourist Attraction for 2 Years in a Row)

We have an opportunity for a free guided tour of the USS Midway thanks to the generosity of a former USS Colleton sailor. In order to decide if this is feasible, we need to hear from you. If we do this, then all participants will pay for their own roundtrip to and from the USS Midway. If enough

As you may have noticed, we're lost quite a few members to TAPs recently. As we get older, this is going to happen. That's why I think it's very important to make these reunions while we're all still able. Hope life continues to treat you all well and your health is okay. As for myself, I'm doing much better and hope to see everyone in 2013.

Albert

are interested then we may rent a bus for the event. Please send an e-mail confirmation to Mike Harris (mekong152@charter.net) and let him know that you, and any others in your party, are interested.

Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument

We are planning a visit to the Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument on the Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado. A bus will be rented and all participants will pay a fee for the roundtrip. We will lay MRF and 9th Inf. Division wreaths in memory of our Brother sailors and soldiers who gave the ultimate sacrifice. Please send an e-mail to Mike Harris (mekong152@charter.net) to be placed on the list.

THANKS to Board Member Mike Harris and Captain Al Dillon (USN Ret.) for their "boots on the ground" regarding the early prep work on a hotel. Bravo Zulu Captain Dillon (CO of the USS Washtenaw County LST-1166 during the Tet Offensive of 1968)! Come join us for another Great Gathering.

Albert Moore President MRFA

MRFA Registration Fee

This fee by all participants covers several costs for the MRFA during our Reunion and Gathering of Troops events. This is above and beyond your hotel reservation. Please be prompt in sending in your MRFA registration form/payment as it helps us purchase items in advance and provides our staff with a good idea on how many will be participating. ♦

Mobile Riverine Force Association Gathering of The Troops

Crowne Plaza Hotel, 2270 Hotel Circle North,
San Diego, California 92108 • September 6-9, 2012

Name _____

Unit in Vietnam _____ Dates _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ or Cell _____

E-mail _____

Spouse, Family, and/or (Guest[s]): (1) Check here if None _____

(2) If so, please list names w/city and state: _____

Member or member and spouse/guest \$35 \$ _____

Total number of other guest(s) _____ x \$15 ea. = _____

Nonmember (\$50) = _____

Late registration (\$45) = _____

Grand total enclosed \$ _____

Please send this form with your check or money order (payable to MRFA or Mobile Riverine Force Association) before August 3, 2012, to MRFA Gathering of The Troops, 1857 County Road A14, Decorah, IA 52101.

If you wait and pay your registration fee at the Gathering, the cost of late registration will be \$45. Register early and help the MRFA as we utilize your fees to purchase food, beverages, and other items.

The Registration Fee DOES NOT INCLUDE any meals, bus trips, shuttles, rides, etc.

When filling out the form, please do so as accurately and clearly as possible. Your Unit/ Dates of Service information is very important as they will be placed on your name tag when you check-in.

At past reunions, some have questioned our Reunion staff on their Name Tag information. We simply use the data that you send us. You may have served in more than one unit. We can only place one unit on a Name

Tag, so please be clear on what you want displayed.

To those few who always try and get by without paying the Registration Fee and want a free ride, this is not honoring your fellow members and their spouses.

There will be NO Products sold at the Gathering of the Troops in San Diego. If you want to wear Gear Locker items, then you will need to order them before the Gathering and have them delivered to your home. If you have any questions, contact Mike Harris at mekong152@charter.net or Charlie Ardinger at mrfamembership@mabelltel.coop.

Thanks for your support in our great association.

Albert Moore, MRFA President

DOWN A CANAL

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in the belly of the tangos. We owe them big, for many reasons, but the one thing we knew was we were in it together, out there in the bush. They never failed to be there for us no matter what the situation was. We were in it together. The morning we boarded the tangos and left the ships we all had the feeling things were to get bad because intelligence had spotted the enemy in that area. That was to be the longest day in many of our lives, both Army and Navy. We always felt the presence of the boats being close, made the difference that day and many others, on whether we lived or died. On the 19th, the belly of the medical aid boat was the reason many of the wounded lived. Padre Ray Johnson and the men of the aid boat kept our guys from bleeding to death that terrible day. If you saw the medical tango boat sitting against the muddy bank that day and the next with our guys being tended to, you were glad it was there. We suffered dearly that day, and without the protection of the navy gun boats, tangos, and medical guys, we would not have been able to survive. I often think of how I felt, when the ramp on the tangos went down and it was time to unload, and my heart was going a thousand miles an hour. I know a lot of us would have liked to have stayed on the boat, but that was not the case. We will never forget the sacrifice that was made that day, both Navy and Army,

a pair of combat boots, then the soldiers of the Army and Navy's Mobile Riverine Force.

Albert. You take care of yourself my friend. Yes it is a bitch getting old. This NY weather is hard on the old body. Thank the Lord we didn't have too much snow this year. We still use the recipes from you and think of you often. We all would be lost without you my friend, you keep the boys going. I didn't mean to be a pain in the rear, with that e-mail address, and noticed the 47 e-mails showed my son's address, not mine. As I said, take care of yourself and say hi at home. The good Lord willing, we will talk soon. Your health is more important than everything else; I learned that the hard way. As my Irish mom would say, I had a hard head and didn't listen. She was so correct. We will have you in our prayers my friend, and feel better. Thanks for listening to my letter, as not many can relate to what it was like back there in the Delta, so long ago.

**Jim Henke A Co 4th 47th 9th Inf. Div
(06/67-06/68)**

Well I never knew what Riverine meant till I got to the Delta and to the MRF. Roy and I were wounded on the tangos August 16, 1968. I have so much respect for the boat crews and the Infantry for what they did on these missions. The smell of diesel fuel and boat noise still brings up memories. I never personally knew any of the sailors in Nam, but I always said they had to travel both directions, we got off in



"humping" 3 to 4 days then maybe extracted by the boats and then the journey begins again, back through Charlie's rivers, waiting for the ambush that always came. Confusion, turmoil, wounded, KIA—It had to be dealt with in a proper order—Safely, quickly, and get out of the ambush zone; just another day in the life of a Riverine soldier or sailor.

**Dave Harry Schoenian C Co. 4th/47th Inf
(07/68-07/69)**

Hi Brother Albert, What I remembered about my duty was a whole lotta night ambushes; most of the times we spent on the gun tubs we were sleeping from being up all night on ambush + most of our ambushes were done in the Rung Sat C Zone. I've added some photos for your enjoyment, Brother Albert, if you can, send me your address and I'll send you some videos of Dong Tam with some time on the gun boats, or you can call any time, 718-833- 6713. Take care for now BROTHER.

**Tony DiPrima, C Co. 3rd/47th
(May 9, 1966 to May 14, 1967)**

mmm....I think it was actually 6 knots and it was scary...

**Patrick Davis FAIA, CMH Architects,
205-937-5404**

I have never written or even sat down with others and discussed "How things were back then." I guess if I just forgot that phase of my life all was well.

I arrived in Dong Tam in October 1968. I was with the 9th Infantry Division 4th/47th Company C. A new friend, Paul Maples, and I arrived together after training in Fort Campbell (Basic) and AIT at Fort Lewis. We had gone home and married our sweethearts on October 26th and then a couple of weeks later we were in Vietnam. We lived on LSTs in the Mekong River and then went out on small boats for search and destroy missions. Usually the boat carried our company strength group whoever was ready to go that day. The boats were run by Navy personnel. We travelled the "back waters" or what I would consider to be canals. The Navy guys would tell us on some of these trips that we would be going down "Rocket Alley" as they were areas that were predominately known to contain VC strongholds that like to send some RPGs our way and sink the boats before we reached our destination.

One particular area was very close to a South Vietnamese fort. I can remember wondering why the guys on our side were not out protecting us and cleaning these areas up so we could travel safely. Then I would get the explanation of how this "war" was working. South Vietnamese

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On my first outing, we went to an area called The Crossroads that was two rivers that crossed on the way to Ben Tre. Once we got down into the smaller canals, my first thought was that we were not going fast enough and therefore an easy target for the Viet Cong. Several guys said that they had been hit by RPGs on missions just like this. Fortunately, we weren't hit that day. I hated these missions because we were just slow-moving targets. On a couple of occasions, we did get hit by small arms and RPGs but lucked out. To this day when I get onto a pontoon boat and go into a small outlet, I can feel the hair on the back of the neck start to rise and my heart rate goes up.

**Bill Brinton, 4th of 47th Company B, 9th Division (January 17 to April 25, 1969)
I was stationed on the USS Nueces APB-40.**

and we always knew when we were in harm's way the boats were always there to give us help, or pick us up. That in itself was enough to keep us going. To see that little American flag flying on top off the boats as they were coming was like YES, we're out of here. I will say when the shit did hit the fan, there was one thing we all had, and that was, we fought for one another, so we could get home to our loved ones, and put it all behind us. After 43 years, 1967 does not seem so long ago, but in reality I still have a hard time dealing with the losses of such heroes that year, and our brave brothers, we lose each day. JB Johnson was one of our heroes on June 19, '67, and was one of the few I remember, who would sit in the well of the tangos and really never say much. I called him last September, and we talked a bit about Vietnam. Two days later JB died. He once told me in the field no one dies alone, and that still sticks in my head. He lived alone and died alone. No better men wore

deployment but they had to return down the streams back to the ships.

"We were like sitting ducks in these tangos," I said. "It is like 18 wheelers in a convoy, you can hear them coming a long way off." Lessons learned made changes to these craft, such as the flat tops for helicopter pads, etc. The boats also provided us security while we were on the ships constantly circling the ships.

Missions could mean several hours of travel on the tangos, board the boats early in the morning in the dark, stumble around getting on, try to find a place to set your ass down, have a head count to make sure you got everyone on, and then head out.

When we arrived at the destination and the boats started turning to the bank, the ramp was getting ready to drop and you got that sick feeling inside, not knowing what you were going to face when it dropped, and then the famous Delta mud—Charlie's land. Here we come! The Delta terrain was terrible and hard



DOWN A CANAL

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soldiers had family members that were Viet Cong. In fact some of the Viet Cong were being armed by their own family members that were giving them our weapons that had been given to the South Vietnamese Army. Of course to a young American man this made no sense at all.

Sure enough the whoosh of a RPG would be heard from the shore headed to our boat; the boat was well protected below the area where you could see outside. Some of the RPGs would hit just above this area and of course send shrapnel throughout the area where we were standing so we would all squat down below the window area. Sometimes that rocket would not be heard until it struck the boat. I remember my ammo carrier (I carried the M-60 for the first 5 months), let out a yell and fell to the floor. I called for the medic and when he came over he told me my buddy was dead. Apparently a very small piece of shrapnel struck him in the chest and through his heart and was dead before he hit the floor. I also had received small shavings of shrapnel throughout my groin area. As I looked down and saw the blood on my fatigues, I was afraid to look at the wounds thinking my manhood was gone. For many years after the shrapnel that could not be removed at the time, it would surface and I would remove it myself so as not to cut up my wife.

These types of travel were quite regular, although we did not always receive enemy fire. We would be beached and would conduct our mission for about three days. Then we would be picked up by the small boats and be taken

An Infantryman's Memories of Tango Boat Assaults

Albert,

As Delta Company's 3rd Platoon Leader, here's what I recall about tango boat insertions in 1968 and 1969. Usually we boarded the boats at 0200 or 0300 hours fully equipped for a 2- to 4-days mission. We were all tired or hung over or both, but off we went to wherever the Navy took us. Maybe it's because I was a 23-year-old lieutenant, naive, immortal, and dumb. I do not recall any fear because the Navy was going to protect us and we had the steel hull around us (I didn't think of RPGs). I guess you should ask Tom Kelly about those and the damage they can do. Seldom did we land in a hot LZ, but if we did, then the Navy had the firepower to suppress the VC until we found cover in some muddy ditch or that's what I thought.

Usually our ride on the tangos was spent heating coffee with small chunks of C-4 and throwing away the uneatable stuff in our C-rations, which was everything except the pound cake, cheese and crackers, peanut butter, coffee, cocoa, and stale cigarettes. Once, one of the troops had a FNG stomp on the still burning C-4 and it blew the heel off his boot. Oh well, he still limped through the operation with one heel. The bad part of these operations was for the Navy. The VC were smart enough to wait until the Army had evacuated, then ambush them on their return to the ships. Only once did they hit us while we were onboard and 30 troops blindly returned fire, not exposing our heads to see the targets. I'm sure we scared the hell out of them if nothing else. Our saving grace was the loud diesel engines announcing our arrival that gave the VC time to ditty-mau. Thank you Navy for your unmuffled engines.

In hindsight, you could not pay me enough to participate in a tango boat operation.

— Jack Strickland D Co. 3rd/60th (10/68-07/69)

back to the large ship for some very good NAVY food and a night's rest onboard. Thanks Albert for the opportunity to pass this along. Maybe someday I will even attend a reunion. My fear is that I would never remember any of my Army members. I was injured in May of 1969 and was sent to Fort Irwin Army hospital by way of Japan for a month and then Kansas. My unit was retired in July of 1969 and was sent to Hawaii

to finish their duty. I always seemed to be a day late and a dollar short.

Craig Alan Moore 9th Inf. Div. 4th/47th C Co.
(October 1968-May 1969)

Note: Paul Maples from Knoxville, TN, was later KIA by a sniper. He was carrying my M-60 at the time as I was laid up with Immersion Foot and not allowed to go out on this particular mission.

MRFA 20 YEARS

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"I know it's too late for you to go with us this year, but maybe you can go next year." I had never been to Washington, DC, and of course never seen the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. I thought for about 2 minutes and decided that I was going with them now, not next year.

We went back to my house and I called and made a plane and hotel reservation immediately. When Lynne walked in the house, I said, "Honey, I am going to Washington, DC, the day after tomorrow." I think she was a little shocked. I met John, Oscar, and a group of other vets at the Atlanta

airport and soon we were in Washington, DC. I also got to meet Albert when I got there. I will have to say I have never drunk so much alcohol in 2 days as I did on that trip.

When I got home, Lynne looked at me and asked if I was OK. I think she wanted me to go to the emergency room. I had no color and



looked like hell, but I had the best time of my life.

The rest is history. I have not missed an MRFA reunion since then and have missed only one planning meeting. The MRFA is the best thing that could have happened to me. I have met so many people from my old unit, made so many new friends, both Army and Navy, and have had some of the best times of my life. The sad part is, I have seen so many of these good people pass on to a better place. It hurts when we lose one of our good friends or any one of our members. We can only be grateful that we were able to have their friendship for the time we did and we will always have fond memories of them.



Albert receiving a plaque from Gerald Saucier CO USS Benewah

Thanks Albert for starting the MRFA. Thank you for your dedication to the association and for the hard work that you have done to make our association the best Veterans association there is. Thank you Albert for the last 20 years.

Roy Mosemen C Co. 4th/47th Inf
(10/67-10/68)♦

Veteran Visits Comrade's Grave After 43-Year-Long Search

September 4, 2011

By Bill Archer of the
Bluefield Daily Telegraph

BLUEWELL—As he spoke with the Reverend Dr. Earl Rogers and Al Hancock, Lewis “Hoss” Hosler glanced in the direction of a photograph on top of a headstone at Oak Grove Cemetery. It was almost as though Hosler was including the photograph in the conversation.

The photograph was of SP5 Phillip Rogers, a medic in 2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division, who was Killed in Action on June 25, 1968, on the north bank of the Vam Co Tay River in Vietnam. It didn’t matter what story Hosler was telling—happy or sad. He kept looking at the picture of “Doc” Rogers, including him in the conversation.

At 6’3” tall, it is easy to pick Hosler, 67, out of a crowd—even in published combat photos from Vietnam. But he said he didn’t know if he could kill another human being when he first entered the military.

“I wasn’t mean,” he said. “There wasn’t a mean bone in my body. I never thought I would kill anyone. I had no bad feelings about the people of Vietnam... still don’t. That’s the way I thought until I saw one of my buddies get killed. It will make you mean. It made me mean.”

“You take a guy like Doc here,” Hosler said, motioning in the direction of Rogers’ grave. “He was a medic. His job was saving lives. He never carried a rifle. He always had a .45 caliber pistol on his hip, but the whole time we served together, I never saw him clean it. He never fired it that I knew of. We had run Charlie out of their position, but they left snipers behind to pick off anyone who came up to help the wounded.”

Hosler paused. He clinched his lips together tight and looked away from Rogers’ headstone for a moment. After looking back, he resumed his narrative. “That’s how Doc got hit,” he said. He paused again for a few moments. “He was going back in to help another guy who was down. That guy, PFC Don Ungaro, didn’t make it either.”

Even as a young man, Phillip Rogers took responsibilities seriously. “We were living in Davy and our grandparents were living up in Detroit,” Earl Rogers said. “My grandmother had become ill and my mother [Carrie Rogers] went

up to Detroit to care for her. When she was gone, dad [Grant Rogers] collapsed. He died in Phillip’s arms. We were just kids and we felt so helpless. I think that’s why Phillip wanted to become a doctor.”

“*I’ve been here a long time and Charlie hasn’t gotten me yet and he’s not going to get me now... He went up to the wood line with the rest of the patrol and that was the last time I saw him...*”

Phillip Rogers took on the role of helping to raise the family while he was still in school at Kimball High School, one of McDowell County’s four, all-black high schools. He graduated in 1963.

“Our oldest sister was living in New York at that time,” Earl Rogers said. “Phillip went up there to work and he talked to a military recruiter who told him that after he finished his tour, the military would help him with school. He was a straight-A student. He wanted to be a doctor.”

He was the best medic in our division,” Hosler said. “Doc could give shots when guys needed them, but he carried a big bag of big white tablets with him all the time too. Guys would come up to him and say they had malaria, dysentery, or anything else, and Doc would give them one of those big white tablets.”

Hosler said that he hurt himself while working his way through some thick jungle and asked Rogers for something. “He gave me one of those big white tablets and I asked him what was in those pills,” Hosler said. “He leaned over and told me that they were just extra strength aspirin. There’s a whole generation of people who don’t know what it was like over there. There are so few of us left to tell the story.”

After he returned home to Brownsville, Hosler worked in the construction industry for a time, and then spent several years working as a business manager, according to his wife, Marcienne

Hosler, who made the trip with him from Brownsville to Bluefield. The ground is irregular at Oak Grove since many graves have sunk in. Marcienne Hosler cautioned her husband about getting hurt, but only a little bit.

“Doc was a medic and part of his job was to write people up for medals,” Hosler said. “On May 10, 1968, we got over-run when we were fighting near the city of Cholon. I kept laying fire down on them with my .50 caliber machine gun. I was in my track and the enemy was piled up two and one-half feet deep in front of me.” He pulled up the sleeve on his shirt to reveal a scar on his left arm from his elbow to his armpit.

“They took part of my arm off, but Doc fixed me up on that,” Hosler said. He paused again and shook his head. “Doc wrote it up that Lew deserves a Silver Star for what I done that day. They gave me a Bronze Star, but that was because of what Doc wrote.”

Hosler explained that Rogers was a “short timer” and was set to go home. “On the afternoon that Doc got killed,” Hosler said, pausing again to choke back emotions. “They brought us up a hot meal when they brought on a couple new guys. When they dropped the food off, they told Doc he needed to go home, but he said he wasn’t going to leave these guys up here without a medic.”



Al Hancock, Lewis Hosler, and Bill Archer

Hosler said, “That the Viet Cong were mounting an offensive known as Tet II.” Doc came over to my track and asked, “If I had seen his first aid bag,” Hosler said. “We had an old black and white TV that we used to watch in there, and I had seen his first aid bag beside it. When I got it, I told him that I had seen his first aid bag there. I told him I was concerned about him going in that day.”



SP5 Phillip Rogers contributed photo

“I’ve waited all these years to tell you this,” Hosler said to Rogers. Al Hancock who also served with the U.S. Air Force in the Vietnam War, came out to meet Hosler as well. Hancock was among the group of volunteers who helped clear Oak Grove Cemetery.

Doc said, “Don’t worry about me Hoss. I’ve been here a long time and Charlie hasn’t gotten me yet and he’s not going to get me now.” He went up to the wood line with the rest of the patrol and that was the last time I saw him,” Hosler said. “About 15 minutes later, all hell broke loose.” Rogers was killed by sniper fire as he was trying to put bandages on the wounds of another soldier.

“When they first contacted us, we thought it was my other brother, Alonzo Rogers, who was killed,” Earl Rogers said. “He was one of 89 soldiers onboard a plane that was shot down. He had been listed as Missing in Action for about 9 months and we thought that might have been him. He was an engineer, but every one called him ‘Doc’ too.” Miraculously, Alonzo Rogers was one of the 10 soldiers who survived the plane crash and made it out of the jungle.

“It took them about two weeks to get Phillips’ body back here so we could bury him,” Earl Rogers said. “It seemed like it took a long time.”

Hosler, who is still getting used to walking after having both of his knees replaced, walked around Oak Grove to visit the graves of other soldiers and Marines who were Killed in Action in Vietnam. Hancock told a story about working at the airport in Saigon near the morgue and watching the body bags containing the remains of soldiers and Marines Killed in Action as they were unloaded.

“Every one wore two dog tags, a little one and a big one,” Hosler said. “If they got Killed in Action,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

History of The USS Askari (ARL-30), January 5, 1999

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 four 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.

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 Passe 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." 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.

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 four days later, moved to Sasebo to conduct repair operations until 1 February 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 six 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 four 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 five 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

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

From the Membership

Thank you so much. You folks do a GREAT job. We are involved in an organization that. I am very proud of my time with the 9th and the Mobile Riverine Force Association

*Ronnie (JR) Johnson, Recon, 3rd Battalion 47th Infantry, 9th Division (May 1966 to Jan 1968)
rj68ss396@aol.com*

Thank you for all that you do. I have enjoyed your MRFA publication for years.

F. George Schuster, USS Indra ARL-37 (1968-69)

Walter Sexton USS Whitfield County (01/67-02/69) just got out of the hospital. He had open heart surgery (3 bypasses) and would like us to pray for him.

Mobile Riverine Force Association Membership Application Form

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43-YEAR SEARCH CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

you put the big one between their teeth and the little one around their big toe." He explained the reason was because of the severity of the combat wounds and the extent of the damage to the bodies of those who were Killed in Action.

"I used to go to some of the big Vietnam War veterans' reunions like the one in Kokomo, Indiana," Hancock said a few days after visiting with Hosler and Rogers at the cemetery. "You'd have 40,000 to 45,000 Vietnam Vets telling stories the whole time. None of them got to me like the story SP5 Hosler told.

"I'll be 74 years old on Monday, and I can't remember what I had for breakfast yesterday," Hancock said. "But I can remember everything that happened when I was in Vietnam. I remember every minute. It's amazing what SP5 Hosler can remember."

"I was in Vietnam 3 years, 2 months, and 13 days," Hosler said. "The reason I remember that is because I counted every day."

"I was scared the whole time," he said. "If anyone ever tells you they aren't scared out there in combat, they're liars." He told a story about walking point on a patrol through some high grass when he flushed about 20 large locusts. "I opened up with my machine gun and fired off 100 rounds before my platoon leader got up to me and asked what I was shooting at," he said. "That's how scared you were."

After visiting Rogers' grave, Hosler and his wife spent the next two days visiting places in McDowell County that would have been familiar to Rogers. Marciene Hosler said she and her husband had traveled on I-77 through Mercer County a couple of years ago and even stopped

and visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at the West Virginia Welcome Center in Princeton.

"We walked around and looked at the counties represented, but we never thought of looking at the names to find Phillip Rogers," she said. "Back then, we still thought he was buried somewhere in North Babylon, New York." They got help from a cemetery staff person in New York, who checked online and tracked Rogers' grave back to the Bluefield area and ultimately to making contact with Rev. Rogers. They made contact with Rogers on Tuesday and arrived in Bluefield on Wednesday.

Hosler gave Reverend Rogers copies of the materials he collected through the years including a copy of SP5 Rogers' picture on the Wall of Honor at Fort Benning, Georgia. He also gave Rogers a copy of Heith William Nolan's book, "House to House: Playing the Enemy's Game in Saigon, May 1968," that makes reference to Doc

"I'll be 74 years old on Monday, and I can't remember what I had for breakfast yesterday... But I can remember everything that happened when I was in Vietnam. I remember every minute."

Rogers in at least two places.

"That was a crazy place to grow up," Hosler said of his time in Vietnam. "I never forgot him," he said, struggling with his emotions again. "I never will forget Doc Rogers. I lost a great friend that day. The story gotta be told over and over again."

Hosler and Gary, "Doc" Rutledge, another medic who served with Rogers, both posted their recollections of Rogers' on the Virtual Wall. Rogers and Ungaro were 2 of 15 soldiers with the 9th Infantry Division who were killed in individual engagements near the Van Co Tay River on June 24-25, 1968. ♦

ASKARI

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

moved into the Delta proper. The repair ship arrived at Nha Be on the Soi Rap River about five 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 eight 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, 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 Squadron 13 and River Assault Squadron 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 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 nine 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 include the 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. ♦

UP001 MRF Mekong Delta
(white anchor)

UP002 MRFA Vietnam

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(yellow anchor)UP004 9th Inf Div
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UP018 RAD 112



UP019 River Squadron 13



UP020 RAD 131



UP021 RAD 132



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UP023 RAD 152



UP024 Riv Div 153



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UP026 3rd/60th Inf



UP027 39th Inf



UP028 47th Inf



UP029 USS Benewah APB-35



UP030 USS Colleton APB-36



UP031 USS Mercer APB-39



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TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One

Member **Merrill Davis** passed away February 21, 2012. Merrill served on the USS Askari ARL-30 (06/52-08/53). He was a member of the Askari Association. You may contact the family c/o Barbara Merrill, 3405 S Ashwood Dr, Bloomington, IN 47401-9763; 812-331-1641; mfdavis33@att.net.

I would like to thank you for sending me a MRFA Honorary Membership card. My husband was a proud member of MRFA and the USS Askari ARL-30 Association and would be pleased that I am able to continue to receive River Currents and learn about and attend the reunions. Thank you. Barbara Davis (Membership # H250)

Member **Daniel Zanetich** passed away from liver disease January 17, 2011. Dan served in C Co. 3rd/47th Inf (05/66-05/68). You may contact the family c/o Catherine Zanetich, 132 Sophee Ln, Lakewood, NY 08701-6285; 732-730-8858.



Robert Fred

Robert H. Fred (Capt. USN, Ret.) passed away February 9, 2012. His naval career spanned 36 years, from Airman Apprentice to the rank of Captain. While in Vietnam, Captain Fred served with Task Force 116 as Commanding Officer of the USS Hunterdon County (LST-838). He later commanded the USS Opportune (ARS-41); the USS Newport (LST-1179); was Commodore of Service Squadron 8, Little Creek, VA; and Commodore of Mine Group 2, Charleston, SC.

Member **John Fairley** passed away January 18, 2012. John served on the USS Luzerne County

LST-902 (04/69-05/70). You may contact the family c/o Sally Fairley, 1509 W. Marlene Ave, Peoria, IL 61614-5710; 309-684-0519.

Member **John Overleese** passed away October 1, 2011. John served on the USS Henrico APA-45 (1964-68). You may contact the family c/o Teddy Overleese, 6518 113th Ave NE, Kirland, WA 98033-7105; 425-822-3643.

Member **James W. Klug** BMCN USGC (Ret.) passed away January 1, 2012. James served on the USGS Point Marone (1967-1968). You may contact the family c/o Marion Klug, 1514 Gully Rd, Glendola, NJ 07719-4443; jimsandyklug@aol.com.



Steven Hokanson

Steven Hokanson passed away June 29, 2011. While in Vietnam, he served onboard the USS Krishna (ARL-38). Later he worked as a Maintenance Mechanic at a VA hospital in Tacoma, Washington.

I was saddened to find out that a former shipmate from the USS Krishna ARL-38 has passed on. Edward Barth

“War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. The person who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing which is more important than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself.



Gerald Carlson

Member **Col Gerald Carlson** passed away from cancer, November 21, 2011. Col Gerald served in HCC of the 6th/31 Inf (01/69-01/71). He was residing in El Paso, Texas, at the time of his passing.



William Patin

RD3 William Anderson Patin passed away February 18, 2012. William served on PCFs 18, 36, and 79 in Cam Ranh Bay, Cat Lo, and Nha Be (05/69-04/70). He was residing in Reno, Nevada, at the time of his passing.

Former member **Richard Abbs** passed away February 5, 2012. Richard served on Tango 152-3 (11/68-03/69). He was residing in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at the time of his passing.



Rich Corrick

It's with a heavy heart and soul that I send you this TAPS. The Association just lost one of the best of the best. Albert Moore

Plankowner and Board Member since 1992, **Richard Corrick** passed away from agent orange-related cancer, February 29, 2012. Rich served on R-112-1 (02/67-03/68). Thanks to Rich for making the MRFA Memorial & Museum Trailer a reality. Rich hauled the MRFA Memorial & Museum Trailer to all of the MRFA reunions. Rich was a great human being; he did so much for the MRFA. There's no telling how many members he was credited with from stopping folks on the road, especially with a 9th Inf. bumper sticker. A member once told me a crazy guy kept coming up beside him blowing his horn for him to pull over. He pulled over and Rich informed him of the MRFA. This was only one of many incidents. Rich had the MRF and 9th Inf logo on the truck and guys would pull him over. Rich always had extra newsletters and membership forms; he was a great asset. There was nothing he would not do for a fellow veteran. He was one of the most dedicated people I have ever met. He would say, "I'll do it," and he would do it! You could count on Rich to be there. He made all our reunions from the very beginning and his last reunion in 2011, knowing it would be his last. He said he had cancer and this would be his last reunion, but wanted us to know he would always be there in spirit and looking down upon us. I for one will miss my dear friend and

brother as most of us that knew him will. Please don't forget Rich for what all he gave to his Country and to all the members of the Association. Rest in peace my old friend; there will never be another one like you. You may contact the family c/o Miss Patty, 2964 Minetree Pynes Rd, Haw River, NC 2725809645; 336-578-2434; ortrlc@aol.com.

Patty would like any donations made in honor of Rich to go to the MRFA Memorial & Museum Trailer; it was his idea and his Baby. Albert Moore

Richard & I were in RivDiv-112 together and I have known him since 1966, may he rest in peace, and may God continue to bless his family. Billy Sanders RivRon 11 C-112-1 & T-112-1 (04/67-12/67)

I will never forget Rich's words to everybody in the hospitality room at the last reunion. I was a little surprised that he even got up to speak, but when he spoke, I was blown away with his grace, his courage, and his gratefulness of a life well lived. Courage can be found everywhere, not just on the battlefield. Rich proved that. Terry Sater B Co. 2nd/60th Inf (02/69-08/69)

We seem to lose so many of our brothers. Rich has been a close friend for many years and all of us will surely miss him. The reunions and our trip to DC on Veterans Day will never be the same without him. It seems like time is just eating away at us. Roy Moseman C Co. 4th/47th Inf (10/67-10/68)

It was definitely sad to come home from the hospital today and learn of Rich's death. He will definitely hold a special place in the hearts of all who knew him. God watch over you Rich. Don Blankenship A-111-3 and A-152-21 (02/69-02/70)

He will be missed. RIP Brother Corrick. Rich was one of the best of the MRFA. Bravo Zulu. Bob Pries B Co. 2nd/47th (Mech) Inf (04/69-10/70)

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

--John Stewart Mill--

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