

River Currents



A PUBLICATION OF
THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE

ASSOCIATION

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WINTER 2006

*A Very Merry Christmas and Happy & Safe Holiday
Season to All from The MRFA Board & Staff!*

DC WREATH LAYING

I want to thank Bob (Doc) Pries, General Doug Smith, and all the other folks involved in making this year's wreath laying at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial a very special event. This was the first time I had been to the Memorial in a few years. We started placing wreaths at the Memorial in 1993 and have done so ever since. For a few years, it seems like we did not have much in the way of attendance. So we slacked off; wreaths were placed each year on Veterans Day by Doc Pries and a few others mostly from the 2nd/47th and their attendance in the last couple years have been a large improvement. The Navy attendance has been down so this year I and a few others went. We are trying to get the Navy attendance back up to where it once was. We did have a few more Navy attendees this year than usual but we are still not where we need to be.

Doc Pries has been our savior and has done a great job in keeping the flame going, but we need to give Doc more assistance with attendance on both the Navy and Army side. As we get older, we all look back and think of our past, about Vietnam, and the brothers

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL, VETERAN'S DAY, WASHINGTON, DC

we lost. Although we will never see them again, the Vietnam Memorial is the closest thing we have to being with them once again and honoring them for their sacrifice. If you have never been to the Vietnam Memorial or a wreath laying ceremony, it is done with pride, distinction and honor for all our fallen comrades.

I, for one, plan on being at the Vietnam Memorial on Veterans Day for the wreath laying ceremony as long as possible. It's a very special time at a very special place. You do not have to stay at the hotel where the Association stays. It's your choice where you stay. The day and time you attend is also your call. Even if you just show up for the wreath laying, you will enjoy the camaraderie of your fellow veterans as we pay honor to our brothers of Vietnam. You will not be disappointed. Thanks Doc for all you have done from all the Soldiers and Sailors of the MRFA and 9thInfDiv. It's very much appreciated.

Albert

**MORE PHOTOS
INSIDE!**



FROM THE GALLEY

ALBERT MOORE, MRFA PRESIDENT

Reunion 2007

Reunion 2007 will be held at the Adams Mark by the Airport, 2544 Executive Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46241, Thursday, August 30, until check-out Sunday, September 2. Members may make reservations starting September 6, 2006. Room rates will be \$79 a night. To make your own reservations, call the hotel at 317-248-2481. Be sure to mention you're making your reservations under the Mobile Riverine Force Association. For more information on the hotel, contact Angela Jordan, Convention Service Manager 1-317-381-6107 or e-mail ajordan@adamsmark.com. Check them out on the web: www.adamsmark.com. Be sure to choose the Indianapolis Adams Mark.

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The Wreath ceremonies were done in an excellent manner and with honor and dignity shown to our fallen brothers. Bob "Doc" Pries, General Doug Smith and all our brothers of the 2nd/47th infantry should be honored as well for keeping the wreath laying tradition alive and well over the years. Bravo Zulu to all who took part.

- Albert Moore, MRFA President

2007 Events

Registration starts at 9:30 a.m. Thursday, August 30th and 9:30 a.m. Friday, Aug. 31st.

Large Hospitality Room with snacks, beverages 9:30 a.m. daily.

Product Sales Large Hospitality Room 9:30 a.m. daily.

Golf at Winding River Golf Course Friday morning, Aug. 31st.

Pig Out Friday at 1700 August 31st.

Guest Speakers after Pig Out.

Memorial Service at 9:00 a.m. Sept. 1st.

From the Delta to the DMZ Dance with DJ from 8:00 until ??, Sept. 1st.

Raffles Daily

More on these events in upcoming issues of *River Currents*.



Gold Star Wife Kathryn Goudelock, LTG Pat Hughes, Andy Brigante, Doc Chuck Beyers, Cal Meyer.

VETS REMEMBERING VETS

A Tribute to David Squires by Medic Charles Byers

It is with a great deal of honor, pride, and yes sadness that I stand before you and pay special tribute to one man, one soldier, who had impacted my life with his untold heroism and ultimate sacrifice. Davis Ray Squires from Louisville, Kentucky. An Army Spec 5 who was stationed in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968 as a Medic with Charlie, 2nd/60th, 9th Infantry Division. On June 3, 1968, David and I were assisting the Battalion Surgeon in sick bay. We were sent back to the rear area since we were to go home in less than 2 weeks. I received a call that our unit Charlie Company was under heavy fire and taking heavy casualties and that I was to set up a forward aid station with extra medical supplies. Right away David volunteered to go with me and I told David that he was going home in 9 days and I would find someone else, he insisted that these were his men that he had served with and that he owed them and he wanted to be with them now. I gave in, and we were picked up by a helicopter and transported to the area. We were dropped into the wrong area and the wrong unit, a company with the 2nd/39th had walked into an ambush and suffered many casualties. I was kneeling down working on a third soldier when I was shot in my left arm. I remember crawling as heavy gunfire erupted all around me. I was able to make it out finally to a staging area to evacuate the wounded. I was airlifted out and treated in a Field Hospital and flown to Japan for surgery the next day. I never saw David again. It wasn't until I was in a hospital in Japan that I found out about David and his ultimate sacrifice for his Country. In the past 37 years, a day does not go by that I don't think about David and how I could have been a little stronger in my decision. But finally I have realized that it was his decision to go, and it was his destiny. I'm here to pay tribute to David and all the Davids that have served our Nation and have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Thursday, November 3rd, 2005.

Jim Stone Remembers

Charlie Byers was a medic with the 2nd/60th BN in May and June 1968 and went out into the field during the battles that were fought on June 1 and June 3. The 2nd/60th was under the operational control of the First BDE for that operation. According to one report that I had, there were 42 KIAs and more than 112 WIAs during that operation (in two battles on the 1st and 3rd). Most of the KIAs were from the 2nd/39th BN. I'm not sure what part Charlie and the 2nd/60th medics played on June 1,

Silver Star Ceremony for Charles Byers

On Sa., Oct. 14, 2006, Medic Charles Byers received a long overdue Silver Star for his actions taken during the operation aboard the USS New Jersey BB 62.

MRFA member and 9th Infantry Rich Kane was able to make the Ceremony and informed Charles he was attending as both as a former 9th ID Soldier and a member of the MRFA to salute him for his bravery and congratulate him on his receipt of this long delayed Silver Star. Rich found Charlie to be a nice modest guy who very much deserved the first class award ceremony conducted on his behalf on the quarterdeck of the New Jersey.

Rich Kane served with B 4th/47th Inf and D/5th/60th 9th Inf Div 69-70. The New Jersey is located on the Camden Waterfront in NJ.

From the Galley

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2007 Hospitality Rooms

Want more info on booking an individual hospitality room? Contact Angela Jordan, Convention Service Manager at 317-381-6107 or e-mail ajordan@adamsmark.com. If Angela is not in, contact Reggie Vaughn, Sales Manager at 317-381-6127 or e-mail rvaughn@adamsmark.com.

Free Shuttle Service

The Adams Mark has free shuttle service to and from the airport. To phone the hotel for shuttle service, look for the bank of phones in the baggage area.

There is also shuttle service to and from the downtown area. Scheduled times the shuttle will leave the hotel will be in the upcoming issues of *River Currents*.

Fishing Trip 07 Reunion

Member Jim Grooms is setting up a day of fishing at one of the local fishing ponds or lakes. Jim has found a number of good spots. Now he needs to know how many of you would be interested. You may contact Jim at 3137 Braeburn Pl., Highlands Ranch, CO 80126; 303-683-9224 or e-mail jimgrms@yahoo.com.

but I know that Charlie, SP5 David Squires, and the BN Surgeon Dr Joe Ritcherle came out to the battle site on June 3rd and helped save our (Alpha 2/39 and Echo 2/39 Recons) asses. One of our medics (from A Co. 2nd/39th) was dead and most of the others were wounded. I was assisting David Squires when he was shot in the head and died on June 3, 1968. David was put in for the Medal of Honor, but received the DSC instead.

Jim Stone served in Echo 2nd/39th Recon (2/68-2/69)

Do You Remember?

by Gerald E. Barney

1 This happened at our arrival in-country, while enroute via Route 15 in an area secured by the 1st Australian Task Force. The Vietnamese children along the route were yelling "Number 1, Number 1," much to our disappointment! As we were the 9th Division and we knew the 1st ATF was guarding the way. So being the FNGs in-country, we began to yell "No, No, Number 9, Number 9." Of course it took a 1 ATF Sergeant, with tears in his eyes because he was laughing so hard, to bring us back to our senses with an explanation that "Number 1" meant Number 1 GI and the Number 10 meant NO GOOD.

2 Upon arrival at Camp Bear Cat, I was called in by our Lieutenant who proceeded to explain to me how I had been volunteered and that I was about to receive one of the most important assignments of my young career. He "painted" this picture of my task with great care, even explaining if I had to use any ammo on this adventure, I would be held accountable. He then marched me to the target site that turned out to be a ¼ ton trailer dripping some type of liquid from it. "My God," I thought, "I'm going to be killed by radioactivity on my first day in-country." Then the lieutenant stepped back several paces and ordered me to throw back a corner of the tarp. Much to my surprise, the trap was covering a "ton" of various beers in ice!! My job? To keep the two legged rats from it, so the Company Commander could present his troops with a surprise later that evening.

3 Remember the apparent tear gas attack on Camp Bear Cat in early '67? Well, I certainly do! There I was doing my duty for my country, pulling KP, and went to toss some used #10 cans into the trash barrel. How was I to know some yo-yo had placed a torn bag of powder in the barrel before I got there? When my #10 cans hit the powder, it exploded into my first nightmare. I remember being blinded and staggering towards a "water buffalo" (portable water type). By the time I had half drowned myself and flushed my eyes enough to partly see again, the whole camp was on full alert to stop the impending attack! My second nightmare was explaining how I was just an innocent GI in this scenario.

Indianapolis Convention Bureau

For more info on the Indianapolis area, please feel free to contact Paul Williams, Meeting and Sales Manager at the Indianapolis Convention & Visitors Bureau by calling 800-956-INDY, or e-mail: pwilliams@indianapolis.org; or visit www.indy.org.

The Battle of Xuan Loc

Mar 17-Apr 17, 1975 and The End

Xuan Loc was the last major battle for South Vietnam. It sits astride Q. L. (National Road) #1, some 40 odd miles to the northeast of Saigon (on the road to Phan Thiet), and was the capitol of South Vietnam's Long Khanh province. The NVA (North Vietnamese Army) attack fell on the ARVN (Army Republic of Vietnam) 18th Division.

On 17 Mar 75, the NVA Sixth and Seventh Divisions attacked Xuan Loc but were repulsed by the ARVN 18th. On 9 Apr 75, the NVA 341st Division joined the attack. After a 4,000-round-artillery bombardment, these three divisions massed, and, spearheaded by Soviet tanks, assaulted Xuan Loc; but again the ARVN 18th held its ground. The NVA reinforced with their 325th Division and began moving their 10th and 304th Divisions into position. Eventually, in a classic example of the military art of "Mass and Maneuver," the NVA massed 40,000 men and overran Xuan Loc.

During this fight, the ARVN 18th had 5,000 soldiers at Xuan Loc. These men managed to virtually destroy 3 NVA Divisions, but on 17 Apr 75 sheer numbers and the weight of the "Mass" overwhelmed them. Before overrunning Xuan Loc, the NVA had committed six full divisions, plus a host of various support troops.

In the *Sorrow of War*, author and NVA veteran Bao Ninh writes of this battle: "Remember when we chased Division 18 southern soldiers all over Xuan Loc?, My tank tracks were choked up with skin and hair and blood, and the bloody maggots, and the fucking flies, and I had to drive through a river to get the stuff off of my tracks." He also writes "After a while, I could tell the difference between mud and bodies, logs and bodies. They were like sacks of water. They'd pop open when I ran over them. Pop! Pop!"

The Mining of Tango 112-7

The Flotilla's loss was the costliest day in the first 13 months of operations in Vietnam. It was Thursday, March 13, 1968, as ATC-112-7 was operating with Commander River Assault Eleven in I Corps. Six crewman were killed when (ATC) Tango-112-7 hit an estimated 500 pound mine while minesweeping in the Thach Han River in I Corps. The explosion flipped the boat upside down, causing extensive damage and throwing the crew overboard. The blast occurred at 0719 Thursday as the boat was minesweeping in front of a convoy making the transit between Cua Viet on the coast and the supply center at Dong Ha. Heavy damage to the bow and starboard side left the boat a total loss.

Six KIAs T-112-7: BM1 Edward J. Hagl (Boat Captain; McAllister, MT; was Posthu-

mously awarded the Silver Star. He succeeded in leading the convoy 5 miles of hostile waters before his boat detonated the mine.); EN3, Frankie R. Johnson (Toppenish, WA); BM3 Ernest W. Wigglesworth, Jr. (Greensboro, NC); FN Eugene Nelson (Lug Off, SC); SN Robert W. Crawley (Butte, MT); and SN Joseph S. Perysian (Oak Lawn, IL).



L to R: Ernie Wigglesworth (KIA), Robert Crawley (KIA), Ron Pierce, Eugene Nelson (KIA), Frankie Johnson (KIA) and Ed Hagl (KIA).



Our visit to American Legion Post #85 in Arlington over Veteran's Day. Gunner presented the post with an MRFA poster and we inducted a whole new group of honorary "River Rats"!



Kokomo Reunion 06

MRFA VP Roy Moseman and Rich Corrick with the Memorial Trailer at festivities in Athens, GA.



Together Again After 37 Years

by Phil Ferrara pferrara65@comcast.net

In May 2006, I got together with Nick Miller, who was formerly CSO for River Division 152, while I was formerly CO of River Division 151 back in 1968 and 69. We were in Annapolis, Maryland, doing the annual Chesapeake Bay Bridge Walk, wherein 20,000 people hiked across the bridge for a Sunday tradition and the bridge is closed for the hike. We had not been in contact for the intervening 37 years.



Nick Miller (left) and Phil Ferrara (right).

Seeking

Regina Gooden is seeking anyone who knew and served with her husband Sgt. Lloyd Earl Valentine who drowned 9/5/68 while serving in B/CO/3rd/47th 9th Inf Div. Lloyd was from Unionville, Missouri. He served in B CO from 11/26/67 to 9/5/68. Anyone who knew Sgt. Lloyd Valentine, please contact Regina Gooden, 30345 Peach Ave., Bloomfield, IA 52537; or via e-mail regjo50@netins.net.



Pacific Stars and Stripes Information for 2/47 Inf. IIFV Event Tet 68 at Long Binh Feb. 9, 1968

This information was supplied by Les Hines
2/47 Infantry was a U.S. Army unit
IIFV was also a U.S. Army unit
Primary service involved: U.S. Army
Bien Hoa Province, III Corps,
South Vietnam
Location: Long Binh

The following is an edited version of an article titled "Battle of 'Widows' Village" 47th Inf. Fights Off Red Attack.

Some of the most vicious fighting during the recent Tet Offensive raged in the village of Khu Gia Vien, across Highway 1 from Long Binh. Reaction forces of the 9th Inf. Div. engaged an enemy force and prevented it from breaking into the headquarters compound of the II Field Force Vietnam.

Long Binh (IO) - They call it "Widows' Village." It's inhabitants, the families of deceased Vietnamese Army men, live peacefully on pensions and proceeds from washing clothes for Americans. On Jan. 31, this placid community was turned into a blazing battleground when elements of the 88th NVA Regt. swarmed into the streets and opened fire on II Field Force Vietnam headquarters. The 60-man enemy force used new AK47 assault rifles and RPG2 rocket launchers. As the first rockets landed near one of the II FFV perimeter bunkers, attacks were also launched on the Bien Hoa Air Base and the Long Binh ammunition dump. A platoon of the 2nd Mechanized Bn., 47th Inf. attached to II FFV headquarters, attempted to counter the enemy fire, but was beaten

back after losing an armored personnel carrier and three men. While the enemy fire pinned down U.S. troops defending the headquarters area, Bangalore torpedoes designed to blast holes in barbed wire were being readied for launching into the compound. The final enemy push began as the recon platoon of the 2nd/47th joined a platoon from B Co. 2nd/47th, and rolled into the fight from Highway 1. Elements of the invading force were trapped along a narrow street as the APCs roared into the village, machine guns blazing. Enemy bodies soon littered the street and ditches. The fighting eased by noon, but a small enemy force remained in the village. At almost 1:30 p.m. U.S. helicopter gunships began pounding the uncleared area in preparation for a final sweep by the infantrymen. The Reds fired at the helicopters, exposing their positions to ground troops, and resistance was crushed within an hour with 50 enemies killed and 10 captured.

Vietnam and the American Fighting Man

by Mike Rice RM Dong Ha River Security Group, Cau Viet 1967

Vietnam. To the American fighting man here, half a world from home, the name means many things, almost none of them good.

It means the farthest place to those he loves. It means the CLOSEST place to death. It may mean a rice paddy where he lost his best friend. It does mean a war in which he most surely and quickly lost the remnants of his boyhood.

It would be cruel enough without war. For Vietnam is stagnant rice paddies, red clay gumbo, prehensile jungles vines, or draught and monsoon and flood. It is a country of two seasons, hot and dry, and hot and wet, or mixed, for as one GI complained, "This is the only place in the world where you can be shoulder deep in mud and have dust blowing in your face at the same time." It is the residence of the inch-long red ant, the Malaria mosquito, the bamboo flea, the bamboo viper, the Russell viper, pit viper, cobra, bonded krait, four-inch long cockroaches, and a couple of snakes that perform under the aliases of Mr. Two-Foot and One Step Charlie. Needless to say, all poisonous spiders, lizards, rats, bats, leeches, flies, and a million other insects, no two alike, thrive here. So does Malaria, Jungle Rot, Typhus, Fungus, Immersion Foot, Dysentery, Pneumonia, Sunburn, Heat Prostration, Tuberculosis, Leprosy, and a couple other Asiatic ailments we haven't quite put a handle on yet.

They thrive, all of them, but, miraculously, so does the spirit of that amazing being, the American Fighting Man. Every day he meets the challenge of the cruel and agonizing war. He survives. He even triumphs. And what he has to go through, few civilians know. And NO ONE knows who has not been to Vietnam. General Ei-

senhower, in another war, once explained as a war correspondent, "I get so eternally tired of the lack of understanding of what the infantry soldier endures. I get so fighting mad because of the general lack of appreciation of real heroism that is the uncomplaining acceptance of unendurable conditions."

The statement could have waited for a more appropriate war; this one.

The many muddy front lines in Vietnam may complain, but it is health, time-honored fashion of the GI gripe. And the GI does accept the endurable. He accepts 18-hour workdays with no women, booze, or overtime pay. And he accepts the million other little bitternesses of Vietnam. The Hal ozone tablet in a canteen of rice paddy water, the bites and stings of insects, the grime, the dirt, the dust, the mud, the kind of sweat that you bleed. He accepts the facts of rotting wrist-watch bands, a "Dear John" letter, reconstituted milk, canned meat, three salt tablets a day, last chance at the c-rations, and WARM beer. He hears Hanoi Hannah reading our casualty reports each night over Radio Hanoi. Sees his friends fall in battle, and he endures the sight of a mortally wounded child, the cries of pain and "MEDIC" and "CORPSMAN," the smell of Death and the taste of FEAR, the prospect of the next patrol, the RAWEST emotions of the battle, and his own dreams. For Vietnam is all these things.

And it is mumbled prayers under the sound of incoming artillery and learning to laugh at things that aren't really funny. It is the fears and doubts about yourself in battle, because you know if you stop to think about it then during battle it could get you killed. It is wanting a WAR STORY



without having to live it, and then living it and not wanting it. It is the PHONY war story every man despises and the war story too TRUE to ever be told. It is the fear of cowardice and fear of courage.

The American Fighting Man endures all of these and performs everything his country asks of him. For the task, he fuels himself in Courage and Selflessness and Dedication and a Camaraderie that no one who shares will EVER really find anywhere else again, and he gets along on the most simple and pathetic, most God-awful seemingly unimportant pleasures: the sweat wrinkled photograph of a loved one, the sight of Saffron yellow mail bag and a letter from home or a letter simply addressed to "A fighting man in Vietnam," a clear stream with no leeches, or a night's sleep in a real bed. He cherishes hot chow, cold beer, or a cool breeze, or the reminder of home, a USO show, a circled date on a short-timer's calendar, a favorite tune over Armed Forces Radio, or a week-old copy of Stars and Stripes reassuring him that America still exists, his satisfaction is a burst of insect repellent on a leech's back or a dry cigarette.

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American Fighting Man

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And there is humor, even here, not side-splitting humor, but humor that fights the grimness and makes it bearable. "Didja' hear? A couple mosquitoes landed over at DaNang Air Base the other day and a Ground Support pumped 50 gallons of AVGAS into them before they realized they weren't F-4s", or "Hot Damn! Only 300 days and a wake-up, I'M SHORT." "It must be Sunday, they're feeding us Malaria pills again." And humor sprouts in the signs that GIs brand their whereabouts, "No one DARE mortar this place and end all the confusion." On a roadside, "Drive carefully, the life you save may be your replacement." On the fuselage of an ancient C-47 transport, "Trans Paddy Airways" or outside a Marine's tent in Chu-Lai, "Chu-Lai Hilton, VACANCY." or on the side of a C-123 used to spray defoliant, "Remember only you can prevent forests," and a much in evidence bumper sticker, "Support your Fighting Men in Vietnam."

There is a slang in his speech. His dangerous, merciless adversary, the Viet-Cong (VC or Charlie in military phonetics), becomes simply CHARLIE or OLD CHARLIE. And a little Vietnamese street urchin becomes CHARLIE-SAN; though they usually rate the affectionate GI pat on the head with the term, unless one has just run by and stolen your wrist watch. Then you grab them by the neck. Even though billets, hootches, and tents are papered with Playboy foldouts, the memory of American womanhood is distant in his mind; to be referred to as Round Eyed, Smooth Legged Woman who exists in the Land of the Big PX is about all that is spoken. Air mattresses become rubber ladies, Piasters become "P'Z", Military Pay Certificates become Funny Money, replacements become Turtles (because they take FOREVER to get here), and an enemy-infested jungle becomes "VC National Forest." Fighting men are Jet Jockeys, Groundpounders, Grunts, Snuffies, River Rats, Stump Jumpers, Straightlegs, and Saigon Warriors depending on their unit, rating/or assignment. Montagnards, Tribesmens, Yards, and the enemy become (besides Charlie) Congs, Gooneys, Ho's Boys, or simply "The Bad Guys," and Charlie gets either Greased, Zapped, Zonked, Massaged, or simply Blown Away. Jets are referred to as Birds, Prop airplanes as Spads, Scooters, or Tinkertoys. Snakes are Mr. No Shoulders.

And there is the Thousand-yard Stare in a Ten-Foot Room and the Million-Dollar Wound (just serious enough to earn a ride Stateside). There is, too, a less imaginative Alphabet Soup of letter abbreviations that lubricate the Language and Paperwork. Samples: WIA (Wounded In Action), DMZ (De-Militarized Zone), LZ (Landing Zone), FAC (Foreword Air Controller), and so on. Through VC, Ks, PAVNs, ARVN, MACV, TAOR, MPCs, and a thousand OTHER

combinations and alphabetum. There was a favorite phrase, in Vietnamese, "Xin Loi," which means *sorry 'bout that*." It is employed for every stumble, oversight, and injustice, burp, or blister, or disaster. "Xin Loi" may be the last words Charlie ever hears. And finally, everything succumbs to a GI rating system of Number One (Satisfactory) and Number TEN (Unsatisfactory). There are no numbers in between. No GI wants any. In a Gray, confusing WAR, it's nice to deal in BLACKS and WHITES again.

So WHO is the remarkable American our country has sent to Vietnam? Who is this guy we pay the lavish sum of \$65 extra a month and even forgive the trouble of filling out Income Tax forms, for what can only be the most underpaid work in the world? He is the BATTLEWISE Non-Com on his second tour of his third WAR. But mostly, he's a YOUNG American (some COMBAT UNITS average 18 years of age) who would prefer to be back home doing other things, but who by chance of history is here. He VOLUNTEERED or by lack of a deferment was DRAFTED, but he is here because he LOVES his country. By all accounts and opinions, he is the SMARTEST, STRONGEST, BEST TRAINED, MOST SPIRITED, and COMPETENT Fighting Man our country has ever sent to war ANYWHERE. He is YOUNG and he is OLD beyond his years because this war is a CRAM COURSE in Maturity and Survival. Experts marvel at him. "In 60 years of Soldiering and watching Soldiers," writes Military Affairs specialist S.L.A. Marshall, "I have never seen higher morale than that of the U.S. men in Vietnam. Their main gripe is that the enemy is loath to come out of hiding. Their aggressiveness arises from pride in their unit. They bond with their buddies, and wish to get the job over and have an unfaltering belief in the rightness of their task." General William C. Westmoreland, Commander of American Forces in Vietnam, calls him flatly, "The finest fighting man our country has ever produced." There is a Sacred Brotherhood among Combat Vets. There does not have to be speaking or organized gatherings there is merely that look when eyes meet and you just KNOW. *Understand and LOVE your Vietnam Vet after what he has been through, he needs that above all else.*

Report to LTG Fulton on Riverine Communications 1973

by Nathan Plotkin LTC, USA (Ret)

In 1973, I received a call from LTG Fulton in which he asked for a review of communications in a riverine environment for a report he was preparing for the Chief Signal Officer, LTG Myers. LTG Meyers used this report for a book he was writing titled Division Level Communications 1962-73 that was later published by DA. I had retired several months earlier and was in grad school when I wrote the enclosed report. It was typed by one of the secretaries in the ROTC Department at the University so it had a few errors, and I did not have time to wait for a corrected copy.

At the time, I was also thinking of the men who made the communications work. Therefore, I mentioned the names of everyone I could remember, while thinking of all the men who contributed to the success of the communications operations during the time I was with the MRF. They were the pioneers, nobody had come before, and those were the men who made it work.

When we were informed that the 2nd Brigade would probably be the Army element of the Riverine Force, we all faced an unique experience. All of the material such as SOPs and communications plans that had been so laboriously prepared would now have to be evaluated for applicability in a unknown element called riverine operations.

LT Jim Now, the Communications Platoon Leader, and SFC Archer, the Communications Chief, had been assigned to the Brigade since activation. LT Now had completed most of the work required for publication of the Brigade Standing Signal Operating Instructions prior to arrival in July 1966. He had also programmed the school, training of a number of men to fill positions in the Brigade, and was attempting to run a training program with the few men remaining. This was especially difficult since he also had requirements to support the Infantry battalions' training program, services and test new equipment, and perform several additional duties for HQ & HQ Company.

SFC Archer also performed a variety of

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Beautifully Stated

by Member Phil Mohler

As we grow up, we learn that even the one person that wasn't supposed to ever let you down probably will. You will have your heart broken probably more than once and it's harder every time. You'll break hearts too, so remember how it felt when yours was broken. You'll fight with your best friend. You'll blame a new love for things an old love one did. You'll cry because time is passing too fast, and you'll eventually lose someone you love. So take too many pictures, laugh too much, and love like you've never been hurt because every sixty seconds you spend upset is a minute of happiness you'll never get back.

Don't be afraid that your life will end, be afraid that it will never begin.

USN and the MRFA Honor a Fallen Shipmate Where the Past Meets the Present

by Joe Rosner

Building 178 is called Hagl Hall and it is located on "main side" of the Naval Station Great Lakes. In 1971, the Navy named the barracks Hagl Hall to honor a fallen sailor, BM1 Edward J. Hagl, a Silver Star recipient. He is one of ours. BM1 Hagl served as Boat Captain of T-112-7.

It was 35 years ago, Mrs. Grace Hagl, widow of BM1 Hagl, was the guest of honor at the recruit review graduation on November 19, 1971. A Silver Star was

Hagl Reintsma, Diana McFeters, Mark Riley, and Brandon's girl friend, Kimber Suek – it was a memorable day, especially at Hagl Hall.

Today, Hagl Hall is used by the Recruit Division Commander for the NAVET/OSVET program, a barracks that the Navy uses for the indoctrination of prior military personnel wanting to service again. The prior service personnel wanting to serve again come from all branches of the military.

For you Army types in the MRFA, Great Lakes Naval Recruit Training Command (RTC) in Illinois is the central processing location for naval recruits. Approximately 50,000 recruits pass through Great Lakes RTC annually with an estimated 15,000

recruits onboard the installation at any time and is the third largest base in the Navy.

Not long before the Pass-In-Review on November 3rd, our National President, Albert Moore, received a message from FC1 (SW) Michael D. Boyd of RTC Great Lakes. Petty Officer Boyd was given a task to update the quarterdeck at Hagl Hall. He asked the MRFA for assistance. It all stemmed from Mrs. Hagl's request to visit Hagl Hall during her grandson's graduation.

Hagl Hall had several photographs, but mostly they were of present day naval ships and other assets, a photograph of BM1 Hagl and the Silver Star citation was and continues to be in place since the dedication 1971. FC1 Boyd wanted photographs of our boats especially T-112-7. A call went out via the web ring and the Navy received several photographs and other items to transform the quarterdeck. MRF posters, photographs and MRFA coins were sent to PO1 Boyd. In addition, a US flag was sent for a short but meaningful presentation. FC1 (SW) Michael D. Boyd did a great job with the task of gathering, framing, and positioning the photographs and posters plus, the logistics of coordinating two separate parties for this special Navy/MRFA presentation. Bravo Zulu Petty Officer Boyd!

For the MRFA presentation, Grey "Doc" Rather, a retired Master Chief, dressed in his blues and medals – he impressed many with his uniform particularly his many awarded ribbons and medals – Doc, don't stand too close to any magnetic fields. Doc Rather presented a US flag that was placed

in a raised shadow box with an engraved plaque stating: In Memory of BM1 Edward J. Hagl, Mobile Riverine Force Association. There's more to this part of the story particularly the US flag Gunner Stanley sent us, but you will have to come to our next reunion to get the rest of the story. Let me put it this way, it was another fine example of Navy ingenuity.

After the presentation at Hagl Hall, Grace and her family were invited to join the guys from the MRFA on a special tour of USS Trayer, Battle Stations 21.

James McHugh Construction Company is leading a design-build team to create this \$82 million, ultra-high tech training simulator, unprecedented in scope and detail, at Great Lakes. Melding the best of the very different disciplines of entertainment technology, military training and design and engineering, Battle Stations 21 includes a replica of a guided missile destroyer, surrounded by water. In a grueling, 12-hour training rite of passage, naval recruits will experience the sights, sounds and even smells of naval operations and crisis situations. With the facility to be used around the clock by up to 352 recruits at a time, durability, traffic flow and attention to detail took on added importance. McHugh's fourth project at Great Lakes, Battle Stations 21 is slated for completion in February 2007. Special thanks go to everyone involved at McHugh particularly, Project Manager, Brian Anson, for his time and special attention to our group. It was a great tour! It seemed like everyone enjoyed it. If you ever get the chance to see Battle Stations 21, don't miss it. Although the project is roughly 85% completed, James McHugh Construction Company is doing a fantastic job.

Grace Hagl and her family seemed to enjoy the day. We got a chance to honor a hero of our past, meet and have fun with good people of our present, and got a glimpse of an ultra-high tech training simulator that will be used in the future.



MRFA Members attending Hagl Ceremony: L-R Harry Hahn, John McLaughlin, Grey (Doc) Rather, Joe Rosner, Chuck Baron.

awarded to BM1 Edward J. Hagl posthumously for his action in Quang Tri Province, Vietnam, while he was assigned convoy duty, escorting boats carrying vital supplies from Cua Viet to Dong Ha. BM1 Hagl's citation reads, "Having full knowledge that his boat could mine sweep only for command-detonated mines, and realizing that he had no means of coping with either magnetic or contact mines, he unhesitatingly directed his boat and led the convoy through an area that had been the scene of numerous enemy ambushes and minings."

BM1 Hagl succeeded in leading the convoy of boats through five miles of hostile waters before a mine destroyed his Tango boat killing six of a crew of seven on March 14, 1968. The citation also reads, "His gallant actions enabled the remaining sweep and security boats and the logistic convoy to safely transit this dangerous area and successfully deliver their vital cargo to Dong Ha. Petty Officer Hagl's leadership, courage, and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Back in 1971, BM1 Hagl's parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. Hagl of McAllister, MT attended the dedication along with Mrs. Grace Hagl, and his son, Edward Jr., age 8. Hagl was also survived by two daughters, Diana, age 5 and Debra, age 4.

On November 3, 2006 Grace Hagl attended another recruit review graduation, but today's recruit graduation is known as Pass-In-Review. It was Recruit Review Graduation Divisions 373-384 and 950 on the 3rd. This time Grace proudly watched her grandson, Brandon Reintsma, Pass-In-Review. She came with Edward, Jr., Debra



Front (L-R) Widow Grace Hagl, daughter Debra Hagl Reintsma, Son Edward J. Hagl Jr.; Back (L-R) Daughter Diana McFeters, Grandson Brandon Reintsma

Rodger Auld Remembers the Mining

I remember the incident in which our six brothers lost their lives. We were doing a minesweeping run from Cua Viet to Dong Ha that morning and all boats had their drag gear trailing from behind them trying to pick up any command-detonating cables that Charlie had laid out to any mines. This was done to protect the supply boats going to Dong Ha that were coming up the river after us. T-112-7 was the lead boat in the right column and T-112-9 was the second boat in the left column near the left bank of the small river. The coxswain's flat armor plates were down when I was driving Tango-9 and I was just shooting the breeze with our radioman, Tom Hinton. When I looked straight at Tango-7, who was about to pass this small island that stuck out in the Cua Viet River, that's when the mine went off. There was this loud explosion and a huge spray of water that completely engulfed Tango-7 so you could not see it. When the water spray subsided, Tango-7 was upside

down with her screws still slightly turning.

All the other boats came to an immediate halt and tried to reel in our drag gear without it getting caught up in the screws. We could not effectively maneuver with the cable out. The medic evac boat came up to T-112-7 and the corpsman jumped on to the beach of the island because one of the crew had been blown off into the water at the beach. He was the only survivor who happened to be on the back of the boat taking a leak. Most of the bodies were recovered from the boat except two, who were later recovered. The EOD team informed us that it was probably a 750-lb mine that Tango-7 had struck.

It was several days later that we learned that it was a magnetic mine that had been planted there. We had several small craft at Cua Viet start night ops after the mining and they surprised a crew of three VC trying to put a three-piece 500-lb mine together and roll it into the water. Although the VC escaped, they left everything be-

hind. EOD informed us that the mine was magnetic and could be set up to allow 21 ships or boats to pass over it before it would explode. This meant it could go off in the middle of a supply column even after we did a minesweep. The day after the sinking of Tango-7, we were minesweeping again, but I noticed that this time all of the crews were wearing orange or gray life jackets and standing topside by the gun turrets or on the fantail just in case they hit another mine, that is, all except us, coxswains. I miss all of them, it is one memory I will never forget.

Rodger T. Auld BM 3 Coxswain T-112-9
(12/67 - 8/68)

*"If you're going to go to war
against a major enemy, go knock
the hell out of him fast, and go
in there to kill him and get it
over with."*

- Lt/Gen Harold Moore

Riverine Communications

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tasks in various roles as Communications Chief. Platoon Sgt, and additional tasks in HQ and HQ Company, and support of battalion training. He had been charged with expediting the issue of signal equipment and through personal liaison and knowledge of the installation organization, was successful in providing much of the equipment that was needed in early training. SFC Archer and CPL Emig, a radio mechanic, were the only experienced personnel in the platoon and were instrumental in the successful preparation of the platoon for deployment to Vietnam. We were later required to transfer SFC Archer during the initial infusion impact, but CPL Emig remained with our Brigade until my departure. His willing attitude and innovative ability were especially valuable in solving many unique technical problems that arose during training, and in shipboard operations.

The most valuable tools during early planning and training at Fort Riley were the many "lessons learned" documents that were available to us. The unit SOPs and communications records of the 101st Airborne Brigade were especially valuable because it operated as a non-division separate brigade. Although the 2nd Brigade was to remain part of the 9th Division, we planned and trained for communications operations as a separate unit as well as a divisional unit. This could not have been accomplished without the understanding and cooperation of the Division Signal Officer, LTC John Reeder, and his staff. His Division Signal Officer and battalion staff were

always willing to provide support and service far beyond that would be normally expected. Because of their cooperative attitude, various organizational configurations that required attachment of personnel and equipment from the Division Signal Battalion could be tested. These jointly planned exercises and communications tests provided experience that was valuable in later situations requiring rapid response to the unique requirements of isolated riverine operations. We all knew that we faced an unusual experience; therefore, there was no jealous guarding of command assets.

Prior to our departure from Fort Riley, LTC Reeder was finally successful in finding the non-commissioned officer that he had promised to personally select to serve as Brigade Communications Chief, MSG Troy Davis (now CSM-Ret), who served as the Brigade Communications Chief through the final training phases at Fort Riley, remained with the Brigade until shipboard operations were established and operating smoothly. He was assigned as SGM of the Division Signal Battalion. SGM Davis' exceptional organization and technical ability was probably the most important single factor that could be credited for the success of communication operations in the Riverine Force.

There were many technical problems that arose in the operation of tactical ground communication equipment in a shipboard environment. These problems were apparent when the proposed designs of the command ships were reviewed during our initial riverine briefing at Fort Riley. However, there was not much that could be done to make changes be-

cause urgent training requirements, and the difficulty of communications between the Brigade requirements, and the designers in Washington and Philadelphia. When I was finally able to make a trip to Philadelphia, many of the design features that were integral to the ship, such as space and rack configurations, could not be changed. However, the equipment installation had not started and it was possible to make some changes to the final installation drawing. Shipboard specifications are especially stringent in respect to wiring safety; therefore, problems such as designing permanent wiring of ringing equipment AC cords had to be modified to provide the standard electrical plug so a high failure rate item such as a TA-182 could quickly be replaced and repaired. There was no provision for circuit control or conversion of circuits from two to four wire operations. All circuits from the four channel ship to ship and twelve channel ship-to-shore multiplex systems were designed to be terminated as sole users or teletype carrier channels to be permanently wired through the ships cable system. Although only 2 days were available to work with the shipyard engineering staff, we were able to design a system that provided for two or four wire patching of all channels and ringers and installation of cable for connection of a 60-line switchboard SB-86.

In addition, it was possible to provide patching for tactical FM voice radio antennas to provide for selectivity in the use of the various antennas, based on their radiation characteristics. The problems that arose because of antenna radiation patterns were too numerous to discuss in this

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Riverine Communications

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resume. Because of the urgent requirements to get the ship ready for sea, there was not enough time to make radiation studies prior to departure of the ship from Philadelphia. After a period of operations, we were able to determine the best direction of radiation for each antenna in reflection to the ship.

The last minute addition of the SB-86 installation proved to be one of the most valuable assets in the communications installation. When we first began installing the local telephone stations, the Navy staff interposed strong objections indicating that no one would need a telephone in his stateroom/office because of the short distance involved on the ship. In addition, they could not visualize the use of the common user trunks to the other ships and shore stations. This communication, they said, could normally be used over radio circuits from the operation center on the bridge. However, the tactical/administrative telephone system became overloaded shortly after operations began and many requests for local stations had to be refused. Traffic levels were often so high that all switchboard cord circuits would be in use simultaneously, and local users had to wait.

Although the range of Army tactical FM voice radios could be extended far beyond design range because of special antenna configurations and the flat terrain of the Mekong Delta, there were frequent occasions when communications range limitations caused changes to tactical planning. Whenever an operation was planned that would require the extension of voice radio circuits beyond 20 miles and a boat mounted relay could not be established in a defensive position on a waterway, no other communications could be relied upon to provide the necessary command and control communications without the use of airborne relay or other temporary means. These problems were normally solved and in only one instance that I can recall was a recommendation made to not commit forces for a suggested operation because of communications limitations. Although it would appear from the foregoing that radio communications were adequate, that conclusion should not be made. Tactical radio communications in the midrange beyond FM range were almost always unsatisfactory. The AN/GRC-46 or 142 never provided designed ground range. This was extremely limiting during ground operations because the lack of other means to transmit classified messages. In most cases, stations were beyond FM secure voice range and secure voice compatible retransmission equipment was not available. Radio sets AN/GRC-19 and AN/GRC-106 had high failure rates and repair and return were completely unsatisfactory. Some transmitters were not replaced through maintenance channels for

periods of over 6 months. The only available non-portable HF SSB radio set available was the unfamiliar AN/PRC-74. The rechargeable nickel-cadmium batteries for the AN/PRC-74 were not available for conventional units and the requirements for 70 BA-30 batteries as a substitute created a heavy and impractical radio because of battery supply problems. During the year, we used the AN/PRC-74. I did not receive a single favorable report on its use except from special units that performed missions where time permitted the erection of special antennas. None of the units in the brigade reported satisfactory results with this radio in conventional ground operations.

On-line radio teletype circuits were consistently maintained using Navy provided shipboard HF SSB radios and terminal equipment. On-line ship-to-ship radio teletype was also maintained using Navy UHF radios and terminal equipment. Because of the excellent shipboard communications center, which included the latest available equipment to meet installation criteria, this phase of the operation was virtually faultless. I do not recall one violation report in the 7 months of shipboard operations before my departure.

One of the major problems we faced in maintaining communications to shore based installations was the directional characteristic of the AN/TRC-24 antennas. Although the prevailing conditions of our antennas at 90 feet above water and the Dong Tam Terminal at 200 feet would seem ideal, our range and reliability were limited because of the constant moving of the ship with the wind and tide while at anchor, and while underway on the river. This was alleviated somewhat by the addition of omni directional UHF AT-197 antennas mounted atop the standard antenna ship's mast. The problem was compounded by the fact that the antenna elements could only be adjusted by closing down every emitting antenna on the mast, and virtually every transmitter antenna on the ship, except some of the tactical FM voice radios. Although plans to install a remote control antenna rotating system were developed early, the project was not completed until after my departure. This less than reliable ship-to-shore microwave system carried two high priority DCS circuits for the Navy. And although the Navy seemed to understand this and often used radio backup for message traffic, DCS personnel could not accept the fact that tactical Army microwave systems were not designed for mobile operations.

The Division Signal Officer provided photographic coverage of Brigade operations by attaching photographers to Brigade for assignment to units for tactical operations. Because photographers worked with whatever unit was engaged in a tactical operation, they often did not have the respite between operations that the tactical units received. These men usually

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Thank You from Kathryn (Gold Star Wife)

I would like to thank each and every one of you that I had the honor of meeting at the 2006 MREA & 9th Infantry Division Vietnam Veterans Memorial wreath laying.

For years I had watched the wreath layings at the Vietnam Memorial on TV and always dreamed that someday I would be able to participate in a wreath laying. And finally my dreams came through. What an honor it was to have been asked to place the 9th Infantry Division wreath and to meet so many wonderful people. In all honesty I was sort of scared when asked to do the wreath laying and didn't know what to expect. But once I started meeting folks at the Lincoln Memorial prior to the wreath layings all my doubts disappeared. When Lt/Gen Patrick Hughes, US Army Ret. introduced himself as my escort, I thought 'Kathryn you have made it to the top'. I again want to thank each and every one who made this possible. It was a truly great honor to have been able to march to the wall and place the wreath with true American heroes. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Kathryn Goudelock, Widow of Sgt. Forrest Goudelock, KIA E/CO, 3/60th, 4-19-68



L-R Albert Moore, Gold Star Wife Kathryn Goudelock, Andy Brigante, Chet Gunner Stanley.

**MRFA****REUNION REGISTRATION****PRE-REGISTRATION DEADLINE: AUG. 22, 2007**

NAME: _____

UNIT: _____

NAME(S) OF WIFE, FAMILY AND/OR GUEST(S): _____

STREET: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: () _____

E-MAIL: _____

QUESTIONS: CALL 828-464-7228 OR EMAIL: MRFA@CHARTER.NET**NOTE:**

There will be a \$25.00 charge for all returned checks. Cancellations prior to the reunion will be charged a \$10.00 processing fee.

Be sure to enclose your check or money order payable to MRFA with this form. Send to:
MRFA Reunion, 106 Belleview Dr. NE., Conover, NC 28613

REGISTRATION INFO QTY. COST TOTAL

MRFA MEMBER Registration Fee:Included with your registration, you will also receive a complimentary registration for **one (1)** guest (spouse, girlfriend, significant other, etc).

1	\$35.00	\$35.00
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Additional Guest(s):Additional guests include children and/or friends, etc. Note that this fee is applicable to **each** additional guest.

	\$10.00	
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Non-Member Registration Fee:If you served as part of the MRF (TF-115, 116 or 117, the 9th Inf. Division or any other Army or Navy supporting unit), **but are not a member of the MRFA**, this fee applies to you.

	\$50.00	
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GRAND TOTAL ENCLOSED

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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.

1st Bi-Annual MRFA Golf Tournament

"Chipping Out for the River"

Join us at the MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Reunion, August 31, 2007

Friday morning, August 31, 2007 at the Winding River Golf Course, Indianapolis, Indiana is being set for the time and place for our first organized **MRFA Bi-Annual** Golf event.

All members and guests are invited to join us for 18 holes of golf.

Where: Winding River Golf Course - 8400 South Mann Road, (Highway 31 South) - (317) 856-7257.

The event should take about 5 hours and have us back at the Adams Mark Hotel in plenty of time for other planned reunion events. A shuttle service can be arranged, for a small fee, from the Adams Mark Hotel to and from the course. The shuttle can hold up to 12 people at a time and the current price per shuttle is \$50.00 (divided 12 ways, that is a good deal).

Foursome Teams will be randomly drawn at the hotel, before the event, and you can sign up at registration. If at all possible, the teams will be made up of two players from each branch of the service. A point system will determine the winning branch of service, Army or Navy, at the end of play. Winners to be announced at the reunion.

The course is very reasonable in price to play. Currently, 18 holes of golf, without a cart, is just \$18.00. Food and drinks at the turn can be arranged, but that will depend on how many players sign up in advance and want the service. There is no registration fee and the tournament is open to all

levels of players. Since it is a public course, and we will be somewhat limited in our time, it is advisable that players have some experience at playing, but all "Duffers" are welcome.

Friday, August 31st will be a full day of events and should be fun for all of us. Who said, "Golf was just for old guys"? (McCann, 1978).

Please let me know if you want to play and if you would be interested in burgers and a beverage for lunch.

Our Tee Times will depend on how many members we have playing. We are hoping for at least 50 players to show interest in the event so we can reserve time at the course. If less than 50 member's show interest, we will still golf at Winding River on Friday morning, August 31st. Currently, our Tee Times will be between 0900 and 1000 hrs.

Contacts for the event are:**David G. McCann (M-6)****bdalmcc@bresnan.net****(406) 442-8168****Orville L. Daley (USS Askari)****LECOWBOY@aol.com****PLEASE NOTE:**

YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE is printed on the front of your issue of River Currents.

Working Party Update

If you live in the San Diego area and would like to assist in the restoration of CCB-18 by being an MRFA volunteer on the working party, Army or Navy, contact Charles Campbell, 677 G St. SP#1, Chula Vista, CA 91910; 619-427-6835 or e-mail: ccicec@aol.com or Everett Jones at 1947 Gotham St., Chula Vista, CA 91913, 619-421-3721 or by e-mail: oneerj@pacbel.net.

MRFA/9TH WEBSITE: www.mrfa.org

Mike Harris is our web master. He does a great job with the web site. There's information on the VA, KIA, about anything you want on the 9th, MRF, and other in-country units, patches, books, and tour info. Mike has it somewhere on the site. You may contact Mike Harris if you want a book, pictures, etc., posted there. Mike makes the final decision on what will be posted. Contact him by e-mail at mekong152@charter.net. Mike served on Tango-152-1 (68-69).

TAPS

Those gone but not forgotten

Senior Chief Vern K. Eaton, U.S. Navy (Ret), passed away September 1st, 2006, from liver cancer. Chief Eaton was one of a few of the last remaining members of the MRFA to have served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Chief Eaton served his country with honor and distinction and pride from August 1942 till February 1972. Chief Eaton was the recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross, World War II Victory Medal, and numerous awards and medals for his Vietnam service. During the Vietnam War from 5-68 to 5-69, Senior Chief Eaton was a leading chief with HAL-3 Seawolves. I had the honor and privilege of knowing Chief Eaton while serving in Vietnam. He was an outstanding Chief Petty Officer and an outstanding Sailor (no one was any better). Contact the family at Betty Eaton, 1107 Bradley Cir. #2, Antigo, WI 54409, 715-623-9129 or eaton158@aol.com.

Col. Guy Tutwiler, U.S. Army (Ret.), passed away September 23, 2006, from pneumonia. What a great man Col. Tutwiler was; a three-war combat Veteran. When I mention combat, I mean combat; he was the original soldier. We will never see the likes of Col. Guy Tutwiler again! They just don't make them that way anymore. I remember the first time I met the Col., he introduced himself as Guy Tutwiler. We sat down with Dusty Rhodes and Guy kept talking about the old days in the force and of the troops. He said, "They were the best he had ever served with!" After a while, he got up and left. I then asked Cdr. Rhodes, "Who was he?" He said, "He is Col. Guy Tutwiler." Then I remembered CO of the 4th/47th Inf. This man was a hero by all means. He loved his troops and they loved him. I want to thank Bill Reynolds and Capt. Jack Benedick for the information they provided on Guy. You may contact the family at Elaine Tutwiler, 1743 Piedmont Drive, Auburn, AL 36830, 334-502-0249.

Larry Hereford passed away Sunday, October 15, 2006. Larry served in A and C Co 3rd/60th and the 15th Engineers from January 1, 1967 to January 1, 1968. You may contact the family at Susan Hereford, 308 Cherry Street, Mt. Carmel, TN 37645, 423-357-1218, or e-mail larryhereford@cs.com.

BMCs Robert D. Kernechel US Navy (Ret) passed away October 26, 2006, after a lengthy fight with pulmonary fibrosis. Robert was buried at Arlington National Cemetery, November 22, 2006. He was a founding member of the MRFA. "Boats," was a great guy who will be missed by all who knew him and I had the honor of serving with him. Senior Chief Kernechel served as Boat Captain on M-111-3 (1966-4/68). You may contact the family at 518 Orchard Dr., Whitehall, PA 18052, or e-mail crunchy1113@msn.com.

Carl "Hank" Harker MAA-1 USN (Ret) passed away November 2, 2006 of a massive seizure. During the Vietnam War, he served from 12/66 to 12/67 in Subic Bay, Philippines, outfitting swift boats and then at NavSupDet Cat Lo with Boat Division 103 aboard PCF-68. Carl was a real Gentleman. He had a great sense of humor and was always joking or poking fun at something. Hank was part of the original working party here in San Diego that was responsible for the building of the Vietnam Unit Memorial and the restoration of PCF-104. He truly had more hours of sweat equity in the Memorial than anyone else involved. He loved to keep up the landscaping around the Memorial as well since the Navy's contractor always fell short in doing the job. He was

extremely proud of his role in taking care of the Memorial and it really showed." - Don Blankenship

Dave Magnuson passed away November 4, 2006. Dave had been fighting a brave and courageous battle with cancer for more than a year. Dave served in A CO 3rd/39th Infantry. Dave was a quiet man who never said much. He was an outstanding soldier and person. The world was and is a better place for having someone like Dave Magnuson to pass through our lifetime. You may contact the family at Linda Magnuson, 2848 W. Storybrook Dr., Anaheim, CA 92804, or e-mail magnusonlj@adelphia.net.

Riverine Communications

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volunteered for operations at squad level and never hesitated to accept an assignment regardless of the risk or terrain conditions. Unfortunately their names cannot be recalled because they were rotated at regular intervals. Some volunteered to remain longer than required and returned for additional tours. Among these was SP5 John Millaire. The combined communications organization consisted of men from the Brigade Communications Platoon and the Division Signal Battalion were dedicated and loyal, and made up the finest organization that I have ever been associated with.

I recall the communications operations of the Riverine Force from its inception in June 1967 until my departure at the end of the year as being completely successful. This was only possible because of the understanding and responsiveness of the Brigade Commanders, Colonels Bill Fulton and Bert David, to communications requirements and limitations, and recommendations of the communication elements of the command.

Note of thanks: Thanks again for recognizing the army communications men of the MRF. We should also remember LCDR Frank Bobert. He was a great help, I couldn't have run the Brigade comm. without him. He was the Comm. Officer of the Navy Command, I don't remember any of the men that worked for him, but they were all integral to the success of the operation.

*Nathan Plotkin LTC, USA (Ret),
17 Cortes Ct., San Rafael, CA 94901*

Get Well Wishes

We wish good health and recovery for each and every one of our brothers.

Maj. Charles Yongue US Army (Ret) is presently battling pancreatic cancer. Maj. Yongue served in the A-1 145 AB (1964-65). You may contact Charles Yongue at 144 Braisted Ave., Staten Island, NY 10314, 718-494-8942, or e-mail nyongue38@aol.com.

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.

Lloyd W. Austin for Arthur M. Day KIA 5/8/69 D Co 4th/47 Inf

Jack Benedick for C Co 4th/47th 66-68, C Co 3rd/60th 69, and E Co 3rd/60th Inf KIA 4/7/68

Ellen Bergman for Henry Bergman C Co 3rd/34th and 3rd/60th Inf (09/68-05/69)

Bill Brennan for Tom Swanick GMG3 USS White River LSMR-536

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

James J. Byrnes for members of the Junk Force, Dung Island

Gene Cooper for Steve Brichford FT2 68-69 and Jerry Roleofs 67-68 USS White River LSMR-536

Ted Fetting B Co 2nd/60th Inf 10/67-2/68 for all from B Co 2nd/60th and KIA 2/2/68 Fred Jansonivs (ND), Elroy "Stevie" Le Blanc (CA), and Roy Phillips (IL)

John W. Gerbing for Noel T. West A Co 4th/47th KIA 6/19/67

Regina Gooden for Sgt Lloyd Earl Valentine B Co 3rd/47th 9/15/68

Fred Gottwald for Sgt Walter J. Garstkiewicz C Co 3rd/60th and C Co 6th/31st KIA 01/09/70

Gerald Johnston USS Nye Cty for James "Willie" Willeford Nye Cty LST-1067 11/28/66, friend, and sailor 19-year-old (RIP Buddy)

James Long Sr. ComRivFlot-One Staff 11/67-11/68 for Carol Ann, beloved wife

David Lynn for Howard Burns (QM2), Robert Bouchet (SM2), and Herman Miller (GM3) 8/11/68 IUWG-1-3 Adam Metts for Donald L. Bruckart KIA 03/31/69 T-111-2

James A. Morse for Mark W. Weachter CTO-3 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, and SGT William D. Mize B-2 2nd/47th 5th/60th KIA 10/28/67

John Philp for LTC William B. Cronin KIA 04/27/67 Co 2nd/47th and for Colonel Arthur D. Moreland USA (Ret) 2nd/47th 4/67-12/67

USS Guide MSO-447 for Shipmate and Brother Harold Foster

Tom Sanborn 4th/47th Inf for Spec4 David Thorton KIA 10/68 on Toi Son (VC) and 1st Lt James L. Tarte KIA 8/24/68 near Kai Lay

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

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

Robert Vargas for Gene Dirita 2nd/60th Inf KIA 12/10/67

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

The MRFA Board of Directors and Staff would like to extend their most heartfelt and sincere sympathies to all the families of the fallen.



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