



River Currents

PCFs in Canal Mekong Delta

9th Inf Division Troops in Delta

A PUBLICATION OF
THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 23, NUMBER 3
FALL 2014



Inshore Under Sea Warfare Group-1, Vung Tau and Cat Lo



Naval Support Detachment, Cat Lo

From the Galley

We called it VC Hill it was a large hill overlooking Vung Tau Harbor. The base was built on top of and around an old French Fort. The IUWG unit consisted of 60 Enlisted and 4 or 5 officers. The boats for the unit that patrolled the harbor and the merchant ships looking for mine and checking sampans were out of Cat-Lo 15 miles from Vung Tau.

The majority of the boat crews were stationed at Cat Lo. I was there on the hill in 1968-69. While there I knew the French had been there, etc., but I never saw the weapons they left behind. They were found after I left when the new Officer-In-Charge LCDR Montgomery USN and XO Merritt Nicewander started having the men clearing the area around the base. When I was there, all this was covered by heavy foliage. I remember bunkers outside the gate but never saw the gun emplacements or the weapons that were left. I have posted a few pictures of the French Weapons or Cannons. We also had an Australian EOD Team on the Hill that helped with keeping the harbor clear of mines. There was a large Army Radar site above the hill. It was good duty not a lot of hassle; we had good officers when I was with the unit. One was our XO LT Merritt Nicewander who is responsible for sending me more than 700 pictures of the units.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Al Moore

Veterans Day '14 Washington, DC

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

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

For reservations, call 1-703-524-4000 ext. "0." Please state our group name "MRFA" and give your dates of arrival and departure. If you plan to attend, you must make your reservations under our group code prior to the cutoff date of October 15, 2014.

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

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

For more information, contact Board Member Bob (Doc) Pries, (513) 659-4974, priesrl@att.net.

3/34th Artillery Battalion: Heroes All

Tom Lively wrote an article titled "Fire Direction Control" in the Summer 2014 issue of River Currents

Below are some notes.

1. Tom's a little modest saying that the response time from calling in a fire mission until a round was fired pegging it at 1-to-3 minutes; more accurately the response was nearly always less than 60 seconds from the time I was a platoon leader called the artillery FO at our company HQ who in turn relayed the fire mission to Fire Direction Control (FDC) where Tom was until the 3/34th had my round on the ground to my immediate front . . . "at the absolute top of their game" is the only way anyone can describe the 3/34th Artillery. My guys and I are here today because of you!

2. From the time we established "contact" until the time a fire mission was called into our FO (artillery "Forward Observer") at company HQ was 10-seconds or less, a little longer if my Radio Operator and I had to move to a position where we could call in artillery fire.

3. Woe be to those who didn't know their exact grid coordinates: what Tom described was an occupational hazard—be right or you could be dead. The 3/34th's job was to put the artillery where we said; if that was on top of us then that was our call and our consequences.

4. Over a period of 6 months, I had two 105-mm rounds (out of an entire battery of six guns) that were out-of-registration by 25-35 meters; all other missions the

guns were precisely on target and precisely registered.

5. I once killed a water buffalo with an artillery round that was "behind" us by 25-meters . . . the stupid beast didn't know how to "get down."

6. Never used spotter (airburst) rounds. They gave warning to them and time for them to get away and stretching one's neck skywards during a firefight to try and identify the spotter "airburst" round was just too difficult to do through the jungle canopy and too risky. It was either one round on-the-deck or a full-battery-for-effect; seconds separated life from death . . . my platoon had M-16s, M-60 machine guns, and grenade launchers, but our BIGGEST "BANG" was you—the quicker I got one 105-mm round on the deck, the quicker they stopped firing at us and started their retrograde operation. The 3/34th Artillery spoke the loudest and was the "decider" of any firefight. You were the biggest guns we had and many of the times the only thing we had at our fingertips to extradite ourselves from some very nasty situations.

7. If the shards of shrapnel from your 105-mm howitzer rounds wasn't falling around us or zipping passed us cutting through banana trees or lodging in coconut trees, it wasn't close enough to get rid of them; the majority of our engagements were fought at ranges of less than 25 meters, many only 10 meters away: "hugging the belt" and they really knew how to hug it. I crawled outside our

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

MCB-1 Seabees, 23 June 1967

by Peter Dowd
(mcb1reunion@verizon.net)

MCB-1s construction detail consisting of 1 officer and 63 enlisted men at Dong Tam completed its project and rejoined the Battalion. The Detail, formed and deployed on 26 May, mounted out by C-130 aircraft to the My Tho area of the Mekong Delta to construct a cantonment facility for the River Boat Squadron operating out of the newly constructed Dong Tam River Basin. Originally the scope of the project called for one 500-man galley, twenty four 16' x 44' tin roof huts, ten Quonset huts, two 16' x 32' showers, and four 4-hole heads. A construction time of 30 days was

established as the maximum allowable due to impending arrival of additional troops. During the progress of the construction, it became evident that the project would be completed ahead of schedule; consequently the project scope was increased to include a wood frame generator building and the conversion of twenty-seven strong back tents to tin roof huts. A total of 34,930 square feet of new facilities were constructed and 13,820 square feet of strong back tents were converted within the originally envisioned project time of 30 days. Elements of the CBMU-301 Main Body began arriving on 23 June as Ens. M. J. Kux and the An Hoa Detail arrived in Da Nang. The second and third flights, composed of Alpha and Charlie Companys, arrived in Dong Ha on the 6 of June. Bravo Company flew in early the morning of the 26th and the final flight with Headquarters Company and the Khe Sanh Detail arrived on 27 June thus establishing CBMU-301 in the Republic of Vietnam. ★

3/34th BATTALION

Continued from previous page

perimeter once and two dykes away I found a pile of hot AK-47 shell casings. If the artillery was not called in very close, it was ineffective!

8. Infantryman's choices: Air Strikes, Helicopter Gunships, or Artillery. The 7th Air Force didn't keep jets circling above waiting for us to call in an air strike; helicopter gunships took time to get there and always had to refuel and/or rearm at some point . . . we always chose artillery as our Number One Choice and you never had to "refuel" or "rearm" and never did you run out of bombs, 20-mm ammo, rockets, or 50-cal ammunition. You were always there in as much quantity as we required for as long as we needed.

9. Only one weapon was better than the 3/34th Artillery—an Air Force AC-130 and the only circumstance in which this weapon was better was when we had suffered heavy casualties, were surrounded, and a-half-step away from death.

The only thing I can compare the 3/34th Artillery Battalion's performance to is a game of roulette where one wins over 99.99% of the time. Your performance was miraculous. Thank you. **Courtney Frobenius, Bravo Company, 3/60th Infantry, 2nd Brigade, 9th Inf, December '68 to June '69 (courtneyfrobenius@yahoo.com) ★**

2015 MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Reunion, Indianapolis

Start planning for the 2015 MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Reunion. The dates are September 2, 2015 until September 6, 2015. We will be at the Indianapolis Marriott East in Indianapolis again. The hotel and staff treated us fantastic and I know it will be even better next year. You will be able to start making reservations on September 22, 2014. The hotels we want to fill up first are listed below with room charge. Make sure to reference the MRFA when making your reservation so you get the MRFA rate. These rooms went very quickly last reunion, so make your reservations early.

Indianapolis Marriott East
(\$79.00/night) 1-317-352-1231,
1-800-228-9290

La Quinta Inns & Suites (\$69.00/night) 1-317-359-1021

Fairfield Inn & Suites (\$74.00/night) 1-317-322-3716

If you have any problems or questions, contact me at the numbers below. I will be out of the country on vacation from September 26 through October 14 with no access to voice mails or e-mails. I will call you back when I return.

Frank Jones (frank@raffertylighting.com or popsaroni@sbcglobal.net)

MRFA Secretary/Reunion Coordinator

Home: 1-314-822-1230

Cell: 1-314-303-2730

Work: 1-314-918-8144, ext. 108

Hospitality Rooms

All hospitality rooms are contracted on an individual basis. The MRFA isn't involved in the hospitality rooms. You can contact Christine Noggle (cnoggle@indymarriotteast.com, Fax 1-317-353-9775, or Phone 1-317-322-3716, Ext. 1255) after September 22, 2014, for information.



French Guns



French Bunkers



Mess Hall VC Hill

FROM THE GALLEY

Continued from previous page

There were five IUWG Units in-country most were up North. I hope you will enjoy the photos I have posted as much I appreciated receiving them. Most folks, even those who served in-country, are not aware that the Navy had 50 Support Activities and Detachments in-country from I Corps to An Thoi. The following are the IUWG-Units 1 Vung Tau, 2 Cam Rhan Bay, 3 Nha Trang, 4 Quin Nhon, and 5 Vung Ro Bay. Vung Ro suffered a sapper Attack during Tet 1967 or 68?? with casualties and was shut down by 1969.

The IUWG units did not report operationally to NAVFORV (Naval Forces Vietnam—Admiral Zumwalt in Saigon) but rather to MinePac (Mine Forces Pacific) in Long Beach, California.

This played hell on the supply side. Unit 1 could not get carbon arc replacements for the 60" searchlight through Navy Supply so a sailor on the hill got his brother in Los Angeles to go to a drive-in movie and buy the carbon arcs out of his own pocket and mail them to his brother at Unit 1. The

searchlight illuminated the harbor through 1969 by this procurement practice.

All pictures courtesy of Merritt Nicewander

We received the Nye award for the best feeding small Navy Mess in-country 1968. Albert Moore

Dear Mr. Moore,
I apologize for the lateness of this email from two perspectives. One I am sending this email so late and two I am late in thanking you for posting my dad's picture on your website and for making me a member. I know that you have given me the membership at no cost, but I would like to still donate what I can to your organization.

I have received a few emails from several people who have served with my dad. I am very sure it was not easy for them. I recently read a book by Ed Eaton, I must say it was one of the most intriguing and heart breaking books I have ever read. I was intrigued, as I truly wanted to be able to understand what could affect my dad in the way it did. Although he would share stories, you could tell he would hold back a lot. It is the most heart-breaking book I have ever read. I now know what would make

him jump at certain sounds, or would keep him awake at night, or cause him to breakdown and cry when he thought no one else could hear.

I finally understand how and why the bonds that so many of you had created then have lasted to this day. I know that there were regrets that my dad had before he passed away, like he should have gone back to help search for those who were POWs or MIAs, but I understand now why he could not.

I know the horrors that everyone there faced seemed overwhelming at the time, and many are not able to fully escape them to this day. And I would honestly give anything to take those horrors away, but I know I cannot. I am truly grateful for the men my dad served with, they gave him someone he could rely not only for that moment in time, but for every moment in time after that.

I recently found a letter that you wrote to my dad and how you had invited him to be part of the Mobile Riverine Association. It meant so much to him that he saved the letter. My dad taught me to always look for something positive the "silver lining." The silver lining that I think he was

CONTINUED PAGE 7

Honor of a Short Timer's Stick

by Ron Rutowski HHQ
2nd/60th

Men who had less than 90 days left in-country carried a "short-timer's stick." A short-timer's stick was a piece of wood about 18" to 3' long. Some of the sticks had carvings on them or other markings that made it unique to that soldier. Whenever you saw someone with a short timer's stick, you would ask them how much longer they had "in-country?" They would respond with something like 90 days and a wake-up. You never counted the last day in an effort to make it feel like you were closer to going home.

Some soldiers made the short-timer's stick but I purchased my short-timer's stick that had the head of a Dragon on it. It was about 18" long, and with a 50-caliber round that I stuck on the end for good measure. I have my short-timer's stick to this very day. ★



Camp Roberts' trainees went directly to combat with the Mobile Riverine Force in the Mekong Delta.



US Navy Riverine Training at Camp Roberts

In preparation for deployment to Vietnam, where they would be teamed with Army infantry, helicopters and artillery units to form the combined River Assault Forces, members of the US Navy were brought to Camp Roberts for live-fire training. Their main training site was a series of three 50-ton trailers that simulated the decks of gun boats. These trailers were set on a hillside with targets of old vehicles, refrigerators, or various camouflage effects situated at various distances. In theory, the canyon was a river, and each foreign object on the "opposite shore" could house a sniper or an entire enemy battery. There was a permanent team of 16 Navy Gunner's Mates to maintain the equipment and train the incoming recruits. Sailors to be trained would be brought from the Naval Inshore Operations Center after their basic training at Mare Island, near Vallejo, California. They received one week of firing and field training here, followed by an additional week of training on Whidbey Island or Coronado Island.

Upon arrival in Vietnam, the Navy trainees would be assigned to both the heavily armored monitors and

troop carriers to support the assault operations, as well as the PBRs (Patrol Boat, Riverine), 52-ft. fiberglass boats used to patrol and guard the rivers and canals. The river assault craft were heavily modified LCMs (Landing Craft Medium) configured as monitors and armed with a 40-mm cannon, a 20-mm cannon, two .50 Cal. machine guns, a .81 mm mortar, and 40-mm grenade launchers. Troop carriers were armed with a 20-mm cannon and two .50 Cal. machine guns. Additionally, there were specially designed ASPBs (mine sweepers) armed with a 20-mm cannon and twin .50 Cal. machine guns. The PBR was the other type of watercraft that they would operate when sent to Vietnam. It was a low-draft, water-jet powered, fiberglass high-speed river-borne craft used for basic river patrol, river traffic searches and Special Forces insertion in order to disrupt enemy river highways from supplies and ammunition. It was usually armed with twin .50 Cal machine guns mounted in a forward bow turret and 7.62-mm machine guns mounted on pintle mounts amidships and aft. ★

History of Riverine Warfare

Fighting is nothing to the evils of the river—getting on shore, running afoul of one another, losing anchors, etc.

--Admiral David Glasgow Farragut

President Lincoln wrote:

Nor must Uncle Sam's web feet be forgotten. At all the watery margins, they have been present. Not only on the deep sea, the broad bay, the rapid river, but also up the narrow muddy bayou, and wherever the ground was a little damp, they have been and make their tracks.

The United States Navy has fought on rivers at home and abroad throughout its proud history. In the War for Independence, daring American Sailors employed small boats—even row galleys—against the mighty warships of the Royal Navy operating on colonial waterways. In the War of 1812, hard-fighting U.S. naval units on the Mississippi River helped General Andrew Jackson defeat a major British assault on New Orleans. The only way the Navy could combat hostile Seminole Indians in the trackless expanse of the Florida Everglades during the 1830s was to embark armed Sailors and Marines in small boats that penetrated deep into enemy territory. U.S. naval expeditions up the Tabasco River

were an important aspect of the Mexican War of 1846-1848.

From the first days of the Civil War, Union and Confederate naval forces battled for control of the Mississippi, the most strategically vital river in North America. Employing ironclad warships in conjunction with U.S. Army troops, the Navy's Mississippi Flotilla bombarded and then seized one Confederate fort after another. Admiral David G. Farragut earned lasting fame when forces under his command fought their way past the bastions guarding the mouths of the Mississippi and captured New Orleans, gateway to the American interior. Riverine units enabled Union General Ulysses S. Grant to envelope and ultimately compel the surrender of enemy forces besieged at Vicksburg. Loss of the Mississippi split the Confederacy and helped bring about its defeat.

The early years of the 20th century found the Navy once again mounting river operations in support of U.S. foreign policy. Naval vessels provided gunfire support and transported troops and supplies on rivers in the Philippines to subdue Filipino rebels. For decades before World War II, U.S. Navy warships steamed up and down China's broad Yangtze River protecting American missionaries and traders, battling brigands, and

promoting U.S. diplomatic interests. In addition to deploying hundreds of thousands of troops ashore in major landing operations in the Pacific and the Mediterranean during World War II, Navy amphibious units transported Allied ground forces across the Rhine River for the final defeat of Nazi Germany.

One of the most memorable chapters in the Navy's riverine warfare history was the hard-fought struggle for control of the waterways of the Republic of Vietnam. The U.S. Navy, as had the French Navy during the First Indochina War of 1946-1954, and the Vietnam Navy in the years afterward, recognized the critical importance of the rivers and canals of South Vietnam for warfighting and waterborne commerce. With the onset of major combat operations in Vietnam during the mid-1960s, the Navy established the River Patrol Force and the Army-Navy Mobile Riverine Force whose charge was to secure the Mekong Delta. During the enemy's Tet Offensive of 1968 and the Sea Lords Campaign of later years, American and Vietnamese river units fought well and hard against a resilient Vietnamese Communist foe. While the Vietnam War ended in failure for the United States and the Republic of Vietnam in 1975, the experience left us with a wealth of information on the nature of

modern riverine warfare. Insights abound on the most successful strategies, tactics, techniques, boats and craft, weapons, and equipment employed during the Vietnam War.

Consistent with the emphasis in recent years on "green water" and "brown water" operations, beginning in 2005 the Navy worked to establish a riverine warfare capability in the Naval Expeditionary Combat Command. The purpose of the new riverine warfare units, as stated in the Quadrennial Defense Review of 6 February 2006, will be to carry out "river patrol, interdiction and tactical troop movements on inland waterways."

To support that effort, the Naval Historical Center is posting this 1969 publication, *Riverine Warfare: The U.S. Navy's Operations on Inland Waters*. Viewers should understand that while the style and presentation of the work may seem dated, and we have reproduced it with minimal editorial change, it presents a concise summary of a significant episode in the U.S. Navy's modern combat history. If "the past is prologue," Riverine Warfare should shed light on one important aspect of the Navy's current and anticipated operations along inland waterways.

Edward J. Marolda, Senior Historian, Naval Historical Center ★

2nd Airboat Platoon E Co. 15th Engineer Battalion 9th Infantry Division

By James Wollner E Co. 15th Engineer Bn 9th Infantry Division (tinkertoys46@yahoo.com)



Wollner

We had been "in-country" since late September during which we were trained on the airboats by the Special Forces at Cao Lanh. We finished our training and were sent back to Bearcat. Unfortunately our boats had not yet arrived. The Army wanted to keep us on water so they sent us to a base camp at Tan Tru, south of Saigon. It was the home of the 3rd Brigade 39th Infantry. We worked on whale boats carrying supplies and troops and even accompanied some line units on various missions. There was also a problem of living accommodations; there was no space or dry ground to build on. We ended up having to build our own hooch, in a rice paddy. We were aided by an engineer unit who had the expertise and supplies needed. On November 15th, we were sleeping soundly when the VC decided to wake us up with a mortar attack.



As I was running to a bunker, a shell landed in a paddy, a few feet from me knocking me into a somersault. I got up and finally reached the bunker. Catching my breath, I felt something dripping down my back, and it wasn't sweat! A little over 2 months in-country and I got wounded, not bad enough to get out of the field, but at least I got a Purple Heart!



Two weeks later, our Airboats finally had arrived from the States. We were sent back to Bearcat to pick up the boats.

We had sporadically received mail because we were always moving around with no permanent home to tell our loved ones.

Our "bastard" unit was finally assigned to E Co. 15th Engineer Bn. for rations and quarters, we finally had a home.



This was a logical choice as E Company had 5-ton flatbed trucks to carry our boats around and cranes to lift us off and into the water.

We also had been designated the 2nd Airboat Platoon, even though we were the first group of airboat pilots trained. The second group of trainees was designated the 1st Airboat platoon. "Ours was not to reason why....."

No sooner had we settled in when new orders were issued for our first assignment.

E Company had been helping to build a small base camp for the Royal Thai Army at Long Thanh

in the Rung Sat Special Zone. This area was southeast of Saigon and was a haven for the Viet Cong.

A huge machine called a "tree crusher" was flattening and crushing all the vegetation around the camp's perimeter when it ventured the muddy, mangrove filled swamp of the Rung Sat, at low tide.



The "crusher" became completely mired and stuck in the mud. It couldn't move. The next part of this disaster was when tide returned. The water had risen halfway up the wheels, surrounding it, making it look like a new steel island. The final part of this disaster was that the air intake for this machine was now underwater and sucked up the brackish water shorting out all the electrical parts. The situation is best described as, "FUBAR."

These ugly circumstances thrust the 2nd Airboat Platoon into its first combat mission.

Our boats were driven to the launch site via the 5 tons, picked up by cranes and gently dropped into the waters of the Rung Sat. We had to provide security for the mechanics and engineers that were deployed to figure out how to rescue the "tree crusher" from the grip of the muddy mangrove filled swamp. E Company was a bridge company and used this expertise to affix giant pontoons to stabilize and prevent the machine from sinking further into the mud.

During the day we reconnoitered to find suitable places to set up ambush positions along the maze of tiny streams that covered and surrounded the area. Our boats were deployed about 200 yards out in an arc around the tree crusher. My boat was the farthest end of our prearranged positions. As the sun went down, we were enveloped in darkness and had just settled down when star shells began lighting up in an area not too distant. Those illumination rounds seemed to light up our positions for all to see and made us very nervous. Finally, as the star shells floated ever so slowly behind the mangroves, spindly shadows reached out and pulled us back into the dark, thank God.

About 2 a.m., I was interrupted from my thoughts when I heard movement behind our location. I quickly and quietly woke the others, now we all were listening when "CRACK" a twig or branch snapped. I radioed back to the crusher that there was definitely movement behind us. The tree crusher people in turn alerted the Thai camp. All our boats were ordered back to the crusher. My boat was the last to return and as soon as we tied up all hell broke loose. Machine guns, explosions, mortar flashes and RPGs were being fired a few yards from our position. I was glad we were behind the heavy steel of the "crusher." We soon realized though that we were not the object of the attack, it was the Thai base camp itself.

The enemy was between us and the camp and it seemed in a perfect crossfire. Our boats were equipped with 0.50 cal machine guns mounted on them. We started firing at the areas where the tracers and flashes were originating from. After about 5 minutes, the camp radioed us to cease firing as some bullets were going into the camp itself. We again hunkered down as bullets were whistling by us and coming at us from all directions. Just before sunrise, the firing ceased. We were ordered to stay close to the crusher but reconnoiter the

surrounding areas for any sign of the enemy retreat, we saw nothing, no blood trails, no sampans, no people; they had just vanished into the morass of mangroves.

We heard that the Thais had inflicted major damage on the attackers, killed and recovered over 30 bodies, and blood trails led off in many directions. The Thai's captured hundreds of weapons and only sustained only a few casualties. This was born out later when we obtained

pictures of the aftermath of the battle. The photos told the whole story; it was unbelievably a one-sided battle. I like to think our warning was the key to alerting the camp of the impending attack.



During the ensuing days, the Engineers decided to drag it out of the mud and into the channel with a river tug. They would float the tree crusher down river to more solid ground for disassembly and removal back to Bearcat. Our airboats provided security all the way down river till it was safely in the capable hands of the 15th Engineers. Another discovery we made was that the 0.50 cal machine guns could only be used if the airboats were stationary. If they were fired while we were tooling down the river at 40 mph, the recoil would turn us on our side, not good! We ended up with M-60s, a great improvement plus we could carry more ammo.

Once the mission was complete and the tree crusher was safe on solid ground, we were relieved by a line unit. Our airboats were loaded back on the trucks, and we were sent back to the E Company headquarters.

It was Christmas Eve and just in time for the Bob Hope Show and later a real Christmas dinner with turkey mashed potatoes, stuffing, and even cranberry sauce. The show was fabulous, a couple thousand soldiers couldn't be wrong. Bob



was leaving when I snapped his picture, and almost got clipped by his REMF driver!

During the next few days, we were assigned to the many details suffered by everyone in the base

camp. Some of these were perimeter guard, KP, and worst of all "shit burning." The pungent smell of this detail lingered in your nostrils for days.

The good part of this was that we were able to take advantage of the many perks Bearcat offered, ice cream, burgers and the PX. This respite soon ended, and we would soon be assigned to go out on another mission.

New orders came through and we were again loaded onto the trucks and sent back to the Thai

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Prelude to the Rach Ba Rai Operation

September 15, 1967

By Al Breininger, CSO, RivDiv 91, 1967 albsail@gmail.com

I've read several accounts of the heavy combat action the Mobile Riverine Force experienced on the Rach Ba Rai on September 15, 1967. All have been informative and present the action that day from several vantage points. Attending the reunions over past years has taught me that while we may have been in the same action or battle, we saw different things depending upon our specific position in a column of boats, or in a column of troops pushing through the jungle.

One insignificant aspect of the subject operation was the transit of the artillery barges to the firebase in support of this operation. I was assigned the Navy escort detail with a few boats of Division 91. Our mission was to lead the barges to the firebase; they would establish to support the commencement of operations once the task force entered "Snoopy's Nose."

As I recall, the barges and escorts were to leave the mobile base prior to the troops being loaded on the ATCs. I believe our departure time was about 0230 to 0300. The artillery barges were to come out of the Dong Tam basin and meet up with us at the designated rendezvous time. So far, the event came off as planned.

We had a flood tide that night, which meant we were being pushed inland, up the main rivers. We were in blackout and radio silence conditions. As the night progressed, I found that we were proceeding too fast to our objective. Our engines were running as slow as possible. Even with our engines basically in idle, we were going to arrive at our destination too early.

Before the turn up the tributary that lead to the location where the firebase was to be established, there was a wide section in the river. I decided to make a 180 degree turn to port to make a big loop to slow our advance and "eat up some time." Again, so far so good. The Monitor I was riding had radar and I was able to track our column. Just as we completed our turn, a VNN Rag Group came steaming by us headed downstream. Yep, you guessed it, as we did our second 180 degree turn to head us toward the firebase site, the boats pulling the artillery barges followed the VNN Rag group boats, instead of us.

There was no alternative but to break radio silence and contact the artillery barge tow boats and alert them to their error. It took several minutes until we got the boats and their barges back in line, so we could proceed to our objective. We were now faced with not having enough time to get to the objective, but we did end up making it there only a few minutes off schedule.

Had we not happened upon the VNN Rag group boats, everything would have been executed as planned. Even so, the artillery barges were in place by the time the troop loaded ATCs approached "Snoopy's Nose," and they began their supporting fire on schedule.

This certainly is an "insignificant" part of the overall operation that horrific day, but I thought I would take a few minutes to document this "prelude" to the day's events.

"Murphy's Law" (what can go wrong will go wrong) was not widely known back then, but "Murphy" was with us that morning in this segment of the operation. I can only add that it was good we had the radar that evening, and thankfully, it was working. Otherwise, a bad day would have been possibly much worse. ★

2nd AIRBOAT PLATOON E CO. 15TH ENGINEER BATTALION

Continued from previous page

camp we had left earlier. Our allies had priority to any and all equipment used and the Thai's had seen what our boats could do earlier. They liked what they saw and wanted them to be part of their operations. Now we would be working with the Royal Thai Army, Queen's Cobra Regiment.

We began operations quickly and were fairly familiar with the area around the camp. As we became more familiar of our surroundings, we kept expanding out and into the heart of the Rung Sat. Thai soldiers became a regular part of the airboat crew.

We initially lived in a large tent but this provided minimal protection against mortar attacks.

Echo Company came up with a plan to build us a large bunker. A dozer would pile up sand around three sides of a wooden box they constructed. The only problem was they could only pile and push the sand half-way up the sides, any further, the sides would collapse in. We had to fill and pile up sand bags another 3 or 4 ft thick on the exposed areas to include the top and the front side which had to be at least five bags thick. During the daylight hours, our job consisted of filling of sand bags for



our huge bunker. Now we knew how the Egyptians felt in building the pyramids. We hated doing this but knew we needed it for our own safety.

Every couple of days we would go back and forth to Bearcat for supplies. Sometimes we would have time for showers, a decent meal, and a comfortable bed. If we stayed any more than 24 hours, the First Sergeant assigned us to other regular duties, not caring that we had just come in from the field or that we worked 24-hour days. We always seemed to get the short end of the stick with regard to these base camp assignments. Needless to say, we tried not to hang around Bearcat for very long.

We became extremely effective with night ambushes. We inspected river traffic, sampans plying the larger rivers, general recon, discovering VC staging areas, providing security and once in a while inserting LRRP patrols. The VC no longer had exclusive use of the Rung Sat and they didn't like it at all.

From time to time a Navy PBR would come by looking for captured weapons, which we had. We would trade them for cases of frozen chicken, veal



Mobile Riverine Force Association Membership Application Form

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

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY

- ☐ Postal Delivery ☐ Go Green with Email

Name _____
 Street _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip Code _____
 Phone _____
 Cell _____
 E-mail _____

- ☐ WW-II ☐ Korea ☐ Vietnam

Army Member

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

Navy Member

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

Dates Served in Unit (mm/yr - mm/yr) _____ to _____

MEMBERSHIP RATES

- ☐ 1 Year \$20 ☐ 3 Years \$50

DONATION

☐ _____

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

patties, or steak. We ended up having cookouts and good meals of fried chicken, steaks, or spaghetti and veal. It was feast or famine and a good change from C-rations, unless you liked ham and lima beans.

This "first mission" and "bunker building" are only two of the many experiences that happened to the 2nd Airboat Platoon. My experiences and those of my brothers are told in the "Bamboo Shoot, the Story of the 2nd Airboat Platoon." It offers the details of the airboats capabilities as well as their limitations, most of which were successful

but sometimes ended in tragedy. The mangrove swamps and waterways of the Mekong Delta are unforgiving and this is especially true of the "Rung Sat" Special Zone.

During July and August the 9th Division was in the final stages of moving down to Dong Tam and so were we. The 2nd and 1st Airboat Platoons eventually merged and became part of the Mobile Riverine Force.

These experiences by no means happened only to those in the 2nd Airboat Platoon, but also to most of us who served in the Mekong Delta.

On August 15, 1968, I left Vietnam and I did not let the door hit me in the ass on the way out! As the Pan-am "Freedom Bird" climbed out of enemy rocket and 0.50 cal mg range, there was a collective and audible "sigh" of relief, from everyone onboard the plane. I was finally going home. ★



Airboats-at Dong Tam



**Bridge removal and move
2/15/1967**



Building road January 1967

15th Combat Engineers, No Time To Rest

**By Member Lee Kolstad D Co 5th Combat Engineers
(lkolstad1@cox.net)**

Company D, 15th Combat Engineer Battalion arrived in Dong Tam with the first elements of 2nd Brigade, 9th Division to help establish the Dong Tam base camp. While the camp continued to grow in size, the Mobile Riverine Force was established with the 2nd Brigade to include the 3/47th, 4/47th, Infantry Battalions and Companies A & B of the 3/60th and C Company of the 5/60th Infantry Battalions. Each of the three line platoons of Delta Company were assigned to support a specific battalion with mostly demolition support both on field operations from Dong Tam and in direct support of the MFR when their assigned battalion was on the ships. This situation was SOP until Jan. 1968 when one Engineer platoon supported the entire MFR.

The Combat Engineers in Delta Company never had a restful or dull moment. Besides providing direct support to the infantry, Delta Company provided the following support to 2nd Brigade's mission: Road clearing every morning; 24-hour berm support; 24-hour dredge security; convoy support and security; mobile artillery security; perimeter tower and bunker construction and placement; barracks, orderly room and mess hall construction; road and bridge construction and maintenance inside and outside of Dong Tam (My Tho bypass for one); heliport construction and maintenance, other general Dong Tam construction and maintenance projects, civic action projects and many other general and diverse field engineer tasks.

There was one mission where an old French Eifel bridge that was blocking a canal was cut in half, attached by cables to a sky crane helicopter and raised out of the canal. Another project involved the cutting of an Eifel bridge away from its abutments so it could be raised and floated up the canal to a new location.

Elements of Delta Company participated in most of the battles and operations that 2nd Brigade was involved in and were also online in the re-taking of My Tho during the Tet Offensive.

The performance of Delta Company epitomized the motto of the 15th Combat Engineers, "Drive On." ★



**Driver Richard Hauner-Passenger Lee Kolstad, Manning Machine Gun, and Dob Anderson behind Lee Randall McComas
Picture taken at 2011 MRFA Reunion**

Army-Navy Mobile Riverine Force

by Mike Harris (03/29/02)

By early 1965, the Vietnam War was escalating at a rapid pace. Marines were making beach landings, Army air mobile forces were put into action, and it was determined by the higher ups that something serious needed to be done to slow down the enemy supply routes in the South China Sea, Gulf of Tonkin, and the Gulf of Siam.

In March of 1965, a coastal interdiction force named Operation Market Time was put into place. Working corporately with the Vietnamese Navy (VNN), the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard launched the new tactic with immediate success. In July of 1965, the Coastal Surveillance Force/Task Force 115 was activated and took command of all coastal interdiction.

From the onset, North Vietnamese and Viet Cong vessels were being encountered and sunk by the joint forces. It became obvious to the enemy that they needed to switch strategy. This led to an increased movement of arms and supplies via inland waterways.

As the movement of enemy supplies increased on the inland rivers and canals, the U.S. Navy formed Task Force 116. The official name became the River Patrol Force. The primary vessel used was the Patrol Boat River (PBR). The PBR sailors had their hands full from the beginning. As new river divisions were formed, the frequency of contact increased. Operation Game Warden took it to the enemy with fierce determination.

Commander Naval Forces Vietnam, realizing that more manpower was needed, decided to expand operations. In early 1967, Mobile Riverine Force/Task Force 117 was formed. The plan was to combine U.S. Naval and Army Forces in an attempt to thwart the enemies' efforts. The Navy Mobile Riverine Force and Army 2nd Brigade of the 9th Infantry Division were soon to become partners in the war effort. Later the Army 3rd Brigade joined the alliance.

The Mobile Riverine Force concept was based upon tactics from two previous wars. The U.S. Civil War saw the first ever ironclad vessels pitted against one another. Until then, all hulls were wooden structures. The USS Monitor, a Union vessel, and the USS Merrimack, a Confederate States vessel, made history while battling one another on March 9, 1862. Ironically, the Union Navy had purposely sunk the USS Merrimack, its own vessel at the time, early in the war in order to keep it out of confederate hands. The confederates were resilient, though, and raised the vessel, refitted it and she played a major role in naval history. These were but two of the many ironclad vessels used during that era. The United States never built another wooden battleship.

During the Indochina War, the French Navy successfully utilized riverine assault craft against Viet Minh Forces between 1946 and 1954. They were called dinassauts. When the U.S. Mobile Riverine Force arrived in 1967, many of the older French craft were still being used by the South Vietnamese Naval Forces.

The Mobile Riverine Force began operations in January 1967. River Assault Squadron 9 was soon joined by River Assault Squadron 11. The assault craft were mainly formed from older Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM) 6 hulls. Most were 50 to 55 feet in length and propelled by twin V-6 engines. The styles included (1) A Monitor boasting a 40-mm cannon on its bow. Later the Program V monitors had 105-howitzer mounts; (2) a flame boat called a Zippo that could spray napalm hundreds of feet; (3) an Armored Troop Carrier, dubbed the "Tango," that was used to ferry infantry troops from one location to another. It also had a miniature helicopter pad; (4) a Command and Communication Boat that provided logistics for each operation; (5) an Assault Support Patrol Boat that was equipped with sonar and V-12 engines for minesweeping purposes; and (6) a Tango boat that was outfitted with high pressure water cannons to dispose of enemy bunkers. All of these craft were heavily armed with 20-mm cannons, Mark-19 Grenade Launchers, 0.50- and 0.30-caliber machine guns, small arms, and various other weapons.

The Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers were initially surprised by the efforts of the joint Mobile Riverine Force, but they soon began developing resistance tactics. The September 1967 battle on the Ba Rai River turned out to be a prime example. During the 4-hour battle, in which half of the boats were hit by heavy enemy fire, 3 Navy men were killed and 77 wounded. The enemy suffered 173 casualties.

The Mobile Riverine Force played a key role in saving the Mekong Delta from enemy control during the 1968 TET Offensive. By June of 1968, River Assault Squadrons 13 and 15 had joined the force. Two Mobile Riverine Bases, made up of various support ships and craft, were in place along the main rivers to support the infantry and riverine craft on a daily basis. Dong Tam, an

***The Mobile Riverine
Force played a key role
in saving the Mekong
Delta from enemy
control during the
1968 TET Offensive.***

USS Harnett County (LST-821)

In a remote corner of the South China Sea, 105 nautical miles from the Philippines, lies a submerged reef in the Spratlys the Filipinos call Ayungin, but Ayungin is different. In the reef's shallows there sits a forsaken ship, manned by eight Filipino Marines whose job is to keep China in check. It is home to a World War II-era ship called the Sierra Madre, which the Philippine government ran aground on the reef in 1999 and has since maintained as a kind of post-apocalyptic military garrison. From afar, the boat doesn't look much different from the Chinese boats that surround it. But at close range, water flows

freely through holes in the hull. Old doors and metal sheets dot paths where the men walk, to prevent them from plunging into the cavernous tank space below. The ship's ancient communications and radar equipment looms above, looking as if it could topple over at any time. With the tropical sun blasting down on it, the ship has been ravaged by rust. Whole sections of the deck are riddled with holes.

The Sierra Madre at one time was the USS. Harnett County built as a tank-landing ship for World War II and then repurposed as a floating helicopter and river patrol boat hub in the rivers of South Vietnam.

In 1970 the United States gave the ship to the South Vietnamese, and in 1976 it was passed on to the Philippines. But nobody had ever taken the time to strip all of the communications gear or even old U.S. Navy logbooks and a fleet guide from 1970.

The Chinese presence at Ayungin has spooked the Philippine Navy out of undertaking its regular run to resupply the Marines there. The men depend on fish—fresh, fried, dried—as their main means of physical survival. They are all undernourished and losing weight, even though eating and meal preparation are the main activities on-board, after fishing. The Marines live in the old officer's quarters and on the boat's bridge. When the Sierra Madre was first driven up on the shoal in 1999, it was a desired posting. There was less rust, you could sleep wherever you wanted and people played basketball in the vast tank space below deck. Now that space is filled with standing water.

So, all you former sailors and others that served on or passed through her can still be proud of her. The USS Harnett County is still doing her duty after all these years, doing what she was designed to do, and like in Vietnam, a lonely outpost amid hostile surroundings. ★



During Vietnam on the Rivers



Ex-USS Harnett County (LST-821) underway while in South Vietnamese service as RVNS My Tho (HQ-800)



Ex-USS Harnett County (LST-821) in Philippines service as BRP Sierra Madre (LT-57) at A.G. & P. Shipyard at Batangas. Vessel was grounded in Ayungin Island (Second Thomas Shoal) in the disputed Spratleys group of islands sometime in 1999. It is reportedly being used as an outpost by the Philippine Navy up to the present.



MRFA Trailer at Norfolk, Nebraska



MRFA & 9th Infantry Vets at Nebraska Vietnam Vets Reunion at Norfolk

FROM THE GALLEY

Continued from page 2

able to find and hold onto from that time was the friendships and bonds he created.

Mr. Moore, Thank You. Thank you for allowing me to be part of such a wonderful group of people, thank you for helping me to find answers, which have granted me

peace. Thank you and the many that stood up for what they believed in and served. Thank you for fighting for my rights and my way of life.

I anxiously await the next installment of the newsletter.

May God Bless you and your family, and those who served and still serve today.

Sincerely, Alicia Ballew (Barnes)



Example of a Chieu Hoi Pamphlet

Remembering Vietnam

1967-68 Chieu Hoi

by Ron Rutowski
HHQ 2nd/60th

I had the rare opportunity to go on a helicopter flight where I was a part of a new operation called Psychological Operation (PSYOP) that focused on psychological warfare. We would fly over known VC areas and I would help throw out Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) pamphlets that were pieces of paper about 3" by 5" with instruction to the VC that if they wanted to surrender all they had to do was yell Chieu Hoi when they saw a U.S. soldier. They were instructed that they would be given food and treated well if they surrendered. Sometimes it worked and those that turned themselves in were treated fairly. Some VC tried to yell Chieu Hoi when they ran out of ammunition in a firefight. Flying in a helicopter over enemy-controlled area was a very dangerous job as helicopters were a favorite target of the VC. Note the flags on the Chieu Hoi pamphlet. They represent the countries that were supporting and involved in the Vietnam War. ★

How to Find Someone

George O'Connell USS Terrell (LST-1157) groconnell@lst1157.com

I use three cross references before I 'call one' . . . this one was fairly easy because 'you' had included the home town and 'we' know the approx age.

For starters I use (1) People Smart (<http://my.peoplesmart.com/psp.aspx>). They are cheap but good. They give the age and in most cases keep the name up there for a while.

I also check the (2) VA Funeral Registry (<http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/>). Pretty good BUT very incomplete. People who I 'know' are buried in National Cemeteries are NOT in the VA listings—FREE, and I will use (3) Find A Grave (<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi>). It is FREE for the basics and usually reliable, normally giving the birth and death dates and a lot of times they will show the headstone SO if you are looking for a person name like Michael J. Philpott that you 'knew' was a BM2 in 1964, you can figure he was probably 25 or so (prewar) and if they show a Michael J. Philpott died in 1980 at 41 or so you probably have the right guy especially if the stone cites USN and a whole lot better if they say BM1 USN.

Normally if I get two out of three, I am real confident, except as in the case we had enough 'info' to figure the People Smart was correct.

As for myself, I use what they call ZabaSearch Advanced Search. I have been pretty lucky with it as it usually gives a guy's age so if he is in his mid-60s you can figure he maybe who you're looking for. It does request his full name; if it's an oddball name you may get away with just the last name. Smith and Jones are hard ones to find on any search engine. Enter the State he was from on Google ZabaSearch, click on advanced search and go from there. Some search engines may have a cost that will come up with more info; it usually is not that expensive. We used one when we first started the association, but we had so many requests we could not afford it.

The association does have a Vietnam Database that gives us the person we're seeking's full name, MOS, rate or rank, and state of record. This is a good way to narrow down your search.

The one thing is a person has had to use the VA for health issues or a home loan, etc. I don't mine helping on these nor does Mike Harris. We're the only ones who have use of the database. If you want or need help, you need to be a member of the MRFA, and please don't send a handful of names all at once. Both Mike and I stay real busy; sometimes more than we would like. **Albert** (mrfa@charter.net) and **Mike Harris** (mekong152@99w.us) ★

The Last American Pirate

by Herschel Hughes, Jr.,
Ed.D. CDR, MSC, USNR (Ret.)

Today, Captiva Island, just off southwest Florida, is the site of carefree getaway vacations, but its name reveals its darker, much-romanticized connection with ferocious pirates of the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. This island is where history and legend has it that pirates, like Jose Gaspar, repaired their war-torn ships and imprisoned beautiful female captives.

Until now no one has even suspected that right in the middle of the Vietnam War, between tense combat operations, one final act of piracy by an American sailor was perpetrated; one more beautiful female captive was taken—not just taken, but invited to dance for the ship's crew! This is the story of that sailor, the story of the last American pirate.

One winter afternoon of 1968-69 this sailor was tasked to take his Captain's gig ashore to the Division Headquarters at Dong Tam, to check on some work being done ashore for the ship. Upon arriving at the dock there stood a most remarkable and unexpected sight—a tall, young, and beautiful western woman. In stark and poetic contrast, a burly, unshaved midget accompanied her. Well . . . beautiful, buxom, western woman and a midget were the two most unlikely objects to find on a Dong Tam dock. They were entertainers, she a singer/dancer and he her drummer, both from Australia, sent down to the USS Benewah by the Special Services Officer to put on a show.

Now, this was the "pre-TQL" Navy. For those folks who stayed in the Navy into the '90s and have taken Total Quality Leadership courses, you have been informed that we are all on the same team. The crews from our sister ships are patriotic Americans, too. As good "TQL-ers," we don't compete with other ships' crews for scarce resources anymore! But this was before that, when we did compete, vigorously, with other ships for scarce resources, and beautiful, buxom western women were extremely scarce in the MRF. In addition, the Benewah was our Commodore's flagship, which is like being "teacher's pet" because we already thought they were the favored ship.

Alas, this young sailor was NOT from the Benewah, but WAS from a ship that looked like the Benewah; in fact, only one number painted black on the dark green bows distinguished them at all. Within a flash, this otherwise honorable "officer and gentleman" made his decision to carry out an act of piracy. He told the buxom lass and her short friend he would gladly take them to his ship, the "Benewah," and with a nod to his coxswain gave the order, "Take us back to our ship, Coxswain!" At that point, the lass and the midget were technically captives.

The entertainers were happily bound for the "Benewah," while this young pirate was anxiously laying the groundwork for the next phase of the plan. Washington in all his glory did not cross the Delaware with more sense of mission than this young officer brought his newly found treasure across the Mekong River to where the ships lay anchored. As the gig arrived alongside the pontoon that served as the ship's loading dock, little difficulty was found getting dock space as shipmates, and the embarked boat crews, became aware of his cargo. After firmly assuring the bug-eyed Quarterdeck Watch that "No official measurements of anything were needed for the ship's log," the young pirate escorted the lady



Cdr Hughes onboard the USS Constitution—no he wasn't on the commissioning crew, but he was like the typical sailor checking the grog out see if it was fit for consumption.

and her drummer to the wardroom. He quickly moved to put his plan into place. The trickiest part would be handling the Captain. It was this young officer's job to know the ship's operations well in advance, and a special service show of this "magnitude" would certainly have been well planned and the Skipper briefed.

Swallowing his pride, the rookie pirate lied to his deeply respected CO for the first and only time. Confessing he had somehow missed the ball on this one, he informed his Captain that Special Services had, for some reason sent us a show.

"Does the Skipper want me to send her away?" the sailor asked. "Where is she?" responded the CO. "She's in the wardroom, sir." "Perhaps I should go meet her?" "I think it would be worth your time, sir."

The plan was in the bag the second the skipper laid eyes on her. This fine captain had never been known to move about his ship with any clumsiness whatsoever, but as he made visual contact with this young lady's most prominent features, he tripped over the threshold of his own wardroom door. Following introductions, the Skipper ordered work to stop and a "Tango" boat with a flight deck to be requested to tie up amidships to function as the stage. The sailors and soldiers could "man the rail" on all decks on the starboard side for the show.

Perhaps the show would have had a little more "atmosphere" in a darkened nightclub, but the young lady and her drummer put on a whale of a show that afternoon. Most of the crew had not seen a western woman for 6 months, some close to 10 or 12. This lady from Australia was a sight for sore eyes. It was a reminder that home still existed where, hopefully, we would return soon. After the show, the "hostages" were thanked and taken back to the post at Dong Tam.

Somewhere in Australia are a retired singer/dancer and her drummer who have fond memories of their performance on the "Benewah." Now you know they never made it to the Benewah, because they were victims of the last American pirate. To the crew of the Benewah and their embarked troops, this old retired pirate will try to make it up to you at some future reunion. But to his faithful shipmates, you know I did this for you, God bless you all. And if those old Benewah sailors, who never took any TQL courses, catch up with me and do me in, Shipmates, just scatter my ashes. . . well . . . how about on Captiva Island! ★

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

MRFA GEAR LOCKER

Hat Pins



P001 MRF



P002 9th Inf Div



P003 RAD 91



P004 RAD 92

SALE
\$5⁰⁰
FREE
SHIPPING!

A great gift for any occasion. These sturdy and colorful pins will make a great addition to that special hat. Makes a great lapel pin and tie tack too! Each is quality hand-crafted pewter and comes complete with clasp. **Designed exclusively for the MRFA and not available anywhere else!**



P005 RAD 111



P006 RAD 112



P007 RAD 131



P008 RAD 132



P009 RivRon XV



P010 RAD 152



P011 Riv Div 153

P012 USS Benewah
APB-35

P013 3rd/60th Inf



P014 MRF 3/60



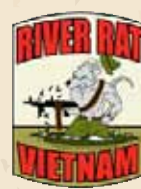
P015 39th Inf



P016 47th Inf



P017 River Raiders



P018 River Rat



P019 Brown Water Navy



P020 White River



P021 U.S. Army



P022 U.S. Navy



P023 Vietnam Svc Medal



P024 Purple Heart

SHOW YOUR PRIDE!

GEAR ORDER FORM

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell _____

E-mail _____

Ordering is as easy as 1-2-3.

1. Indicate your choice of item number (be sure to include color and size, if applicable), with quantity, and total amount. Add amounts for grand total to enclose.
2. Make your check or money order payable to the MRFA. The MRFA does not take credit cards.
3. Mail Gear Order Form and check to Products Chairman, Chet Stanley Jr., 205 Carolina Ave., Easley, SC 29640-1409; 864-306-8400; gunnerstan@aol.com.

Visit www.mrfa.org to download our product catalog from the MRFA Gear Locker!

VCCC Pin

Custom made 3" diameter Vietnam Combatant Crewman Pin. Silver Insignia on white base. Designed by Member Tom Nielsen (T-132-6).

\$14⁰⁰
FREE SHIPPING!



VCCC001 VCCC Pin

Item No./Description	Size	Quantity	Amount
			\$
NOTES:			
Total items ordered _____			
Grand Total			\$

A Burial at Arlington

by Paul J DeNicola

In 2003, I had the great honor of attending a funeral at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. It was a deeply moving occasion that began with a service in the Old Post Chapel followed by the burial. I elected to walk behind the caisson to the grave site with a few other guests. I'm glad that I chose to do so for it was a humbling experience. As the caisson proceeded to the site, people visiting the cemetery paused to pay their respects to the passing procession. Some saluted, others placed their hand over their heart and still others removed their caps and bowed their heads.

The previous year I had received a call from a Vietnamese friend of mine named Le Luu. Le Luu is a South Vietnamese woman who had immigrated to the United States in 1975 after Saigon fell to the communists. Her husband was a Lieutenant in the South Vietnamese Air Force and fought alongside US troops. At the time she immigrated to the United States, her husband had been missing in action for 10 years. When Le Luu called me in 2002, she told me that the remains of her missing husband had been found and positively identified through DNA tests. When his remains were identified, Lt. Nguyen Bao Thung had been missing almost 36 years. He had been shot down or crashed along with his crew in a UH/CH-34 Helicopter while flying a mission in Laos. Le Luu invited me to the funeral service and internment in Virginia at Arlington Cemetery, which was scheduled to take place June 26, 2003.

The evening prior to the service at Arlington there was also a service at a local funeral home to honor those whose remains were found at the crash site. A single coffin was placed at the head of the room containing their remains. In attendance were Vietnamese, Americans, and to my surprise, a number of gentlemen in military uniforms from Finland, although at the time I did not recognize the country their uniforms represented.

The service began with the reading of the names of those who had died: Phan The Long, Nguyen Bao Thung, Bui Van Lanh, and Larry Alan Thorne.

Larry Thorne! I pondered this man's place among the South Vietnamese who were honored that day and upon returning home I began doing research on the Internet to learn who Larry Alan Thorne was. My research led to his remarkable story.

He was born Lauri Allan Törni in Viipuri, Finland, on May 28, 1919, and as a young man, he enlisted in the Finnish Army where he attained the rank of captain. Because of his expertise in winter survival and his skiing abilities, he developed, trained, and commanded Finnish ski

troops. During the Finnish Winter and Continuation Wars, he fought the Soviet Union that had invaded Finland. His ski troops fought the Russians for extended periods of time deep behind enemy lines. For his bravery in battle, he was awarded the Knight of the Mannerheim Cross, which is the equivalent of our Congressional Medal of Honor. After Finland's war officially ended, Capt. Törni joined the German Army to continue fighting the communists.

After WWII, he made his way to the United States and in 1954 enlisted in the US Army as a private and adopted the name Larry Thorne. While in the army, he was befriended by a group of Finnish-Americans. This group of Finnish officers had immigrated to the United States and was inducted into the army under the Lodge Act. Several served in the Special Forces. With their support, Thorne was brought into the Special Forces where he excelled. He taught skiing, survival, and mountaineering. He attended airborne school and rapidly advanced in rank. In 1957, he was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant. He was promoted to captain in 1960. From 1958 to 1962, he served with the 10th Special Forces Group in West Germany. While there he was second in command of a search and rescue mission in the Zagros Mountains of Iran gaining him a notable reputation.

In 1963, Larry Thorne served his first tour of duty in Vietnam with Special Forces Unit A-734 and fought in the Mekong Delta. In 1965, he returned to Vietnam for a second tour. Thorne was assigned to Headquarters Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). He was instrumental in establishing standard operating procedures for the fledgling Studies and Observation Group (SOG). MACV-SOG was a joint service unconventional warfare task force engaged in highly classified operations throughout Southeast Asia.

When North Vietnam began to increase its military strength in South Vietnam, the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong used the neutral country of Laos for sanctuary. This area was utilized as an area for transport of weapons, supplies, and troops from North Vietnam. By 1964, the North Vietnamese had sent 30,000 troops into South Vietnam.

In September 1965, the infiltration of reconnaissance teams into Laos, codenamed Shining Brass, began with Larry Thorne flying as an observer for intelligence gathering missions over the region of eastern Laos. Because of this, he became very familiar with the entire area in which MACV-SOG and the 5th Special Forces teams would be operating.

In October 1965, the first MACV-SOG cross-border team was to be inserted into a targeted area within Laos by South Vietnamese Air Force

helicopters. Their task was to report on North Vietnamese troop movements in the targeted area. This region later became part of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. One of the helicopter crews on this mission included 1st Lt Phan The Long, Commander; Lt Nguyen Bao Thung, Co-pilot; Sgt. Bui Van Lanh, Crew Chief; and passenger Capt. Larry Thorne. Their job was to rescue any crew from a downed helicopter should there be a need to on this particular mission.

The weather that day was especially hazardous because of thunderstorms and lightning over the target area. At one point, Capt. Thorne intended to cancel the mission but changed his mind when the cloud cover opened enough to continue the mission. Once Capt. Thorne learned the insertion of the team was successful, he radioed that he was on his way back to the airfield. That was the last transmission that was heard from his helicopter, although there were numerous attempts to contact anyone aboard his aircraft.

Intense search efforts were initiated at first light and continued for the next month; however, no trace of the helicopter and crew were found. Shortly thereafter, Larry Thorne, Phan The Long, Nguyen Bao Thung, and Bui Van Lanh were declared "missing in action." Prior to this mission, Larry Thorne had been recommended for promotion to Major and was being groomed for a staff position as an intelligence officer. His posthumous promotion to Major was approved in December 1965.

Larry Thorne is the only soldier known to have fought under three flags—those of Finland, Germany, and America.

While the families of these South Vietnamese crewmembers and those of Larry Thorne have received some closure regarding their loved ones, it is important to remember that there are still over 1,700 Americans still listed as "missing in action" in Southeast Asia.

For additional information on Thorne and the Finnish-American experience, read J. Michael Cleverley's books *A Scent of Glory: The times and Life of Larry Thorne and Born A Soldier*.

Larry Alan Thorne; Major; SD-5891, HQ, MACV ADVISORS, MACV; Army of the United States; Norwalk, Connecticut; May 28, 1919 to October 19, 1966; (Incident Date October 18, 1965). Larry A Thorne is on the Wall at Panel 2E, Line 126.

The author of this article was born and raised in Milwaukee, WI. He currently lives in Iron River, MI. He served in Vietnam in 1968-69 with the Army's B Company & HHC 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division/Mobile Riverine Force in the Mekong Delta.

ARMY NAVY MRF

Continued from page 6

Army/Navy base, was built from scratch to house additional support elements of the Mobile Riverine Force.

Battles were taking place all over the III and IV Corps Regions. The areas closer to Saigon were protected by River Assault Squadrons 9 and 11. More southern combat regions were covered by River Assault Squadrons

13 and 15 in conjunction with Vietnamese Marines (VNMC), Vietnamese Army (ARVN), and Regional/Popular Forces (RF/PF).

Operation Giant Sling-shot and Operation SEAL-ORDS were two of the larger thrusts to interdict enemy forces and supplies. Many other smaller Task Groups, Task Units, and Task Elements met the enemy on his own turf. At one point, *Time Magazine* reported a

casualty rate amongst Mobile Riverine Forces as high as 70%. The Viet Cong and North Vietnamese were suffering much higher rates of attrition.

As the United States began to withdraw from Vietnam, President Nixon instituted the Vietnamization Program. In early to mid-1969, the Mobile Riverine Force turned River Assault Squadrons 9 and 11 over to the Vietnamese

Navy (VNN). On August 25, 1969, the joint Army-Navy Mobile Riverine Force was officially disbanded. U.S. Navy personnel would continue to fight the remaining boats in various capacities until December 1970 when the last riverine craft was turned over to the VNN.

During their watch, the sailors and soldiers of the Mobile Riverine Force were awarded scores of personal awards for valor as well

as many Presidential Unit Citations, Valorous Unit Awards, Navy Unit Commendations, Meritorious Unit Commendations, Vietnamese Gallantry Crosses, and Vietnamese Civil Action Medals. Many sailors and soldiers paid the ultimate sacrifice and hundreds were wounded. The Army-Navy Mobile Riverine Force has earned its proud place in the annals of United States military history. ★

TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One



Dettmers

Member **Frank Dettmers Sr** BMC (Ret.) passed away June 2, 2014. Frank served on A-131-6, CCB 31, and T 54 (05/69-05/70). You may contact the family c/o 4236 Lochlond St, San Diego, CA 92111-3628, 858-277-1676.

Member **David G. James** passed away November 17, 2013. David served in D Co., 2nd Platoon 2nd/60th Inf, (10/68-10/69).

You may contact the family c/o 4 Waltham Dr, Nashua, NH 03060-5356, 978-988-0704.



Lueck

Member **William M. Lueck** passed away October 14, 2013. William served on A-151-1 (10/68-09/69). You may contact his sister Christie L. Lueck, N1577 Krocken Rd, Poynette, WI 53955-9656.

Member **Dennis McDougall** passed away July 28, 2014. Dennis served in A Company

3rd Platoon 3rd/60th Inf (01/68-01/69). You may contact his wife Joyce, 1792 Turnberry Ter, Orlando, FL 32804-6014, 407-481-0241, joycebates@earthlink.net.

Thoughts and prayers for Joyce and her family, RIP Dennis was shot in the chest at My Tho during TET. Tom Wright



Lisko

Member **Robert "Bobby" C. Lisko** passed away December

23, 2013. Bobby was a plankowner member of the MRFA and attended all our reunions and stayed in touch with all the members of Delta Co 3rd/60th (10/67-10/68). You may contact the family C/O Linda D Lisko, 12811 128th St., Broken Arrow, OK 74011, 918-344-3596, badgambler@cox.net.

Bobby entertained Delta 3/60 with his trays of slides and always commentary. He was a big part of our MRFA Reunions. John Ellis

May our Brother Bobby rest in peace. It was a honor and a privilege to have known him. Albert

The Passing of My Hero, Dennis McDougall

It is with great sadness that I write to all of you on the passing of our friend and brother, Dennis. Dennis has been my hero for the last 46 years even though I didn't know it until around this time last year. Leading up to the MRF reunion last



McDougall

year in Indianapolis I was debating on whether to go or not. Not that I didn't want to, because I did, but because of resources (two kids in college and all the rest). Then in one of my correspondences with Alex Kaufbusch, Alex told me that Dennis McDougall would be there. I had recently heard of a brother that was in a battle for his life with cancer and that his name was Dennis McDougall. That was when Alex told me that Dennis was "the guy that came back for you on October 23rd."

You see, October 23, 1968, was the day I thought my life was over. Our company was on an eagle flight to a location that turned out to be inhabited by much more enemy that was anticipated. The LZ was so hot that none of the choppers landed. The bird I was on got close enough to the ground for five of us to jump off. So there we were, the five of us, pinned down in the rice paddy with the entire wood line firing at us. Sgt. Espinoza, myself and three others that I don't know the names of. I remember the small dike I was using for cover was getting eaten up by the bullets coming at us. We had no radio, no fire power. It seemed hopeless. That's when I thought it was my last day on this earth. Just about then is when out of the

sky came what I call "God's grace in the form of two F4 fighter jets" with Huey gunships to follow. We were later joined by the rest of the company and things turned in our favor.

Right after that mission I left the company and went to the 9th Div. Sniper School. I never got to spend any time with my unit (Co. A) again. What I didn't know and never found out until last year was that upon landing from the failed eagle flight and learning that five soldiers were left behind, a young lieutenant by the name of Dennis McDougall volunteered to go back with some of his platoon members and rescue the five left behind. It was Dennis that called in those F4s and the gunships. It was Dennis that led his platoon into position to save us. I admit to you I am crying while writing this.

It was the greatest pleasure for me to meet Dennis and his wife Joyce for the first time last summer in Indianapolis. I am so glad I could finally thank him in person. I look at my wife and my two sons, my home and everything else and know that I would have none of it without the courage and efforts of Dennis and his platoon on that day in October, 1968. He has fought this disease with the same courage and dignity that he had while in Vietnam.

I too am a believer in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ as is Dennis. And because of that I have the comfort in knowing that Dennis is well and comfortable beyond our imagination. I pray for the Lord's grace and peace for Joyce and all of Dennis' family and friends. Good bye, my hero. Larry

Larry Haugen, Co. A 3/60th, 9th Div. Snipers, 916-202-6375

A young man who does not have what it takes to perform military service is not likely to have what it takes to make a living. --John F. Kennedy--

In Memory Of

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

Ralph Bakle from Charles Sykes for a job well done
MajGeneral Lucien Bolduc, Jr. USA (Ret) for Guy Tutwiler
Bravo Charlie A 10 (04/69-04/70) for Terry Mason and Gil Reyna (Class NIOTC 2-69)

Brothers of the 2nd/47th Inf for all Army and Navy KIA's
Mike Clark in memory of Larry Welk and Lydes Gardner 4th/39th 9th Inf Div (1967)

Orville Daley for Merrill Davis USS Askari ARL-30 (1952-1953)
Ron Easterday for Marco A. Serrano Jr. and Franklin D. Hite HHC 2nd/47th Inf (Mech) KIA 03/13/67 and William B. Cronin (LTC) HHC 2nd/47th Inf (Mech) KIA 04/27/67

Dennis D. Erlandson for Verlyn H. Hanson Co D 3rd/47th (1968-69)
Ted Fetting for Eloy "Stevie" LeBlanc, Roy Phillips, and Fred Jansonius B Co. 2nd/60th KIA 02/02/68

Bob Flaige in memory of SP4 Robert "Bob" Jenks E Co. 3rd/60th died of wounds 03/02/68

Nan Fulton for LtGen Bill Fulton Cdr 2nd Bde Asst Div Cdr 9th Inf Div (1966-68)
Tony Garvey for Wes Sade, Billy Olsen, and Staff Sgt James Williams C Co. 4th/47th 9th Inf

John W. Gerbing for Noel T. West A Co. 4th/47th KIA 06/19/67
Regina Gooden for Sgt Lloyd Earl Valentine B Co. 3rd/47th KIA 09/05/68
Mrs. Elizabeth M. Hayes for LTC Daniel P. Hayes HQ 3rd/34th Artillery (06/67-01/68)

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

James Henke, Tony Spradling, Dave Nelson, James Callan, and the Band of Brothers for Sgt Gerald Thurman and Spec James B. Johnson, and all our Brothers lost on June 19, 1967, from A Co. 4th/47th 9th in AP BAC, Long An Province

Joe Hilliard for Joe Benack from Florida and Donald Hartzell from Pennsylvania
Bruce Jensen in memory of Frederic Peers Webb A-111-4 KIA 12/21/67

J. R. Johnson 3rd/47th 9th "Recon" (05/66-01/68) in memory of Walker, Gotch, Paradez, Nelson, and Hayes

Dave Justin for Tim Doty A Co 3rd/60th

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

Willie B. Lloyd for Capt Walter J. Riedemann USN (Ret.)

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

Richard MacCullagh for Chaplain Rene L. Pettit, LT, CC, RC, RivRon 13 and 15
H. Bruce McIver for HM1 Zeph Lane who was severely wounded 03/31/69 and unfortunately killed in a private plane crash 05/20/85

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

A R "Monti" Montillo for William "Bulldog" McLaughlin B Co 3rd/60th KIA 10/03/68 and Barry "Butch" Copp B Co 3rd/60th KIA 10/28/68

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

Albert Moore for Tom Bityk CS3 IUWG-1 VC-Hill/Ha Tien (1969-70)

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

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

Jasper Northcutt for SSGT Henry T. Aragon B-2 2nd/47th KIA 08/23/67, SGT

James E. Boorman B-2 2nd/47th KIA 08/27/67, SP4 James D. Bronakoski B-2 2nd/47th KIA 04/27/67, SP4 Michael G. Hartnett B-2 2nd/47th KIA 04/27/67,

SGT William D. Mize B-2 2nd/47th and 5th/60th KIA 10/28/67, CPL Harold K. Southwick B-2 2nd/47th Inf KIA 03/02/67 (first KIA in B Co. 2nd/47th in Vietnam), and PFC Robert C. Voltz B-1 2nd/47th Inf (Mech) KIA 03/11/67 (first KIA 1st Platoon B Co. 2nd/47th in Vietnam)

Chet "Gunner" Stanley for all the USN and USA KIA's of the MRF (1967-70)

Ken Sundberg for Michael David Sheahan 5th/60th KIA 02/25/68, Robert L. Conley 5th/60th KIA 02/01/68, and Glenn Dean Taylor 5th/60th KIA 02/01/68

Robert Sutton for LT James F. Rost Jr. Vin Te Canal Chau Duc KIA 11/69

Robert Thacker for SFC Earl T. Pelhan, Jr., 15th Eng, 9th Inf Div, KIA in Delta Lo Steven Totcoff for my brother CPL Dennis S. Totcoff B Co 3rd/47th 9th Inf Div KIA 5/2/68

Edward Toth for Norman Neuleib USS Askari ARL-30 (1952-53)

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

USS Guide MSO-447 for Shipmate and Brother Harold Foster

Henry Velez for my fallen brothers, B Co. 2nd/39th Inf

Ron and Judy Wallace for all those lost from 3rd/47th Inf

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

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

David Wilson 2nd/60th KIA 08/05/69, Timothy Shelton 4th/39th KIA 06/25/69,

Steven Murray 4th/39th KIA 05/26/69, Harvey Crabtree 2nd/4th Arty KIA 06/19/69, and Dennis Mattox 1st/501st 101st Abn KIA 08/23/69



Mobile Riverine Force Association

1857 County Road A14
Decorah, IA 52101-7448

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



MRFA Sponsors

Our expressed thanks to those who have become MRFA sponsors! It's never too late to get onboard as a sponsor, so we continue to seek and welcome those who wish to sponsor the MRFA! Sponsorship in the MRFA helps to defray the cost of producing *River Currents*. Sponsorship lasts for a period of one year, with your name and information appearing in four issues. Send your \$25 (payable to the MRFA) to Charlie Arding, 1857 County Road A14, Decorah IA 52101-7448

VISIT WWW.MRFA.ORG

Sponsors...

Dallas Abbott A Co. 3rd/60th Inf (06/69-06/68)
LT H. M. "Murf" Alexander ComRivDiv 132 (6/68-6/69)
Jimmie J. Apel A Co. 4th/47th Inf and 6th/31st (1969-70)
Charlie and Georgina Arding T-151-11
Ed Arledge USS Indra ARL-37 (1967-70)
John Armstrong HHC 3rd/47th Inf (04/66-01/68)
Dale Ashley USS Monmouth County LST-1032 (11/66-11/67)
Christian Bachofer Jr. ComRivDiv 92 (07/68-06/69)
"Doc" Barber USS Harnett County LST-821 (1968)
Bob and Sara Bischoff
Richard Bittle USS Nueces APB-40 (06/68-04/69)
Tom Bityk IUWG-1 Vung Tau/Ha Tein (05/69-05/70)
Robert B. Blair USS Clarian River LSMR-409 (1966-68)
MajGen Blackie Bolduc USA (Ret.) Cdr 3rd/47th Inf
Thomas Breidel R-92-2 (06/68-06/69)
William Brennan USS White River LSMR-536 (02/66-10/67)
Brothers of the 2nd/47th (Mech) Inf
C. Vic Brumley USS White River LSMR-536 (05/66-07/67)
MGen Walter Brydie, Jr. HQ 3rd/34th Arty (1968-69)
Ralph Burnette 1st Plt A Co. 4th/47th Inf (05/67-07/68)
Gerald Busic USS Garrett County LST-786 (06/68-05/69)
John and Pamela Carlin in honor of Erol Tuzco
RADM William Carlson CO USS White River
LSMR-536 (10/65-03/68)
Jim Carter RivRon 15 T-52 (12/69-12/70)
LTg Robert Conaty XO RivDiv 131 (05/68-04/69)
LTC Richard Crotty HHC 3rd Bde, 9th Inf (07/67-07/68)
William Currier HSB 3rd/34th Arty (11/68-08/69)
William Dabel C-1 3rd/39th (01/69-10/69)
Orville Daley USS Askari ARL-30 (1967-68)
Peter Danchuk USS Windham County LST-1170 (02/72-02/76)
Robert Dockendorff NSA Dong Tam YRBM-17 (03/67-04/68)
William Duggan RAS 13 M-131-2 (08/68-08/69)
Ron Easterday HHC 2nd/47th Inf (04/66-09/67)
and 659th Div (09/67-01/68)
Paul Eastham T-132-11 (05/69-07/69)
Vergie Eblen Associate Member
Leon Edmiston B Co. 3rd/60th 9th Inf (06/68-05/69)
Dennis Erlanson D Co. 3rd/47th Inf (1968-69)
Edith Ethridge Associate Member
Larry Gunner Ethridge USS Askari ARL-30
Cdr Kirk Ferguson USN (Ret.) ComStabRon 2 (11/69-11/70)

Terrance Feters HHQ 3rd/47th Inf (04/69-07/69)
Ted Fetting B Co. 2nd/60th Inf (10/67-02/68)
Bob Flaige E Co 3rd/60th Inf (05/67-05/68)
Dennis Frank D Co. CMDR 3rd/60th Inf (07/68-07/69)
William B. Fullerton USS Benewah APB-35 (1970)
Nan Fulton Associate Member
Richard Gallagher USS Mercer APB-39 (1968-69)
Gamewardens of Vietnam Mid-Atlantic Chapter
Ron Garcia USS Windham County LST-1170 (1966-68)
Tony Garvey C Co. 4th/47th 9th Infantry Div (1968)
John N. Gavin USS Satyr ARL-23 (1971)
John W. Gerbing A&E Co 4th/47th Inf (1966-68)
Ronald Gillespie TF 115 USS Krishna (1965/66)
Regina Gooden Associate Member
Ron Gorman T-91-10 (01/68-12/68)
Gary Grahm A-111-7 (05/68-05/69)
Roger "Grossie" Grossinger D Co. 3rd/47th 9th Inf (1968-69)
Frank Gubala A Co. 3rd/47th Inf (02/68-07/68)
Robert Halloran USS Harnett County LST-821 (12/67-12/68)
Roger Hamilton, Jr. USS Mark AKL-12 (08/68-08/69)
Jeffie Hanks USS Benewah APB-35 (01/70-01/71)
SFC Michael Hamner RivRon 13 and 153 (07/69-02/71)
Joseph Harper USS White River LSMR-536 (12/66-12/68)
Leo Haynes RivDiv 594 PBR-8120 (04/69-02/70)
Charles Heindel C-91-1 (11/67-12/68)
GMGSN Bernard Howlett USS Carronade IFS-1 (12/65-08/67)
James Hoyer 1097th TC (MB) (08/68-07/69)
MajGen Ira A. Hunt Jr. HHQ 9th Inf Div
Alan G. Hyde 9th Signal (1966-68)
Truman Irving USS Mark AKL-12 (08/68-08/69)
David Jarczewski C Co. 4th/47th Inf 9th Div (05/66-05/68)
Bradley Jenkins HSB 3rd/34th Arty & 2nd/47th Mech (09/68-10/69)
Bruce Jensen T-111-3 (1967-68)
Gerald Johnston USS Nye County LST-1067 (01/66-01/67)
David Jones Z-111-7 (10/68-10/69)
Everett Jones CCB-151-4 and CCB-152-5 (04/69-04/70)
Frank B. Jones RivRon 15 T-48
John L. Jones 1st Plt, A Batt 84th Arty (10/66-11/67)
Mackey Joyner USS Krishna ARL-38 (1946-49)
Harry & Judy Kawamura
Jerry "Hollywood" Kawecky B Co. 3rd/47th 9th Inf (07/68-12/68)
Dane Keller RivDiv 532 PBR 121 (05/69-05/70)
LTC Nick Laiacona USA (Ret.) C Co. 3rd/60th Inf (1968-69)
Bob Lennon USS White River LSMR-536 (1966-68)
Roger Lewis IUWG-1 Unit 2 (06/68-06/69)
Walter F. Lineberger III XO RivDiv 91 (1968-69)
Tom Lively C Battery 3rd/34th Arty (10/68-09/69)

James Long Sr. ComRivFleet One Staff (11/67-11/68)
Steven Loomis Naval Advisory Group (VNNSY) (06/70-06/71)
Robert "Bob" Lord YTB-785 Winnemucca (02/71-12/71)
Richard Lorman T-152-6 (06/68-06/69)
Corrado Lutz PCF-23 (03/68-03/69)
Michael Marquez A Co. 3rd Plt 3rd/60th Inf (07/68-07/69)
Frank O. Martinovich D. Co 3rd/47th 9th Inf Div (09/68-07/69)
Terry Mason RM3 RivDiv 132
Cratis McLaughlin D. Co 3rd/47th 9th Inf Div (09/68-07/69)
Sgt E-5 Ken McLean B Co. 4th/47th Inf 2nd
Bde USS Colleton (11/68-01/69)
Thomas L. "Mac" McLemore T-112-7 (12/66-12/67)
Adam Metts T-111-2 (08/68-10/69)
MilSpec Tours Inc
Capt Lawrence K. Monahan USNR (Ret.) YRBM-20 (1970-71)
A R "Monti" Montillo B Co. 3rd/60th Inf (04/68-09/68)
Albert and Sarah Moore USS Benewah (APB-35)
J. Russell and Alice Moore A-91-5 (11/68-06/69)
Roy and Lynn Moseman 4th/47th Inf
Tom Muench Korea Era Vet SAC
Co Van My TF-115.3.7 Cat Lo
CWO James T. Natividad HHC 3rd/60th (1966-67)
CSM Joseph M. Natividad B Co 3rd/60th (1967)
Naval Advisory Group
Nha Trang (1967-68 and 1970-71)
MAJ Joseph D. Nichols III, CO Co. 3rd/60th 9th Inf Div (12/66-11/67)
Jasper Northcutt B Co. 2nd/47th Mech Inf (11/66-05/67)
James Noyes C Btry 3rd/34th Arty (06/67-06/68)
George R. O'Connell USS Terrell City LST-1157
Charles Ostrov HHC 2nd/47th Mech Inf (01/68-12/68)
John C. Oxley Recon E Co 3rd/47th Inf (11/65-11/67)
Capt Jerry Pape USN (Ret) Staff COMRIVFLOT ONE (01/68-12/68)
Dwayne Parsons M-111-1 (Zippo 1) (11/67-11/68)
Robert Pawlowski T-111-11 (03/67-12/67)
Michael Howard Phillips D Co. 15th Combat Engineers (08/68-06/69)
BM1W. R. Posey Craft Master YTB-785 (1967-68 1970-71)
LCDR Leonard Previto CTF-117 (08/67-08/68)
Richard Pubanz A Co. 4th/47th Inf (01/69-03/69)
Bryan and Dolly Rasco USS Indra ARL-37 (09/67-01/69)
Paul Ray M-151-5 (06/69-07/70)
Capt William Renton USS Askari ARL-30 (10/68-09/69)
Donald and Marijo Robbins USS Benewah (APB-35)
William Robinson Jr. CO USS Mark AKL-12 (06/70-05/71)
Durwood D. Rosser M-91-1 (10/67-08/68)

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