



A PUBLICATION OF
THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 4
WINTER 2010

Veterans Day in Washington DC

This year's gathering at the Wall was a very special event. As always, we had a great turnout from our members. We'd like to thank Doc Pries for once again handling everything and making sure all went smoothly.

Everyone met at the Wall at 8:30 and we proceeded over to the wall to honor our brothers. A few were in attendance for the first time, it was a very moving ceremony. A special thanks to Doc



We had quite a procession.



L-R Dave Altman, Tom Stuart, Al Cady, Wesley Spyke and Roland Fletcher.

Bob Pries, Gen Doug Smith, and Quinn Sommers, as always they did a great job with the wreath laying. I want to thank my old shipmates Al Cady, Tom Stuart, and Dave Altman for placing the Benewah wreath at the wall. It was the

first for a Benewah wreath.

A bit later in the day we held our ceremony at the Naval Memorial. The Missing Man ceremony was lead by Dave Schoenian and was a first of it's kind at the Naval Memorial. Thanks also to all the members who helped Dave.

Most of all it was a high honor for us to Have Mrs. Nan Fulton, her daughter Laurie and son Bill Jr, as our guests of honor. Mrs. Fulton is one of the most loving and caring people I have ever had the honor of knowing. She's just a great lady and really loves the

Mobile Riverine Force Army and Navy Team. Last but not least was our bugler, Sgt. Bob Nichols, who played Amazing Grace and Taps to end the ceremony.

Chet "Gunner" Stanley was our MC for the afternoon and in true "Navy Diver" fashion did a great job.

Thanks also to our speakers and special guests for all their kind words and memories. This day was one that we will not soon forget.

The MRFA would also like to thank Andrea Jones and the Navy Memorial staff for making sure that we had all of the chairs, supplies and anything else we needed to make things run smoothly.



The Missing Man ceremony.



Mrs. Nan Fulton, with son Bill Jr. and daughter, Laurie.



Andrea Jones with MRFA President Al Moore.



Remember, we thank you, the members, most of all. Without your attendance and caring, this day would not have been such a memorable event. Albert

2010 Kokomo, IN Vietnam Vets Gathering

Thanks to Georgie Ardinger for these great photos of the gathering in Kokomo.



What Ever Happened to YRBM-20?

Thanks to an email I received from David Derr, STS2 (SS), US Navy (Active) we know that the YRBM-20 is well and still in service. In Vietnam she played a large role with the Brown Water Navy, she was known as the Delta Hilton. Below are the letter and response:

I'm writing concerning the YRBM 20 you make mention of on your website. I had the privilege to work and sleep on her during my submarine's overhaul period from 2005 to 2007. I was on the USS Alabama at the time. I heard a rumor that she had been in Vietnam but at first I didn't believe it. Then I found this web page and I was amazed to discover that she had such a rich and honorable history. Near the end of the overhaul I asked one of the shipyard workers in charge of maintaining her what would happen to her after we left and moved back onto the Alabama. He said there were plans to tear her up which saddened me.

Fast forward to yesterday (8/3/2010) where I

happened to be in San Diego for training and was taking a harbor cruise tour. As we floated past the 32nd street base something familiar caught my eye. I couldn't believe it. It was the YRBM-20! Apparently they had towed her down to California for use at one of the dry docks there. Who would have thought it? Anyway, for anyone that still cares out there the YRBM 20 is still alive and happy down in sunny San Diego.

V/R, STS2 (SS) Derr

David, are you still on active duty? I remember receiving a nice Alabama Ball Cap and a nice letter from the Commanding officer when the boats was alongside the 20.

Yes I am still active duty. I transferred off the Alabama in 2009 shortly after she completed overhaul. I forgot to mention that the overhaul took place at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, WA. It was from there she was towed to San Diego.

ALBERT MOORE

SEE ADDITIONAL ARTICLE ON PAGE 4

From the Galley

REUNION UPDATE: Start making your reservations for Reunion 2011 today!

Dates: August 31st, 2011 - Sept. 4, 2011. Room rates: \$79.00 a night plus tax. These rates are valid for 3 days prior to the reunion and 3 days following the reunion. Individual meeting or hospitality rooms \$125.00 per day. You may begin making reservations now. The toll free number is 1-877-361-4511 or 317-381-6103.

A Note from "Action Jackson"

Hi Albert,

We are ready for the troops to start making reservations. Below is the link that will go directly to the MRFA booking page, if they would prefer to book online. Either way, I have been informed that we are ready to go. Visit www.wyndham.com/groupevents2010/indap_mrfa/main.wnt

Michelle "Action" Jackson, Convention Svc. Mgr.
E-mail mjackson@wyndham.com
2544 Executive Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46241
Direct: 317-381-6130, Fax: 317-248-0187
www.wyndhamindianapoliswest.com

Where Were You?

Where were you when we met as brother veterans to share our stories? Where were you when the need to find closure is needed? Were you there to meet and enjoy the families of those you fought beside? How many questions have gone unanswered because you didn't come to the reunions to share experiences with those you fought beside? Did you miss the opportunity because the one person who could have brought that closure passed on, carrying those most intimate moments with him?

By not attending the MRFA's reunions, you miss all of the above and will never get to experience the close interaction of each other, our friends and families.

The Department of Veterans Affairs cites Vietnam veterans dying at a rate of almost 300 per day! The death rate has almost doubled since 2001. My experiences with MRFA's reunions is likely not different from yours. I was stationed onboard CCB 112-1 during 1967-68. It wasn't until I joined the MRFA that I learned my Boat Captain, BMC Bartlow, had recently passed away. This left an empty void in me. There was so much I wanted to share with him; to talk about experience3s I couldn't easily speak with to others. I decided at that time to make an effort to reunite with the rest of my unit by attending the MRFA reunions.

Since then, three more of my boat crew have passed on. I am so fortunate to have been reunited with them and their families before they died. We shared many stories, dinner and outings together. I dearly miss my comrades in arms, but am thankful that the MRFA provided me the platform for all of us to meet and share one last time.

We can all find excuses not to attend. DON'T MISS THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET, SHARE AND FIND CLOSURE BY ATTENDING. I look forward to meeting and greeting you at our 2011 reunion.

Respectfully,

Gary Newman, MAC, USN (Retired)

Mobile Riverine Force Association Wyndham Hotel 2011 Reunion • Indianapolis, IN August 31, 2011-September 4, 2011 Reunion Registration Form

Name: _____

Unit In Vietnam: _____ Dates: _____

Name(s) Wife, Family (Guest): _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

Send this form with check or money order to the address below.

Reunion Registration: \$50 covers both member and spouse \$ _____ Total: _____

Other Guest(s): (\$20 each) \$ _____ Total: _____

Non Member: (\$70 each) \$ _____ Total: _____

Grand Total Enclosed: \$ _____

☐ Please send my registration info via email.

Registration Notes

Please send your check or money order (payable to MRFA or Mobile Riverine Force Association) before August 25, 2011 to: MRFA Reunion, 106 Bellevue Dr. NE, Conover, NC 28613. If you have any questions, contact Albert at mrfa@bellsouth.net or Charlie Ardinger at mrfamembership@mabelltel.coop or Gunner Stanley at gunnerstan@aol.com.

Please register early. If you wait to pay your registration fee at the reunion, the cost of registration will be \$60.

When filling out your form, please do so as accurately and clearly as possible, especially your unit and the dates you were in-country. This way there will be no misunderstandings when you check in.

You will receive your registration form and name tags at the MRFA registration desk when you check in.

For those few who always try to get by without paying the registration fee, and try to get a free ride, we'll be checking name tags. This is not playing fair with your fellow members and spouses since it raises the costs for everyone else. Last reunion, we found 4 or 5 members walking around with name tags from years past.

Some of you in the past have requested a copy of your registration form for your paperwork prior to the reunion. We will be glad to do so via email. Be sure to select this option in the above form. Again, please make sure you send the correct e-mail address. You will still need to fill out this form and send with the registration fees. We'll email you a confirmation copy.

Please send a correct e-mail address. At past reunions, folks have questioned us on their info sent and we show them what they sent and they still want to make changes. As for units some of you may have been in 3 or 4 different units. We can only put so much on a name tag so try and keep it to one or two units or ships, or RivDivs, Co's, etc.

Thanks for your support.

Albert

The Wyndham Hotel

So close to the airport, yet so far ahead of the pack.

Be first-class. At the Wyndham West Indianapolis Hotel you are never far from everything that makes travel a little more pleasant. The fact is we're the closest full-service hotel to the airport and just minutes from downtown Indianapolis. Step inside our newly renovated hotel and you'll quickly realize you're sacrificing absolutely nothing for convenience. Our airy lobby is done in gorgeous earth tones with granite floors and is flooded with sunlight. Colorful abstract art by a painter whose work hangs in major museums adorn our walls. You'll also find welcoming clusters of seating that are perfect for catching up with friends or for an impromptu meeting with colleagues. Book your reservation today.

24-hour Room Service and a 24-hour Business Center - this is service on your terms.

We understand that for most, bankers' hours are a charming thing of the past. To get things done sometimes life needs to conform to your schedule. That's why anytime of the day or night you can grab a workout in our 24-hour Fitness Center, order up a tasty snack from our Room Service or even finish a report in our Business Center. When you're finally ready to wind down, relax in one of our comfortable guest rooms or take a dip in our pool. Shoe shine and dry cleaning services mean you'll always look your best. When a comfortable dining experience or an icy cocktail is on the menu, head to our restaurant or sports bar. Those hosting a stylish wedding or professional gathering are sure to appreciate our huge amount of customizable event space with our very own Exhibit Hall.

With airport monitors in the lobby, you just know our service is on a higher plane.

We think there's nothing more frustrating than being stuck in the airport waiting for a flight. That's just one reason why we have airport monitors showing departure information for all local flights right in our lobby at the Wyndham West Indianapolis Hotel. If your plane happens to be late, linger by our pool or have that extra cup of coffee with us. Of course, you can always print your boarding pass right in the hotel. If your shoes need a last minute touch-up, we have you covered there, too. But when it's your presentation that needs touching up, no worries - our Business Center is available 24 hours a day. Our dedicated Business Center Concierge can help you make copies, collate or just give you directions.

When you are ready for a meal, stop by our rustic Marker Restaurant. It features a wine list so impressive it has been mentioned in several national magazines. We even have an in-house wine steward, who'll offer suggestions for just the right choice to complement your entrée. If you're more in the mood to sip a cold ale or lager, try our sports bar with flat-screen TVs and pub-inspired leather seating. Room Service is available 24 hours a day for those who prefer not to go out. Naturally, complimentary Wi-Fi is accessible from almost anywhere in the hotel and poolside.

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The Wyndham Hotel

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Services & Activities

Below is a list of helpful services and amenities you can expect while you are staying with us. Many are complementary but some do require a fee. So whether you need a spare toothbrush or a document to be faxed, just ask.

On-Site Activities & Entertainment

Indianapolis has so much to offer. But right within the hotel there are some great choices for things to do. For those who want to work up a sweat, we have a newly renovated fitness area featuring cardio equipment with private monitors and MP3 jacks. If soaking up some sun is more your idea of down time, enjoy yourself poolside. Our pool welcomes you all summer from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Even if the nighttime temperature dips, no problem - the pool is heated and very comfortable.

What to do if....

This will be an abbreviated column, as there is not a lot of new news on the benefits front.

Just a few reminders, however. If you are suffering from one of the many conditions/diseases that have been linked to Agent Orange, be aware that, "about 86,000 Vietnam War veterans, their surviving spouses or estates will be eligible for retroactive disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs—an average of 11.4 years for veterans and 9.6 years for survivors—under a draft VA rule to expand by three the number of diseases presumed caused by herbicide exposure in the war."

"Veterans with these diseases will need to show they set foot in Vietnam during the war."

"The beneficiaries who can reopen previously denied claims for these conditions: ischemic heart disease, Parkinson's disease and chronic B-cell blood cancers including hairy cell leukemia. But another 29,000 claims are expected to be approved this year for Vietnam veterans suffering from these diseases but applying for benefits for the first time." Do not wait to file or re-file. As the old expression goes, "Time is Money."

To file claims online visit: <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>. Veterans without a computer can call a toll-free helpline at 1-800-749-8387.

Also, I am looking to cover topics regarding Agent Orange Benefits, Surviving Spouse Benefits, issues or concerns, or other related topics of interest to the readers of this publication. If you have a topic that you would like me to research and cover, please feel free to email me at: thewrightthings@verizon.net.

Paula Wright (Scott)

Thanks to an article in the River Currents I finally went to the VA for the first time ever, got my free exam, confirmed I had Agent Orange toxin, type 2 diabetes caused by the toxins and various other problems that are still being reviewed. I may look like the healthiest guy at the VA but I have problems. So far about \$ 500 per month in benefits and having available more experienced Doctors used to treating Agent Orange victims. I'm still looking for a connection to anyone who was on board the USS West Chester County when it was attacked on November 1, 1968. Thanks Albert,

Tom Smith

Uniforms in the MRF

We were a rag tag bunch on the boats and our uniforms reflected that front-line mentality. I think even the officers turned a head knowing that the guy in that rag tag uniform might be giving up his life the next day. Here are a variety of the uniforms (?) I wore while on the boats:

Cutoffs with Irish penants that would make my boot camp Chief roll over in his grave, no shirt, non-issued sandals, and a stinky flak jacket that smelled of the sweat from previous

boat crews.

Sometimes just a t-shirt with the sleeves cut off. Note the dirty Ked's tennis shoes.

Most of the time no shirt at all. That's scotch and water in the cup which was probably also against regulations to have on the boat. I expect the hair and handlebar moustache were as non-regulation as the non-uniform.

Sometimes the stuff looked like rags. Well, we were after all, rag boat sailors. (Riverine Assault Group).

Sometimes a dun-

garee shirt.

Usually, if I was in dungarees, it was when we were alongside a ship (here, the Sphinx) and I had access to a laundry to wash all the dirty green rags which I wore on a day to day basis.

Sometimes cut off sleeves to help beat the heat.

After we joined RivRon15 we were given camouflage berets. I had one pair of Army greens which served as a dress uniform. Although this was taken while I was in Nha Be shortly after joining RivRon15 I still had my RivDiv111 patch on this uniform.

Probably the dressiest uniform was a set of marine greens. I was still proud of that RivDiv111 patch even though I had been in Riv-

Ron15 for several months when this pic was taken. The only time I shaved off the moustache was when my former commander

RAADM Allen Bergner visited me at Dong Tam.

Don Blankenship 24256 Compadre Way, Ramona, CA 92065

Home: 760-788-9972, rivervet@cox.net
River Assault Squadrons 11 & 15 (A-111-3 and A-152-21)

Battle in the Plain of Reeds

On June 1 and 3, 1968, 42 years ago, there were over 40 men from the First BDE of the 9th ID who were killed in action during two battles fought in or near the Plain of Reeds. These are their names and units. Seven of them were from my unit--Echo 2/39 Recon. I was an arms-length away from SP5 David Squires, a medic from HHC 2/60, when he was shot through the head on 3 June. About half of these guys were from Alpha 2/39. I have not been able to reconcile this list to the casualty numbers on the after action report and there may have been errors in the units on a couple of these men, but all died on June 1 or June 3, 1968, and should be remembered for their ultimate sacrifice on those dates.

KILLED IN ACTION ON JUNE 1, 1968 - IN THE PLAIN OF REEDS

WARD	DANNY	EDWARD	43rd SCOUT DOG
HUMMEL	HARRY	LYNNE	1/11th, A BTRY
CARPENTER	WILLIAM	JOHNNY	2/39th, A CO
LA ROCHELLE	MARCEL	ADELAR	2/39th, A CO
SHUMATE	NILE	DEAN	2/39th, A CO
TURNER	OTIS		2/39th, A CO
BELCHAK	PAUL		2/39th, C CO
HOSEY	TOMMY	BRYAN	2/39th, C CO
OLIVERAS	RUDY	MICHAEL	2/39th, C CO
TAYLOR	RICHARD	KENNETH	2/39th, C CO
TOWNSLEY	STEVEN	DOUGLAS	2/39th, C CO
BOYER	STEPHEN	GREGORY	2/39th, C CO
HOIRIGAN	MICHAEL	PATRICK	2/39th, HHC
ETSITTY	VAN		2/60th, C CO
HASSELL	NORMAN	WINSTON	2/60th, C CO
PHILLIPS	OSCAR	C	2/60th, C CO

KILLED IN ACTION ON JUNE 3, 1968 - SOUTH OF THE

TONG DOC LOC CANAL			
ALL	CARL	KELLY	2/39th, A CO
BADGLEY	DALE	ERNEST	2/39th, A CO
BUSH	STEVEN	CLARENCE	2/39th, A CO
CHUBBUCK	MICHAEL	FRANCIS	2/39th, A CO
CLARK	BRIAN	JAMES	2/39th, A CO
DART	DANNY	JOE	2/39th, A CO
DOWLING	JESSE	WILLARD	2/39th, A CO
JOHANNSEN	GUSTAV	ALFRED	2/39th, A CO
LOOMIS	BILLIE	CLIFFORD	2/39th, A CO
O REILLY	ANTHONY	PAUL	2/39th, A CO
OTT	ALAN	ROBERT	2/39th, A CO
THOMPSON	KENDALL	WILLIAM	2/39th, A CO
VALENTINE	JOSEPH	RONALD	2/39th, A CO
RUSSELL	GARY	LEE	2/39th, C CO

The Plain of Reeds started west of Ben Luc in Long An province and went west as far as the Cambodian border--where the north branch of the Mekong crosses from Cambodia into Vietnam. It went south from the Cambodian border along the Parrot's Beak to the northern edge of Dinh Tuong province. The Reeds stopped at the

Kinh Tong Doc Loc and the rice paddies were south of that canal.

The hamlet of Xom Chua was just south of that canal in the rice fields. It was also the nearest place on the map to east of the site of the 3 June '68 battle. Further west of Cai Lay, the Plain of Reeds

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The Plain of Reeds

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came down almost to Highway 4, between Cai Be and Giao Duc. The Plain of Reeds continues on west to the Cambodian border, near where the Mekong crosses into Vietnam.

The Plain of Reeds covered most (if not all) of Kien Tuong and Kien Phong provinces, the northern and western edges of Dinh Tuong, and the western edges of Long An and Hau Nghia provinces. The east branch of the Vam Co River ran to the east of the Reeds, the west branch of the Vam Co runs right through it. Moc Hoa was on the edge of it and Tuyen Nhon was in the middle of it. It sort of skirted the Parrot's Beak, as the higher ground was in Cambodia; virtually all of the Plain of Reeds was on the Vietnam side of that border.

The topography of the Plain of Reeds was generally flat, and it was near sea level, so was flooded with the tides. There were a number of major navigable canals that ran through it and many smaller waterways connected them. There was thick vegetation along many of the canals, while there were roads, footpaths, and even houses along others.

The VC/NVA actually had mock ARVN-style forts set up in the area along the Cambodian border west of the Parrot's Beak. These were used for training the new NVA arrivals that had traversed the Ho Chi Minh Trail and passed through Cambodia. There are aerial photos of some of those in a book that was written by Mike Novosel, the MEDEVAC pilot who won the MOH for his exploits in rescuing ARVN troops in the Plain of Reeds.

Jim Stone, Echo 2/39 Recon 2/68-2/69

*James,
Thanks for reminding people. The Plain of Reeds was always bad in one way or another.*

—Ed Whitmarsh

Please also note: SP5 David Squires (Posthumously, medic w/11 days left country) HHC 2/60

1LT Anthony O'Reilly A 2/39 all EARNED the DSC that Day.

We also lost from A 2/60, a Tiger Scout, Hung. He should be mentioned.

1LT Greg Hering E 2/39

Seeking

The following is a response we received to the Seeking article in our last issue from Steve Williams, former Captain, US Army Special Forces, 2223 Bearden Street, Davis, CA 95618; steviewms@sbcglobal.net.

Dear Steve,

I just received my fall 2010 issue of *River Currents* and saw your notes regarding David. I was not his CO at the time of his death, but I was his best friend and confidant. I arrived in country in July of 1967 and was CO of Headquarters Company. Dave and I became buddies because we were not in the field when the troops were. (After Dave returned from the hospital he was given an admin job in order to keep him from going back to the field). We took coffee breaks together every day and I got to know him as a friend. (He talked a lot about his family and friends in Sausalito, Dave talked a lot about the 19th of June and the losses that Alpha Company took. (I became the commander of Alpha Company in late January 1968). I believe that all of the officers were killed or wounded and more than 30 enlisted men were killed on the 19th. In 1969, I visited the Battalion Chaplain when he was stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. (His name was Bernie Windmiller and he was with the troops on the 19th and he had stories that were beyond description).

When Dave was told that he was going back to the field as a rifle platoon leader, he told me that he knew that he was not going to make it. I discussed this with him and told him that he was going to be all right. (He didn't unpack his gear when he left HHC to go back to Alpha Company). I am not a religious person and I do not believe in fate, but Dave had that premonition. (After what he went thru on the 19th of June, I guess he was certain that he could not survive

Earl Marple brother of S/Sgt Reese L. Marple who served in B/CO/3rd/60th From 6/26/1967 was KIA in Long An province due to multiple fragmentation wounds own 5/11/1968. Earl is seeking anyone who may have served or knew his brother. You may contact Earl Marple, 104 East Ave. Sevierville, TN 37862; 865-908-6455.

Member **John L. Green Jr.** is seeking any who remembers a fire fight he took part in on Feb. 6, 1968 while serving onboard ATC (Tango)

another event).

When Dave went to the field on his first mission in September, I was the assistant S3 or the S3 Air. Those were quiet times, very little activity. The troops worked off the boats and would stay out two or three days. The command and support group would remain on command and control boats (CCB's) and would monitor the troop progress/activities. The mission had ended and the troops were on the way to the pick up point. I received word that there was a casualty and a medivac was required. Casualties were identified by roster number rather than name and rank. When the roster number was verified, it was not David. Shortly after, another call corrected the number and it was David. (This hit me like a ton of bricks). They had passed through an open area and a VC popped out of a spider hole and fired one shot hitting David in the back of the head. That was the only shot fired during the entire mission.

While I commanded A company from late January until mid July 1968, I had 23 killed and 122 wounded. Each and every one of those casualties had an everlasting effect, but none affected me more than the loss of David. We were friends and he was one of the neatest, coolest guys I have ever known. To this day, he crosses my mind constantly.

I hope this helps and is not too blunt. I may have some pictures of Dave and me, but I don't know where they are right now. We just moved from Palm Beach Gardens Florida to the hills of North Georgia and when we start going thru our "stuff" I may come across them. Sorry about the bad email address but it was probably my old work address. (I retired on 31 July). I retired from the Army in 1974. My mailing address is:

Robert Bischoff
8280 True Love Mountain Rd., Young Harris, GA
30582; Phone: 706-379-2572 or
cell 561- 758-6367; Majbob8280@aol.com

Boat 111-8 as Gunners Mate 3rd/Class, operating with B/CO/3rd/60th, 9th Infantry Division. John is looking for anyone who served with him from Nov. 1967-Nov. 1968. Also who was Com-RivDiv-111 at that time and the B/CO Company Commander at that time? You may contact John L. Green Jr., P.O. Box 2163, Folsom, CA 95763; phone (916) 817-4241 & (916) 202-9934; or email johnngreen3222@yahoo.com.



History of The YRBM-20 (Vietnam)

The YRBM-20, known as the Delta Hilton, was a floating Brown Water Navy base in Vietnam during 1969 and 1970.

YRBM stands for "Yard Repair Berthing and Messing." It was not self propelled. A barge tied to the stern had diesel



outboards to move the YRBM when needed. It was located on a wide spot in the Bassac River, the tributary of the Mekong River south of the town of Chou Doc Province and very near the

Cambodian border. Detachments assigned to the YRBM-20 patrolled the French-built border canals nearby. One canal ran between the Bassac River and Ting Binh. Another ran to the Mekong River.

The YRBM 20 had Freezers and Refrigerators and at times was the best dining spot in the Province.

The YRBMs were vulnerable to mines. A swimmer could float down the river in the 1 to



PHOTO COURTESY OF BOB GREGORY

6 knot current and place the mine on the hull. In the day time the bow watch would shoot under any debris or water plants floating near with a carbine. At night an outboard motor boat would circle and the YRBM and the bow watch would randomly toss concussion grenades into the river. When the current stopped in the dry summer season there was also a stern watch set with a carbine and grenades. This was on a stern fuel and pusher barge with its diesel outboard motors. See Kent Hawley's YRBM-20 web site. It is an excellent site, be sure and check it out. ABM

Awards earned during the Vietnam War: Navy Unit Commendation, RVN Gallantry Cross with Palm, RVN Civil Action Medal, First Class, with Palm, RVN Campaign Medal with 60's device and the Vietnam Service Medal.

2011 Reunion—Help Needed

To my fellow association members Navy and Army

I had asked Terry Sater for help in getting more boat guys to the reunion. I have had some complain there are not enough folks from their RivDiv's attending the reunions. I have also received the same from members of all of our Navy and Army units. I thought we should send Terry's letter out to each of you, Army and Navy, to show you where Terry is coming from and the reason behind it. The association can only do so much, we need member's help and assistance as well, to make the reunion more to your liking.

If you would like to help get more of your old shipmates, boat crew members, Army platoon members, Company members to come to a reunion, we can help. Just send me an e-mail and I will be glad to send you the names of folks you served with.

Terry has put an excellent letter together, and you can use it as a guide. You may contact our membership chairman, Charlie Ardinger at mrfa-membership@mabtel.coop or me, Albert at mrfa@bellsouth.net. Complete rosters are not available for distribution. We can give you a list for your platoon, company or boat crew, ships crew, or base folks. Even if there are only a few you remember, if they're members we will send you the info we have on them. We appreciate your support. In Brotherhood,

Albert

This is Terry's letter...

My Fellow Shipmates

The Mobile Riverine Force Association will hold its next reunion on August 31st through September 4th, 2011, at the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel, 2544 Executive Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46241.

Albert Moore, President of the MRFA, mentioned to me that the Association would like to see more former members of River Assault Squadron 13 at the reunions. I told Albert that I would be glad to contact everybody on the Riv Ron 13 roster, to extend a special invitation, or encouragement, to make this reunion a big one for the Riv Ron 13 guys. I know a lot of the guys

receiving this have attended many, if not all of the reunions. Perhaps they can simply help to spread the word and help find others, not on this list. Many of our Riv Ron 13 "runnin' mates" on the roster did not have e-mail addresses. I will be sending them a "snail mail" letter, or contacting them by phone.

As someone who has been to quite a few reunions, I'd like to offer some personal observations, with the fond hope that we have the biggest and best reunion of Riv Ron 13, yet.

First and foremost, the reunions are fun! If you like golf, cards, dancing, good food and good times, you will enjoy yourself at the reunion!

Secondly, we are a "Band of Brothers." We few have a shared experience; the crucible of war, in a unique and decorated unit. As we age and face the autumn of our lives, it should be on everyone's "bucket list" to reunite, at least once, with those who fought with us, shoulder to shoulder, or back to back. On the plus side, many of us are either retired, or near retirement, so it may be easier to find the time to get away to the reunion!

It is a wonderful experience to see one of your buddies from the MRF. It means a lot to me, to get together with Mike Thom, who served with me on T-131-6, and Frank Springer, who served with me on T-131-9, as well as all of the other guys who served in the Mobile Riverine Force. There are always heart warming scenes of old friends who embrace in the joy of seeing that each has not only survived, but endured and enjoyed a full life.

You will also make life long friends with men you may not have even met in Vietnam, but shared the experience on another boat, ship, or river squadron. One aspect of the reunions that has been a pleasant surprise is the camaraderie and interesting insights gained from conversations with our Army counterparts. For example, I will always remember a conversation with a couple former members of the 9th Infantry Division. It was late in the evening, sitting at a table near the pool. They seemed very appreciative of the fact that they knew that our boats would come in to get them, no matter what we had to go through to get to them. It was a very simple statement. A "given." Still, it meant a lot to me, to hear it.

The reunions are a learning experience. At every reunion, you will have questions answered, or blanks filled in, that may have plagued you for years. You may see yourself, in a photo, or video. Some may be concerned that attending a MRFA reunion may stir up unpleasant memories. I believe it is healthy to get together with the men you served with and to express your thoughts and emotions on the war. For those of us who have attended the reunions, I'm sure they would say that the burden of the war is eased with each reunion.

The reunions can be a unique and special time for family. I attended three reunions with my father, Dale. I will always treasure the memories of those reunions. Dad thoroughly enjoyed each experience. We smoked cigars, drank beer, had great dinners and laughed... a lot. Dad was very interested in all of the stories and the history of the MRF. He died in August of 2003, just a couple weeks before the reunion of that year. I was convinced by friends and family that Dad would have wanted me to go to the reunion. My son, Chris, went in Dad's place and has carried on the tradition, attending the last four reunions with me. He is very interested in hearing the stories and the history, just as his grandfather did. I believe we owe it to our children and our grandchildren to know the history of the MRFA, from the men that were there.

Last, but certainly not least, the reunions are an excellent forum to gain insight into the latest news and developments concerning Veterans Administration benefits. The best source for learning what is available to you, as a veteran and how to pursue it is to talk with others who have gone through it.

You can find additional information on the MRFA and our 2011 reunion at the association's website. Here is the page that refers to the reunion, specifically: www.mrfa.org/2011.Reunion.htm

I hope you decide to attend this reunion. Your buddies want to see you!

Sincerely,

Terry M. Sater, Riv Ron 13, Class 14-R,
March '68 – March '69,
807 Emerald Oaks Ct., Eureka, Mo. 63025
Cell Phone: 314-660-6613

The Chief

The "Mobile Riverine Force" or "Brown-Water-Navy" has a special interest to me because I served a year (1967-1968) aboard the USS Garrett County (LST 786) that was part of Task Force 116 under project, "Game warden."

There were, however, other Task Forces, such as 115 and 117. Task Force 117 worked closely with 116 at times and was also part of the Mobile Riverine Forces as well. It was more of the "attack section" and encompassed Monitors, PBRs, Tango boats, and a variety of other river craft. These craft were heavily armed but slow and cumbersome. Many times they landed troops on various river banks under heavy enemy fire, while taking heavy casualties as well.

I first noticed this photograph on the Internet while doing research on the Mobile Riverine Force. The photograph was part of a collection

placed on the web site by the Mobile Riverine Force Association. The photograph simply entitled; "BMC J. C. Robertson," immediately grabbed my attention and captivated my imagination like no other photo. I was basically, mesmerized by the intense feeling and emotion that oozed from the muddy waters and corridors of time in that black and white photo.

"Chief" Robertson epitomizes the entire Vietnam experience in a split second of the camera's shutter. Here is an older man who sits on the back of a Tango boat lost in thought as he takes a moment to smoke a cigarette during the lull of battle. The tattooed tentacles of an octopus on his right forearm, disheveled hair, and wrinkled weathered face tell it all! He exudes all the human emotions of battle, such as physical exhaustion, disgust, and mental reflection upon his life, and the treacherous surroundings that he finds himself in. At the same time, however, he registers the aura of a real combat sailor who

had probably seen too much and was wishing he were somewhere else.

This is a photograph of a true warrior, and a man who gave his all because it was simply his job and, as the slogan at the Naval Training Center (NTC) in San Diego once read: "The tradition of the service demands it."

The more I looked at the image in this photograph, the more I wanted to know about the man himself. "Who was he?" "What happened to him?" and "Is he still living? So many questions, so long ago.

Initially, when I started this quest, I was in contact with Mr. Albert Moore, President of the Mobile Riverine Force Association. Apparently, Mr. Moore was just as infatuated with "The Chief" as I was. In fact, he had been searching for clues long before my own interest was peeked.

Like Percival from Arthurian legend, "Chief

The Chief

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Robertson" became my search for the Holy Grail. Despite my ambition and honorable motives, it became quickly apparent that Chief Robertson and the Holy Grail were equally elusive.

I sent letters to the Naval History and Heritage Command in Washington, DC, and the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri. I marched through various Internet sites like "General Grant through Richmond" but, never once was I able to locate anything more than what I first started out with! Oh... the anger... the frustration of it all!

What we do know of "The Chief" is that, he is, more likely than not...one, Chief Robertson who probably joined the Navy around 1942. He served as a boat captain on a "Tango" boat in Task Force 117 under Division 92, in Vietnam. That would seem like enough information for any "pseudo investigator" (such as myself), to follow through with, and especially for some entity as large and all encompassing as, the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis. However, despite my best attempts, the Personnel Records Center claimed they did not have "enough information" to locate a Chief Boatswain's Mate J. C. Robertson.

Nonetheless, perhaps someone "out there" who reads this article may know someone who knows someone, who knows ... (well you

get the idea). However, until that event occurs, Chief Boatswain's Mate, J. C. Robertson will remain as a "MIA" because no one seems to know what happened to him.

This photograph is "worth a thousand words," but it would still be nice to hear just a word or two from "The Chief" himself. To use an old cliché and just a "wee-bit" of journalistic licensing, let me paraphrase the actor and entertainer, Jimmy Durante by simply stating: "...and good night Chief Robertson... wherever you are!"

Note of interest: I'm pretty sure the picture itself was an official USN photo. After I shipped home in August, I remember seeing it for the first time, so it must have been in an All Hands Magazine; that would have been late 1968-69. If true, then I believe that our photographer (PHC Dan Dodd) took it. It was during Tet, when we were all worn out. That's why he looks so tired. Any other time, he always had a big smile and a great sense of humor. The reason he looks so old is that he was old. If I remember, he had already retired (Texas??, had skin-like old shoe leather, and a permanent tan), but volunteered to come back on active duty for Vietnam.

One reason we promoted him to BMC is that he was a natural warrior. On the night of 19 Feb. 1968, Division 91 boats were strung out individually along several miles of the Can Tho River to prevent a Battalion size crossing of VC. I was riding M-91-1; Robbie and Tango 12 were about one-fourth mile away and adjacent to us.

Our 40-mm turret was trained 45 degrees to starboard. The VC set up a triple ambush, with two firing positions on the south bank and one on the north.

The VC began with a perfect RPG shot. It went straight down the barrel length of the 40 mm, penetrated the movable elevation plate around the barrel, smashed through the loading station, and exited through the rear of the turret, wounding eight of us with one shot. The mount caught fire, there were three streams of tracers converging on the boat, and we were skidding off both banks of the river. I expect that some of us would have died, but without orders, Robbie gunned T-12 into the brawl. The enemy, concentrating on M-3, never saw him coming until his gunners opened up on both banks. It got quiet pretty quick. So, I have a personal interest in honoring this man.

J. D. Eldridge, Captain U.S. Navy (Ret.) Blue Swords one aka Pocketknife



The Lost Squad of Ap Binh Son Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 39th Infantry

The members of Romeo and Juliet Reconnaissance Platoons, Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 39th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division, woke to a bright sunny day in Vietnam. The date was 5 September 1967. We were at Camp Martin Cox better known as Bearcat. None of us had any idea what was to come to pass that day. It was supposed to be as close to a cake walk as the recon platoons could get. We didn't know how dark the sky was going get, even with the sun beating down on our heads, at a 100 degrees. This is an account of the events of that day ... a day that will never be forgotten ... at least while there's blood pumping through my veins.

The 1st Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, maintained a minimum force of one infantry company presence, from a rotated Battalion, at the Ap Binh Son rubber plantation at all times. There was an established Command Post (CP) that each Company used as its base of operations during its rotation. The unit would surround the plantation house common grounds and man it at all times. They would also run patrols around the plantation on a daily basis. The plantation itself and the surrounding area had once been a VC stronghold before the 9th Division arrived a year earlier and successfully pushed them out. Someone thought a show of force at the plantation was strategic and effective. Bearcat was only a few thousand meters from the plantation off Highway 15.

The plantation owner, a Frenchman and his two daughters, lived in the plantation house. They were suspected of being VC sympathizers. There was no relationship between the Frenchman and the occupying units. He and his daughters

ignored us as best they could and we observed their daily routine. We knew they were paying the

VC tax collectors regularly in order to be operating the plantation as if the war didn't exist. The VC tax collectors were rumored to come right up to the edge of the rubber at night, where the Frenchman would meet them, and pay up. The VC were also rumored to be accompanied by one or two "Caucasian mercenaries." We really wanted to capture or bring one of them in ... dead or alive. We suspected they were also French by nationality.

On 5 September 1967, the remnants of Romeo and Juliet reconnaissance platoons were trucked to the Ap Binh Son rubber plantation. This was supposed to be a break for us. An opportunity to pull a patrol close to what we considered to be home. A chance to afterwards to have a few minutes to ourselves... to write letters home and to heal up. Most of us were ravaged with bamboo poisoning. Our forearms were raw and swollen masses of scabs and puss from beating our way through the bush. It was one of those rare times we looked forward too. Hot food and a safe place to sleep at night... with both eyes closed.

This particular morning our mission was simple enough... a quick and dirty cloverleaf patrol of the plantation and surrounding area. It was nothing exciting... just three separate loops around the plantation to see what was going on. It was nothing that I hadn't done a number of times before when I was assigned to B Company. The difference this day was that Romeo and Juliet platoons were down to 20 men (or less). To complete this mission we would have to combine into one platoon and split up into 3 squads. It was a simple process that didn't take

long. It was like picking players for a sand lot baseball game.

I was attached to 1st squad with a sergeant from Romeo Platoon being in charge as Squad Leader. At the time, I also was a buck sergeant in Juliet platoon. I was not in charge of the squad on that day because it was predominately a Romeo platoon squad. My function was another set of eyes... and another loaded M16. Our squad had the first leaf of the patrol. We had some rubber and bush to beat around and then back to the CP.

SGT Bravie Soto, a Squad Leader, Romeo platoon, led the 2nd squad. I remember Soto as a hard figure to forget. Soto was of Native American decent. A looming figure... but quiet. He was older than most of us at 26-27. His leaf involved patrolling the perimeter of a major portion of the rubber in the plantation then into the bush and back into the CP. The rubber itself had an access road that ran straight through the middle of the plantation. It came to a "T" at the far end or backside of the rubber. That's where the rubber trees gave way to the bush. The 3rd squad was to skirt the edge of the rubber and come back around to the right through the bush and back into the CP.

The three squads split up about 1030 hours and proceeded to execute the patrol. My squad took the short route through the rubber before entering the bush. I estimate that we weren't more than 20 minutes into the patrol when we heard all hell break loose to our right flank.

The chatter of the small arms fire couldn't have been more than 200-300 meters from us. The firefight couldn't have lasted more than 3-5 minutes at most. I remember hearing much small arms fire and the sounds of hand

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Dedication Reunion Brings Flow of Memories

By: Wendell Affield, Bemidji Pioneer

On 11 July 1967, 4th/47th Inf. 2nd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, Mobile Riverine Force, engaged 165th Regiment, Viet Cong Main Force, in entrenched positions near the Rach Xom Cau River about 20 kilometers south of Saigon.

In the afternoon's fighting, seven Americans were killed and eighteen wounded. Six U.S. soldiers died. Five from C Company, one from B Company, and the captain of a Monitor, a navy gunboat. Among the dead was Sp4 Clarence E. Lossing, 3rd Platoon, B Company, Blackduck.

An excerpt from a letter to the Lossing family from 3rd platoon leader, 2nd Lieutenant Phillip R. Bateman, forty-two years later:

"You should know that on the day he (Clarence) died, he was doing exactly what we had come to expect of him. He was up front, in the enemy bunker line with myself, my radio operator, Poppelreiter, the artillery forward observer and his radio operator, and Sergeant Jim Franklin.

"It was an intense, dangerous fight. Most of our weapons jammed and, as I said before, the enemy fire around this lead element was intense and deadly. Just before our handful of friendlies up front were forced to take cover and try to clear our weapons and get below the torrent of fire, Clarence was hit. Poppelreiter and I were closest to him, maybe 15 or 20 feet away. "Popp" cried, Black Duck's been shot in the head. He's dead.

"I saw Clarence fall and knew Poppelreiter was right. Clarence had suffered an obviously fatal head wound fired from the treeline a short distance ahead of us and behind the bunker line. He died instantly.

"Clarence died as he had lived, doing his job without hesitation, and covering his fellows. May his soul forever be in peace and honored rest."

Memorial Service

On 21 Aug. 2010, beneath a cloudless sky, men from B Company gathered in Blackduck to dedicate a memorial to Clarence. The memorial, a full-size soldier statue, was placed by the Lossing family. Clarence's comrades in arms stood at attention near his grave. Friends and family eulogized him. Sweat trickled down the Patriot Guard members standing at attention who had single-filed into the country cemetery where Clarence rests. The local American Legion color guard honored Clarence. The city of Blackduck signed a proclamation honoring him.

Dalton Tom, a member of 3rd platoon the day Clarence died, called his fellow veterans to attention, marched the formation forward and ordered, "salute." To Clarence, to the men who had come so far to honor him, to all veterans, and to the visitors, Tom, knee bowed, lamented the fallen warrior. "Crying of the Taps" rose from his heart. The elegy brought tears, tight chests and renewed memories of the day Clarence died as the dirge echoed in the treeline.

Family Gathering

The following day, the group of B Company veterans gathered at the Loren Lossing home north of Blackduck. It was a poignant afternoon as memories and tears flowed. I had the honor to visit with them. As I interviewed the men of Clarence's platoon, a theme emerged, a theme of

sheltering Clarence, protecting him from danger. And a sense of guilt – guilt that Clarence, married 17 days before he deployed to Vietnam, never had the chance to live life.

Bill Befort was a sergeant, a squad leader in 1st platoon in 1967. Today he lives in Grand Rapids, Minn. His unit was ordered past 3rd platoon's right flank by B Company commander, Capt. James E. Engeldinger. Befort recalled the frustration of waiting in reserve, listening to the firefight a short distance away.

Befort has been instrumental in clarifying that afternoon for me. In paraphrasing a reply to one of my questions, he said B Company did not end up in possession of the field 11 July 1967; 3rd platoon was forced to pull back from the Viet Cong entrenchments and company Headquarters group was shot up shortly after that. B company dug in for the night.

Early the next morning, when B company re-entered the area, 3rd platoon had fought for the previous day, they discovered that during the night the VC had withdrawn, carrying away their dead and wounded. Thus the discrepancy in VC body count between survivor memories and the 9th Infantry after-action report.

Befort said, "The memorial dedication and Tom's 'Crying of the Taps' was very touching."

Dalton Tom, a PFC in 1967, now lives in Las Vegas, Nev. I asked Tom, a Native American, about his "Crying of the Taps." "It's a cry – no words – sound of taps. From the heart, for the fallen warrior."

Tom said the weekend gathering brought back the relationship with Clarence from Vietnam. Meeting his family – how close-knit – their love for Clarence. Seeing fellow vets again. He was touched by the "welcome ness."

J.R. Franklin, a staff sergeant in 1967, now lives in Rego, Kan. He spoke of operating in the Rung Sat, moving inland aboard PAB's (Plastic Assault Boats).

"The VC would mortar the shipping channel (Saigon River) then fall back," he said. "The navy needed the army to go beyond the mangrove-lined channels. It was OJT (on the job training) for us and the VC in 1967. We'd go 3-5 days without resupply – body couldn't take more. After five days we'd lose up to 35 percent of the troops to immersion foot. What we saw as hardship was normal living conditions for the VC in the field."

Franklin, a 3rd platoon squad leader, was in the point element near Clarence on 11 July 1967.

Franklin said, "The Lossing family has made me feel welcome – I was walking on eggshells. I feel responsible for Clarence [his death]. By the end of the afternoon, the day Clarence died, I was ranking NCO."

Franklin was touched by the warmth of the Blackduck community. "This is the America we thought," he reflected.

Frank Lopez, a Sp4 in 1967, now lives in Addison, Ill. He spoke of how tight-knit the company was.

"We trained through boot camp, AIT (Advance Infantry Training), rode the same trains, took the same ship, the USS Pope to Vietnam," he said. "We were a very close, locked union."

In Vietnam, the MRF, Navy, was very valuable to us. I asked Lopez what weekend memory he

would carry home. "Brotherhood – love – security – healing – closure. Clarence was a very loved individual – happy, had the same fears of combat as all of us."

Today Lopez helps veterans. He spoke of how he had recently sent a letter of support for a PTSD claim for an engineman on the USS Benewah, a support ship attached to the MRF.

Jerry Matheis, a sergeant in 1967, now lives in Adams, Minn. He carries an undeserved guilt about Clarence's death. Matheis was in Bearcat, on his way to R&R the day Clarence Lossing was killed. Looking off toward the sky, he said, "Perhaps things would have been different if I'd been there."

Matheis sent me several pages of his journal which have proven invaluable in giving me the feel of the misery the men went through – nights and days in water and mud – no escape, lack of sleep.

An excerpt from Matheis' journal:

"17 June 1967: At 1:00 the moon went under and at 1:30 the VC snuck up to within 25 meters of our positions and set a claymore mine. He blew it and hit one of our men in the 1st platoon. His name was Kretlow, he is a team leader, 1st platoon. I guess that he got it in the leg. He is all right. The claymore just missed Barry Lin by an inch. He was asleep and never woke up when it went off. He woke up later and wondered what happened. We were hearing noises out in front of us. Lossing from Minnesota threw two hand grenades out at the noises. It slowed things down a little."

"Nobody locks their doors – I have a family of new friends," Matheis responded when asked what memories he would take home from the memorial weekend.

Ernie Slavik III, a sergeant in 1967, lives in Antioch, Ill.

"Make sure it's the third, I have a fourth, my son, and a fifth, my grandson," he said proudly.

Silver Star

Slavik often volunteered for point, "because of my outdoor hunting experience." Slavik's exploit deserves an essay of its own. On July 11, he was walking point, several hundred yards ahead of his platoon when he spotted suspicious activity across a dry rice paddy. He moved back to his fire team and on the radio, reported the enemy activity and suggested holding the company in position until he triggered the ambush. Capt. Engeldinger ordered him to move forward, up the left side of the paddy. Slavik moved forward and received fire from a well-concealed bunker approximately thirty yards away.

His Silver Star Award reads:

"Receiving blazing fire from machine guns, rocket launchers, and small arms, Specialist Slavik immediately returned fire killing an insurgent. Seeing that two bunkers in particular were pinning his fire team down, Specialist Slavik courageously charged the enemy fortifications. He bravely ran through a torrent of fire for over 50 meters, shoved the muzzle of his rifle into the firing port of a bunker and fired furiously. Slavik eliminated two insurgents then turned upon the other bunker. He braved steady fire once again, hurling grenades as he dashed toward the automatic weapon. His valiant actions obliterated the fortification that had pinned down his fellow soldiers. Suddenly he faced an enemy soldier who

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Ap Binh Son

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grenades or maybe M79 rounds going off. We froze in our footsteps. Our radio had been clear up to that point. We heard the 3rd squad call the CP wanting to know what was going on. We did the same.

The firefight was a short but intense exchange. Both my squad and 3rd squad were told to ignore the gunfire (we were waved off) and advised that racket was coming from the direction of A Company 2/39th that was also operating in the AO that day. Someone either at Battalion or at the CP surmised that it was A Company out there blowing off some steam. We couldn't confirm that. We were instructed to complete our leg of the patrol as planned. There was little or no radio contact with anyone from that point until the patrol ended.

By 1145 hours, 1st and 3rd squads had reported back to the CP. We sat around and talked about what we had heard. It was more than evident to us that something was very wrong and we were all more than concerned about SGT Soto and his men. After what seemed like hours we were told to saddle up and cover Soto's leaf of the patrol to see if could find them. We immediately took off into the rubber. It was about 1430 hours.

I can't remember how long we had searched the area for sure but I remember being on the back road of the plantation. The rubber trees were to my right and the bush to my left. The sun was bearing down on us. It was scorching hot. There was also something in the air... it wasn't just the unforgettable stench of raw latex... it was fear!

We had come across a group of plantation workers. They were sitting in a group along side the road. I didn't remember ever seeing that many of them working there before at the same time. They were physically shaking, like they were all having drug withdrawal, at the same time. They were chewing beetle nuts, which itself is a narcotic, and smoking their dope too. It was evident they were all scared shitless about something. There was real fear in their eyes. The Romeo squad leader was trying to get some information out of the workers as best he could. We didn't have an interpreter with us so we had no way of interrogating them. We knew the workers were terribly afraid, and that something was wrong, we just didn't have any way of finding out of what.

Long after the fact, having rolled the events of that day around in my mind a hundred times or more, I have come to the conclusion, that the fear we saw in the eyes of the plantation workers was due to their having witnessed what had happened to the 2nd squad. I also believe they knew that we were in the sites of the VC force responsible. They were probably afraid of being caught in the crossfire if the shit hit the fan. The thought also crossed my mind that they could very well have been part of the VC force themselves. Most of them were old men that looked like they wanted to live to be a little older. They appeared harmless enough.

The road we were standing on showed signs of VC traffic. There were directions signs scratched in the dirt ... limbs and branches laid out in patterns that could not be mistaken for

anything other than movement signals. It made the hair, what little of it I had, stand up and tingle on the back of my neck. Personally, I just wanted to get the hell out of there ... and fast ... something wasn't right. I swear we were being watched and possibly within seconds of also becoming among those missing that day.

I surmised that the VC would not have left the signs on the road for a small force. The Romeo squad leader either wasn't sure about the signs or what they meant. Either way, he came to the same conclusion I did, and we left the area unceremoniously and headed back to the CP. We had searched the area in vain. Little did we know that we were within 20-30 yards of the ambush site and the bodies before turning back.

At the CP we sat around waiting for something to happen. We could hear a lot of radio chatter from the squawk boxes in the CP area. Until now we were the only ones to have done anything at all. In late evening several 2 1/2 ton trucks rolled up loaded with troops. The regular daily supply run for the CP was with them. A couple of cooks jumped off the trucks and began to set up the chow line to serve a hot evening meal. There was still no sign of the 2nd squad.

Shortly after the arrival of the trucks, we (the remnants Romeo and Juliet) less the 8 men of Soto's squad, were loaded on to one of them and brought back to the battalion area at Bearcat. We were there just long enough for a shit, shower, shave, and a hot meal. At dusk were loaded back up and trucked out somewhere to the south to do another ambush patrol along VC lane. It was evident that something had gone seriously wrong with SGT Soto's patrol and someone at the Company and Battalion didn't want us around and under foot. We didn't understand why at the time. Would all know soon enough.

I don't remember when exactly it was that we heard that they had found the squad. I want to say 2-3 days but it may have been late the next day. It seemed like forever. Time was a "warp" in Vietnam. I just don't recall. I do remember feeling sick to my stomach and then a fit of rage when I heard the circumstances under which the bodies had been found.

It appeared that the VC had ambushed the 2nd squad midway through the rubber on the back road of the plantation. They were taken totally by surprise. Their bodies had been found riddled with bullets, stripped nude, and it was apparent that their bodies had been brutalized, even after they were dead. The VC had then placed some of the bodies in water filled APC emplacements or ditches, tied together and weighted down with rocks and or pinned down to the bottom of the water filled ditches with stakes. Due to the 1st and 3rd squads being waved off, when the initial firefight was heard, the VC had plenty of time to have their way with SGT Soto and his men. There were signs that a couple of the men had been shot execution style after they were dead.

On September 21st 1967, I was wounded in another action, and put on light duty. I was sent to the 9th Division Reliable Leadership Academy as a student. I was thankful for the opportunity. A few weeks rest. It would prove to be the move that got me off the line for good. I went through the two-week course. It was a piece of cake for me after all the training I had

received on my previous tour in Korea. I graduated as co-Honor Graduate and was retained as an Instructor.

Shortly after being assigned to Reliable Academy, I read a newspaper or magazine article, about that patrol at Ap Binh Son. The article told it like it happened. Unfortunately I can't find the copy I had sent home for safekeeping. Nor can I find anyone else that was on the patrol with me that day. Fortunately, I have been contacted by several men that were detailed to the recovery team that went into the plantation to recover the bodies. Their accounts of the condition of the bodies of our fallen brothers was grizzly to say the least. The memory of the patrol and the sight of "The Wall" further engrave the events of that day in my mind.

As time passes I often wonder why there wasn't any intelligence passed on to us prior to our doing the patrol. Particularly about the possible presence of a significant VC force capable of doing what they did. We didn't have a clue. I understand that Mushrooms are grown much the same way ... by being kept in the dark and fed on shit. We knew the feeling that day.

Sometimes I wonder who was in charge of the CP at plantation that day. I'd like to be able to ask him (them) what was going through their minds when they waved us off while listening to the firefight. There are times I try to rationalize, whether we could have made a difference that day, had we "cut and run" to help, when we first heard the firefight. I think things might have gone down differently if the squads had consisted of all men of Romeo platoon or all of Juliet platoon. We probably wouldn't have radioed the CP at all ... we would have been on our way while the shooting was still going on. Had we been forewarned of VC activity in the area ... we would have known there was trouble and done all we could without hesitation. Some decent intelligence perhaps would have made all of us, particularly Soto and his men, a little more cautious and alert in the execution of the patrol.

In all honesty, I have come to the conclusion that we couldn't have saved the men of 2nd squad that day. They were surely dead by the time the shooting stopped. The best we could have done was made contact with the VC forcing them to leave the bodies where they were. We could have seen to it that Soto and his men had their dignity in death! The VC wouldn't have had the time or opportunity to do anything else to the bodies as they did. I often wondered how the Army explained the condition of the bodies, and the circumstances under which these men died, to the families. For years I could only imagine ... The fact of the matter is that the next of kin were informed that the men had been killed in action. They explained away the condition of the bodies by saying that they the squad had been in the jungle for several days before being found and that they had been ravaged by animals during that time ... The only animals that could have inflicted the damage found on those men were armed with guns, bayonets, knives, and machetes ...

This was written in memory of SGT Bravie Soto, SP4 Edwin P. Prentice, SP4 William T. McDaniel, SP4 Kenneth J. Krause, SP4 Arnold Benson Jr., SP4 Elmer D. Byrd, SP4 Willie L. Jones Jr., and PFC William R. Brennan.

Dedication Reunion

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

was aiming his rifle point blank at Slavik. In complete disregard for his own safety, Specialist Slavik remained in the open and exchanged fire with his adversary, killing the guerilla with a final burst from his weapon."

B Company moved forward to Slavik's position. Heavy enemy fire erupted from the far side of the paddy. Slavik, taking cover behind a large tree, jerked his head back as a sniper's bullet splattered bark in his face. When he turned, he spotted a grenade come hurling in two feet behind Captain Engeldinger and his radioman. They did not see it and could not hear Slavik screaming, "live grenade." Slavik jumped from his cover to get their attention and shouted again as he dove for cover. Engeldinger was wounded in the back when the grenade exploded. Slavik said he would lay down cover-fire so Engeldinger could be assisted back for medical attention. Slavik's M-16 jammed. Out of grenades, he rose from his position and zigzagged, screaming the Vietnamese kill scream, toward the sniper.

"I scared him away," Slavik said, "All I found were some empty shell casings."

He said he'd learned the Vietnamese kill scream in AIT. It was based on the World War II Japanese Banzai scream, designed to terrify the enemy.

Slavik was wounded that day and didn't hear that Clarence had been killed until later in the evening.

"Frank [Lopez] and I often volunteered for point over Clarence," he said wistfully.

When asked what he would take home from the memorial weekend, Slavik said, "His (Clarence's) family was as he so often talked about. His gravestone, touching it gave me a feeling of our closeness. And peace, that he was at rest where he so loved, home in Blackduck."

On 16 July 2010, Ernie Slavik III was awarded a second Silver Star for actions he performed three weeks earlier, on 19-20 June 1967, in Vietnam.

Close Connections

Mike Masello, a sergeant in 1967, now lives in St. Charles, Ill. He was in Dong Tam the day Clarence died. He said the memorial weekend gath-

ering revitalized his friendship with Clarence and the Lossing family. He treasures the camaraderie of Clarence's brothers and family – blessed – brings closure.

Paul Nitzel, a Sp4 in 1967, now lives in Burlington, Iowa. About the memorial weekend, Nitzel said, "This is what America should be about. People here in Blackduck have been open, warm, caring, and generous. They have shared their lives, emotions, and experiences with us. Having spent a couple of days together we are no longer strangers. We (platoon) have a special bond we don't let many others share. The people of Blackduck and the Lossing family are now part of this bond."

Bill Wolters, a SpL4 in 1967, now lives in Eagan, Minn. "It's easy to make friends you'll have forever – Clarence's family – brotherhood."

David Persson, a SpL4 in 1967, now lives in Kennesaw, Ga. On 11 July 1967, he was a squad leader in 1st platoon. He first met Clarence at Fort Riley, Kan., in basic training.

"Clarence was easy to befriend due to his calm demeanor and gentle attitude. He often talked about his family and life at home in Blackduck. Meeting the Lossing family members 43 years later and taking part in the dedication for Clarence is an honor for me."

Ron Hoy, a SpL4 in 1967, now lives in Reseda, Calif. He was touched by the wonderful Lossing family – their warmth. He said about the weekend, "Clarence is smiling down."

As the sun set, after the last veterans of B Company set out for home, I visited with Loren Lossing. In 1967, Loren was in the Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport en route to Vietnam when he heard his brother had been killed in action. His orders were revised and he served out his enlistment at Fort Hood, Texas. Loren said he 1049'd (army jargon for volunteering) for Vietnam but was refused.

Loren gives special credit to Ernie Slavik III, David Persson, and J.R. Franklin for bringing the weekend together. He was humbled, meeting the men Clarence served with – putting faces to the little stories they'd shared with him long distance over the years. And he said the weekend for him was about healing. During the dedication

ceremony, as he stood near his brother's statue, he looked out over the crowd.

"I saw vets standing back, on the periphery of the crowd at the cemetery – holding back – healing for them," he said.

A few weeks after the memorial dedication, my wife and I had dinner with Phillip Bateman, the lieutenant in charge of 3rd platoon the day Clarence was killed, and his wife, in Taos, N.M. Phil reiterated what others had said about Clarence – the dedication to his friends, dependable soldier. Phil said that the day Clarence died, while he and others were taking cover trying to clear their jammed M-16s, Clarence had moved forward to one of the enemy bunkers and stood up, firing over the top of it into the treeline beyond, when he was shot.

The following evening, my wife and I visited Angel Fire Vietnam Veteran's Memorial. It had closed for the day, but as I wandered the grounds, reading tributes to the young Marine lieutenant written by a grieving family, I reflected on the cost of war. I remembered the men from B Company I had recently met, the scars they carry four decades later and the Lossing family for their loss. As Patti and I traveled across this great country, I recalled the panhandlers that approached me wearing shredded fatigue jackets and Vietnam Veteran baseball caps. Sadly, others, younger, wearing faded desert camo have joined their ranks. And I wondered, do politicians, before they send young people to war, consider these ramifications?

Wendell Affield attended high school with Loren and Clarence Lossing. He served in the navy from 1965-1969. In 1966, he did a WestPac tour on the USS Rogers DD 876. On Feb. 1, 1968, he returned to Vietnam as a member of the Mobile Riverine Force, coxwain of Armor Troop Carrier 112-11. He was wounded and medivaced home. "Collateral Damage," published in Vietnam, October 2008. Today, he is retired and lives with his wife, Patti, on a farm in northern Minnesota. Ten years ago he began attending the local university, studying writing. He enjoys writing non-fiction and poetry. He currently has an unpublished memoir, "Muddy Jungle Rivers." He can be reached at affarm@paulbunyan.net.

Sick Call

Member **LT Michael Hahn** just had double by pass surgery, he is now home doing well. But will have a 6 to 7 week recovery period. Mike was operations officer on the USS Benewah 12/66-12/67. You may contact Mike at 112 Escavara Cove, Austin, TX mnhahn@austin.rr.com.

Chaplain Jim Johnson is having some health issue and not feeling up to par. Jim served as Chaplain for the 3rd/60th (HQ/CO) 9th-ID 6/67-4/68. You may contact Chaplain Jim at 2505 Dartmouth Dr. Fayetteville, NC. 28304. gymjimgem@aol.com

Tom Bityk

As you may already know, my battle with Prostate Cancer has been going on since 2003. First they cut it out, then it came back, then there were hormone treatments to put it in remission and then it came back stronger. Then there were more new treatments and then those failed too.

April-May of this year it was discovered the

cancer had moved to my Lymph nodes and 2 golf ball sized tumors were present. By the end of July I was granted a clinical trial of an experimental drug called TAK-700. Unfortunately it came with severe side effects the likes of which I wouldn't wish on anyone and it was 24/7. The times I passed out in discomfort I wished I wouldn't awake.

The first week of October I was taken off that poison because it wasn't working and it was then discovered the cancer had metastasized to my bones, my left leg, back and right shoulder. It was agreed that I would start Chemo Therapy, but first I had to withdraw from the other poison first. The last two weeks of October were unbelievably terrible for me and especially hard on my Deb.

Monday, October 25 I started my first "chemo" treatment. The next 5-6 days were a horse of another color as the chemo started doing its thing to me (thank god for pain meds). I also had to adjust and make changes to my diet to compliment the chemo, so there goes all the good stuff.

Yesterday's appointment showed that my cancer growth had abruptly stopped and my PSA was holding steady at 512.3 (normal is 4.0 or less). I was then prescribed a sleeping pill to get me through the night. I awoke this morning feeling refreshed and alert (I'm a Lert!). I haven't felt this good since before I started that awful TAK-700 back in July and it is also the first time in a long time that I could find the strength to sit upright and write an explanation of what has been going on with me in any sort of detail. I now reflect upon the small things I took for granted. Tom is still doing his Chemo and doing the best he can under the circumstances. Tom served with IUWG-1-1 Vung Tau and NSD Ha Tien 5/69-5/70; Tom at 3121 Kallin Ave., Long Beach, CA 90808; tbityk@charter.net Tom's cancer is Agent Orange related. I wish, hope and pray for a speedy recovery for all our brothers out there who are under the weather, Albert

A Tribute to Commodore Commodore Wade C. Wells, Capt USN, Retired Memories and Sea Stories

By Al Breininger, former LT, USN,
River Assault Division 91 CSO, 1967

In September 1966 I reported for training to Coronado Naval Amphibious Base. It was there that I first saw Capt. Wade C. Wells, USN. He and his staff were busy with the details of establishing the Navy Component of the Mobile Riverine Force. I had no direct contact with him; and upon hearing his "growls" at the staff, wanted none. You see, Captain Wells was a task master – he demanded. He obviously had not been to any sensitivity training. He might be labeled "cantankerous". But correctly, he was the man chosen by the Navy to get a tough job done.

His task in 1966 was to "build" the outfit when the Navy had no funding for the project. Interestingly, the Army anticipated one of its brigades going into the Mekong Delta, and was much better organized in this effort. But, that was not to stop him from completing the task assigned.

In 1968, I was to see, first hand, how he was able to get a job done. Capt Wells was the commanding officer at NIOTC (Naval Inshore Operations Training Center) and I was stationed there as an instructor. He was hosting a conference to set in motion the testing; development of tactics; and deployment of electronic sensors into the Delta. Attending the meeting were people from other parts of the Navy's Washington bureaucracy. As the conference proceeded, Captain Wells pointed his finger at people directing them to go back to their organizations and get what was needed. He was very direct. "You'll get me \$100,000; you'll provide P-3 air support, etc". There was no debate. His stern presence sent the message that you do not refuse him.

On a lighter note, I recall an evening at a party at NIOTC when he clanged a spoon on a glass, stood on a chair and said, "Everyone shut up! I've decided we're having a Christmas Party, and Barbara Breininger is in charge". That was his style. Direct, no questions; just get it done.

In December 1966, while still in Coronado, CA and before deployment to Vietnam, he decided one day that the outfit should have mascots, and within minutes, two junior officers were out in town procuring two miniature dachshund dogs (to be named Lucie, and Linus). Funding??? Who knows – it just got done – I believe from the welfare and recreation fund of the supply officer. In country those dogs received first class care. At the morning briefings on the Benewah, they sometimes wound run loose, and tug at the pant legs of staff seated there. No one dare attempt to stop the dogs, or they would get a tart comment or a harsh look from the Commodore.

During the briefing one morning when the relocation of the mobile base was being discussed, someone mentioned a sandbar that might be problematic for the ships to cross. In the Commodore's eyes there were no obstacles – his response; "Blow them up".

He had a jeep assigned to him when we were initially based off Vung Tau. He commented that he wasn't going to have a "damn olive drab jeep". He wanted it to be Navy Blue. One problem – there was no Navy Blue paint to be had, so the jeep got painted the best blue color available – a light, "powder blue" from the Navy's routine supplies. I guess this was Capt. Well's equivalent of the "pink submarine" that was the subject of movie "Operation Petty Coat".

There were two sides to Captain Wells, and in Vietnam, I only saw the gruff, snarly toned, demanding, "old man". I witnessed him chewing out his Chief Staff Officer one night, and it reinforced that I wanted to keep my distance from him. When I heard him order his supply officer to put on a life vest, and jump off the pontoon alongside the Benewah to see if it worked, I knew my instincts of keeping a low profile were correct. Captain Wells was hard on his staff. I thought one Commander would not make it through the year without a nervous breakdown from the pressure.

But, he loved the boat crews. One day he wanted to see all the boat captains on the Benewah.

We division officers accompanied the boat captains to the Benewah and were quickly told to go to the wardroom and have coffee. He wanted to hear from the boat captains and during the discussion; one mentioned that he had not had ice cream for a long time. Capt Wells asked which ship he was based from, and then told his Chief of Staff to tell the skipper of the Colleton that they were serving ice cream on the mess deck that evening.

It was not until Captain Wells and I were both back at NIOTC after our tours in country that I saw a compassionate, caring side of "the man". Yes, he was demanding, but he cared for his people. No longer did I feel the need to avoid him. When he first saw me after reporting to NIOTC, he greeted me warmly. He provided guidance and encouragement in preparing reports of equipment evaluation tests we performed.

Padre Johnson saw the compassionate side of Capt. Wells in country after our operations as they discussed the loss and injuries of our men. He truly grieved with each one. Yes, under that gruff exterior, was a caring person. He just did not allow himself to display that caring side too often, nor to many people.

Captain Wells honorably served in the Navy in three wars from 1939 until his retirement in 1969. In the Riverine Assault Force Yearbook in 1967 he stated that, "I saw American fight men of great valor and courage (in World War II and Korea). . . I wondered if the American men today (Vietnam) would measure up to those I knew in previous wars. . . You have . . . You are a new breed of U.S. fighting man, the combat sailor, who fights with guts and conviction in close combat against brutal life-snuffing weapons." He was proud of his service, and especially proud of the Mobile Riverine Force.

Now, with fond memories, and great respect, we grieve the loss of this unique person.

Farewell, Commodore. We shall never forget you.



Albert.

I just wanted to comment on your update of the Taps listings. This list of fallen brothers exemplifies the importance for each and every MRFA member to attend the reunions. Our numbers are dwindling as each month passes so we must use every afforded opportunity to share each others memories, friends and families. On my boat alone (CCB-112) four of my brothers have passed on. That's 1/4th of our crew. I urge everyone who can attend our reunions to come and share with each other now, while your health allows it.

—Gary Newman

Recently, Judy Wallace and I have been going through some old Army and Navy rosters, doing searches and trying to find folks that served in the MRF and 9th ID in Vietnam. In doing so, we have come across a number of our brothers who have passed on. It's sad to report we have lost a large number within the last 10 years, and we knew nothing about them. A couple of the Navy rosters I had not looked at since the mid 90's and found way too many who have passed on.

PLEASE NOTE: YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE is printed on your issue of River Currents just above your name and address.

MRFA

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Please Note: This form may be used for New Memberships, Renewals and Changes of Address. Be sure to check the appropriate box.

TAPS *Tribute to a Fallen One*

Commodore Wade C. Wells, Captain US Navy Ret., passed away August 18, 2010 from colon cancer. He also had Alzheimer's. His son said he will be buried at sea. Some of you early boat crew members and ships personnel served under the Commodore 66-67. After he left the MRF he took over the training for future boat crew and officers at NIOTC, Mare Island. He was the first commodore of the MRF, TF-117.

Note from Commodore Wade C. Wells Commander River Assault Flotilla One July 1967. *"In World War II, I saw American fighting men of great valor and courage. I saw the same kind of men in Korea. Before coming to Vietnam I wondered if American men today would measure up to those I knew in our previous wars. In a word you have, you are a new breed of U.S. fighting man, the combat sailor, who fights with guts and convention in close combat against brutal life-snuffing weapons. I have seen few in my Naval career who have pursued and preserved the way you have. Your service is a monument to the freedom for which we fight."*

Commodore Wells U. S. Navy Ret. and Col. Bill Fulton (Lt/Gen) U.S. Army Ret. were known for their courage and leadership ability. They worked together to make the Army and Navy Mobile Riverine Force TF-117 into a superb fighting unit that had no equal then and none today. Albert, MRFA President

Member **Richard Falda** passed away 10/29/2010 from a Aortic Aneurism. Richard served on ASPB-112-6 2/68-2/69. Richard will be buried at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego. You may contact the family c/o Marge Falda, 12921 Oak Knoll Rd., Poway, CA 92064-5621; phone 858-748-8387; or email richmarg72@aol.com. May our brother Richard rest in peace.

Member **Douglas A. Stearns**, 61, died peacefully Monday, October 4, 2010, following a brief illness. While in Vietnam he served with D Company, 4th/47th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division from February 1968 to February 1969. Douglas' second tour of duty was with the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry, First Air Cavalry Division and the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam with Advisory Team 22 and 23 in 1970.

BM1 Albert H. Buster passed away July 6, 2010. Boats Buster served as a Boat Captain on the 1st Medical Boat the MRF had in RivDiv-92, 1966-67. You may contact the family at 2990 Pickering Pl. NE, Bremerton, WA 98310; phone (360) 479-1199.

Member **Karl Ackerman** passed away November, 11, 2009 due to Agent Orange related cancer. Karl served on ASPB-132-4 (RivRon-13) 9/68-9/69. Karl was a friend to everyone he met and over the years helped a number of his fellow veterans. Karl was a plank owner member of the MRFA having joined in 1992 at our Hickory, NC reunion. You may contact the family c/o Leslie Kramer, 86 Newbern Avenue, Medford, MA 02155; lfkrmer@massed.net.

Gary San Sauer (CSSN-Cook) passed away August 21, 2010 from respiratory failure. While in Vietnam he served on the USS Sumner County (LST-1148) from December 28, 1968 to September of 69. He transferred to the USS

Indra (ARL-37) in September of 69 and served on that ship until 21 May 1970. He was on the USS Hunterdon County (LST-838) from June 23, 1970 until September 24, 1970. Gary was discharged from the US Navy on 1 October 1970. You may contact the family c/o R. Cain Sauer (AEC USN Act.), 18219vBauer Road, Lexington Park MD 20653; cain.sauer@gmail.com.

Kevin M. Clifton passed away 2/16/2010. You may contact the family at 6527 Seeley Ave., Chicago, IL 60636. Kevin served on T-92-3 68-69. DOB-18/6/1946. **Ross F. Russo Jr.**, 61, of Dunkirk died Friday morning (Sept. 3, 2010) at Brooks Memorial Hospital in Dunkirk after a courageous battle with cancer. Ross was a U.S. Army veteran, having served two tours of duty in Vietnam as a helicopter crew chief and door gunner with Co. A, 9th Avn. Bn., 9th Inf. Div.

Member **Donald L. Baker** passed away September 30, 2010 Donald served in B Co. 3rd/47th Inf (2/68-3/69). You may contact the family c/o 222 Smalley Blvd. Hamilton, OH 45013; phone 513-896-5509.

Member **Dennis Simpson** passed away from a massive heart attack Dec. 3, 2009. He served with CTF-116 Staff (6/71-6/72). You may contact his wife Anne at 163 Inca Dr. SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49548-7849; phone 616-281-4897.

GMGC Vaughn S. Shuler Jr., U.S. Navy Ret., of Gordonsville, VA died on Wednesday, October 13, 2010, in Saint Joseph, MO. Vaughn served in RivDiv-534 6/68-6/69. Vaughn was a former Vice-President of the East Coast Chapter of the Game Wardens of Vietnam. You may contact the family c/o Theresa Shula 10106 Louisa Rd., Gordonsville, VA 22942; phone (540) 832-3896 or (540) 832-5517.

BM1 James W. Crew Boat Captain A-92-7 (68-69) passed away 31 March 2009 Boats was living in Russell, KY.

Henrietta Queen, wife of George S. Queen BRCM (SW) U.S. Navy Ret. passed away January 28, 2010 after a very long and courageous battle with cancer. Henrietta was great lady and a wonderful and caring Wife, Mother and Grandmother. She will be missed by all who knew her. You may contact Master Chief George S. Queen c/o 3718 Eastman Rd., Randallstown, MD 21133; phone 410-922-2407.

Alan E. Hardtarfer passed away 12/3/2010 he was 69 years old. Alan served in COMRIVRON-11 12/1968-12/1969. You may contact the family c/o 3902 Alameda Dr., San Diego, CA 92103; 619-296-1458. May our shipmate and brother rest in peace.

Member **Russell C. Sprinkle** passed away 12/24/07. Russell served with the 9th Adm 2nd/39th Inf (11/68-08/69). You may contact the family c/o 170 S Bath Ave., Apt. 2, Waynesboro, VA 22980-5053, 540-943-8485.

Chaplain Nathan O. Loesch Commander USNR Ret. passed away on Thursday, November 4, 2010 due to complications from earlier heart problems and a recent fractured leg. Chaplain Loesch served as Chaplain in RivFlat-One 12/67 to 12/68. You may contact the family c/o Maria G. Loesch, 24511 Aguire, Mission Viejo, CA 92692; 949-215-7413; natemeg@cox.net.

In Memory Of

This section is for the members who wish to sponsor the MRFA by placing a notice in memory of one their fallen comrades. In some cases 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 4 issues.

MajGeneral Lucien Bolduc, Jr. USA (Ret) for Guy Tutwiler Bill Brennan for Tom Swanick GMG3 USS White River LSMR-536

Brothers of the 2nd/47th Inf for all Army and Navy KIAs Frank Buck for son Frank H. Buck ENFM USN T-92-10 KIA 12/28/67

Michael Connolly for LTJG James Francis Rost, Jr., RivDiv 132, KIA November 1969

Gene Cooper for Steve Brichford FT2 1968/69 and Jerry Roleofs 1967-68 USS White River LSMR-536

Nan Fulton for LtGen Bill Fulton Cdr 2nd Bde Asst Div Cdr 9th Inf Div (1966-68)

Ray Funderburk for LTC John B. Tower CO 2nd/47th Inf Col Monte G. Euler for Cecil R. Hobbs, Jr. A Co 4th/47th Inf KIA 04/04/68

Regina Gooden for Sgt Lloyd Earl Valentine B Co 3rd/47th KIA September 5, 1968

James Henke, Tony Spradling, Dave Nelson, and the Band of Brothers for Sgt Gerald Thurman A Co 4th/47th 9th Inf (1967-68)

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

Bob Houle CS2 for Larry Hunter CS3 USS White River LSMR-536

John and Barbara Iannucci for Mitchell Perdue B Co. 3rd/60th (01/68-09/68)

David Lynn for Howard Burns (QM2), Robert Bouchet (SM2), and Herman Miller (GM3) IUWG 1-3 Qui Nlon KIA 8/11/68

Men of C Co 4th/47th 1967 for our Brothers KIA 03/19/67 Benito Alaniz; KIA 04/09/67 Ronald P. Schworer; KIA 04/13/67 Charles "Duffy" Black; KIA 05/15/67 Donald M. Peterson; KIA 06/19/67 Robert J. Cara, Robert J.

Jindra, Timothy A. Johnson, Forrest L. Ramos, Cameron A. Rice, David A. Robin, Sheldon B. Schulman, Hubert J. Fink, Kenneth D. Frakes, William M. Geier, John L. Winters; KIA 07/11/67 Marion "Butch" Eakins, Elmer F. Kenney, Harold W. King, Philip A. Ferro, George E. Smith; KIA 07/29/67 Cecil B. Bridges; KIA 09/29/67 James M. Sunday; KIA 10/06/67 Gale A. Alldridge, Danny D. Burkhead, Charles W. Davis; KIA 11/10/67 Charles W. Grizzle; and KIA 05/06/68 John T. Hoskins

Adam Metts for Donald L. Bruckart T-11-2 KIA 03/31/69 A R "Monti" Montillo for William "Bulldog" McLaughlin B Co 3rd/60th KIA 10/03/68 and Barry "Butch" Copp B Co 3rd/60th KIA 10/28/68

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

Jasper Northcutt for SSGT Henry T. Aragon B-2 2nd/47th KIA 08/23/67, SGT James E. Boorman B-2 2nd/47th KIA 08/27/67, SP4 James D. Bronakoski B-2 2nd/47th KIA 04/27/67, SP4 Michael G. Hartnett B-2 2nd/47th KIA 04/27/67, SGT William D. Mize B-2 2nd/47th 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 3/11/67 (first KIA 1st Platoon B Co. 2nd/47th in Vietnam)

Dave Remore for Paco 3rd/60th Inf KIA 05/02/67 and Bandido Charlie 5th/60th Inf KIA 07/30/67

Chet "Gunner" Stanley for all the USN and USA KIAs of the MRFA (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 Frost Vin Te Canal Chau Duc KIA 11/69

Robert Thacker for SFC Earl T. Pelhan Jr. KIA 15th Combat Engineers

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

USS Guide MSO-447 for Shipmate and Brother Harold Foster

Tom White for my brother Mackroy White T-151-4 and A-152-4 (04/68-01/70)

Gary Williams for Dale Winkel C Co. 3rd/60th 9th Inf (01/68-01/69)

CPT Steve Williams in memory of 2LT David George Williams Co A 4th/47th KIA 09/21/67

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 Gary Chapman USS Colleton APB-36 (8/68-8/69)
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 LTC Richard Crotty HHC 3rd Bde, 9th Inf (7/67-7/68)
 William Currier HSB 3rd/34th Arty (11/68-8/69)
 Orville Daley USS Askari ARL-30 (67-68)
 CSM Troy Davis USA Ret. Hq 2nd Bde 9th Sig (11/66-12/68)
 Frank De La Oliva Harbor Clearance Unit One (9/68-6/71)
 Ralph Dean USS Nueces APB-40 (68-69)
 Buddy Deuell, III T-132-8 (5/68-5/69)
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