



River Currents



USS Luzerne County (LST-902) Vietnam

River Raiders in mud in the Mekong Delta

A PUBLICATION OF
THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 24, NUMBER 2
SUMMER 2015



Al Moore

From the Galley

Man it seems like only yesterday we sent out the Spring *River Currents*. Time goes by fast when you're having fun or as you're getting older!!!! Frank Jones has done an excellent job putting the reunion together. He has really worked hard at it. I should have turned the reunions over to Frank much sooner than I did. There have been a few changes with the hotel staff which is understandable. There is always a lot of changes in the hotel industry, but this will not affect the reunion one iota. We have a lot of members attending this reunion for the first time and it's always nice to see new faces, even though the majority has been members for a number of years. The hotel has given us some excellent menus for the daily meal on the patio and some decent prices. That's about it for me; there is more info below on the reunion. One thing I need to say I seem to get most of the credit for the newsletter. That's really not the case without Robin and Georgie we could never do the job we do with the newsletter. It's something we're all proud of and Robin and Georgie should be recognized for the great job they do as well. Folks take care and I look forward to seeing everyone at the reunion. It's going to be another good one. **Albert**

Veterans Day 2015 Washington, DC

The MRFA and 9th Infantry Division will be placing wreaths at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, on Veterans Day, Wednesday, November 11, 2015. 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, 2015.

The Arlington Court Suites is located at 1200 N Courthouse Rd, Arlington, Virginia 22201. More information on this hotel is available at <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 2015. We look forward to seeing you in DC.

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

MRFA Reunion September 2-6, 2015

We will be at the Indianapolis Marriott East again. The hotels we want to fill up first are listed below with the room charge. When making your reservation through the reservation department, make sure to reference the MRFA so you get the MRFA rate. These rooms went very quickly last reunion, so make your reservations early. These rates are good 3 days prior to the reunion and 3 days following the reunion. The last day to book is August 3, 2015.

Indianapolis Marriott East (\$79.00/night) 1-317-352-1231, 1-800-228-9290—is already filled up.

La Quinta Inns & Suites (\$69.00/night) 1-317-359-1021
Fairfield Inn & Suites (\$74.00/night) 1-317-322-3716

Other Back-up Hotels: Below are two more hotels in Indianapolis. They are located one block from the Indianapolis Marriott



Kelly Moore, Sales Manager
and Christine Noggle,
Director of Event Planning

East. There are no special rates for these two hotels. These hotels are just back-ups, if needed.

Quality Inn & Suites East, 7050 E 21st St, 1-317-352-0481

Candlewood Suites, 7040 E 21st St, 1-317-495-6600

Note of Interest: If you have any problems registering at the hotel, please contact Frank Jones.

Frank prefers e-mail (frank@raf-fertylighting.com or popsaroni@sbcglobal.net). You can leave a message at his home (314-822-1230). Frank will return calls or e-mails as soon as possible. Frank works a full-time job, so bear with him on answers.

Indianapolis Marriott East is located in Indianapolis's East neighborhood and local attractions include Indiana State Fairgrounds, Pepsi Coliseum, and Children's Museum of Indianapolis. Regional points of interest also include Indianapolis Motor Speedway and Bankers Life Fieldhouse.

Hotel Features: Indianapolis Marriott East's restaurant serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner. A bar/lounge is open for drinks. Room service is available during limited hours. The hotel serves buffet breakfasts (surcharges apply). Recreational amenities

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MRFA Reunion - Witness to War Foundation

Martin Mader (martin@witnesswar.org)

The Witness to War Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Atlanta, Georgia, that is dedicated to preserving the oral histories of combat veterans from WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and the Global War on Terror by conducting free video interviews that honor your service, preserve your story, and promote the education of military history for future generations. Every veteran receives three DVD copies of their interview, unedited, that they can share with family and friends in addition to having a copy of their interview donated to the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project that currently contains 65,000 veteran interviews. The Witness to War website (www.WitnessToWar.org) publishes clips of these interviews that the public can freely browse to learn about the sacrifices made by our Armed Forces over the past century. If you would be interested in participating in this important project at the 2015 Mobile Riverine Force Association reunion in Indianapolis, IN, please contact Martin Mader at 770-628-0024 or Martin@WitnessToWar.org to set up an appointment. This service is absolutely free of cost. ★

From Kansas to the Delta

**Special Edition 1st Year in Vietnam
The Old Reliable
Vol. 1, No. 50, Dec. 20, 1967**

- Oct. 19—15th Engineer Battalion becomes first echelon of the Division to arrive in Vietnam and begins construction work at Bear Cat near Long Thanh.
- Dec. 19—Major General George S. Eckhardt leads some 5,000 Old Reliabilities onto the beach at Vung Tau, where they are welcomed by General William C. Westmoreland.
- Dec. 30—The Division's first MEDCAP treats 350 patients at Tam Phuoc.
- Jan. 19—About 400 advance party members from various Division units move into Dong Tam in the Mekong Delta to prepare a brigade-size base camp.
- Jan 20—The 1st Brigade and elements of the 3d Brigade and the 3d Squadron, 5th Armored Cavalry launch Operation COLBY. In the Divisions first major contact, 14 Viet Cong lose their lives.
- Feb. 2—Division strength mushrooms to 15,000 as the last major units, including the 2d Brigade, reach Vietnam.
- Feb. 12—Firing in support of the 3d Battalion, 47th Infantry, the 3d Battalion, 34th Artillery learn they can navigate the Delta waterways by mounting two 105-mm howitzers on floating barges.
- Feb. 13—The 3d Battalion 39th Infantry initiates Operation ENTERPRISE, a continuing operation designed to uproot the Viet Cong from Long An Province.
- Mar. 10—2d Brigade takes over Dong Tam, and 3d Brigade moves to Tan An.
Mar. 19-20—In the pre-dawn hours, Troop A, 3d/5th Cav is attacked by major elements of the 273d VC Regiment near Bau Bang. A furious 6-hour battle leaves 254 enemy dead.
- Mar. 24—A harbor is created by dredging away a large island in a turning basin between Dong Tam and the My Tho River.
- Apr. 8—Battery B, 3d Battalion, 34th Artillery shells shoreline of the My Tho River from barges, marking the first time artillery is employed for direct fire river assault.
- Apr. 9-11—A pre-planned airstrike uncovers underground VC positions, forcing the enemy to

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MRFA Reunion: Plan of the Day

Thursday, September 3, 2015

- 7:00 a.m. Liberty Hall Hospitality Room opens
9:30 a.m. Registration hosted by George Duke Marthenze and his staff (setup outside Liberty Hall)
9:30 a.m. Product sales hosted by Chet Gunner Stanley and his staff
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. MRF and 9th Inf Division Museum Room hosted by Bob Pries and his staff (Salons A and B)
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. MRFA Memorial and Museum Trailer hosted by Bruce Graff (contact person and driver) and Charlie Ardinger (front of hotel)
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Luncheon on the patio (if it rains, will serve inside) **Note: Members and guest pay for their own meals.**
Beer will be supplied on patio at no cost. Food pricing: Cheeseburger \$5.00; Hot Dog \$4.00; Bratwurst, Kraut \$5.00; Bag of Chips \$1.00; Soft drink \$2.00. Condiment bar to include ketchup, mustard, lettuce, tomato, buns, and watermelon slices
Throughout the Day Raffle tickets available from Mable Springer (Raffle Queen) and her staff
10:00 p.m. Liberty Hall Hospitality Room closes

Friday, September 4, 2015

- 7:00 a.m. Liberty Hall Hospitality Room opens
9:30 a.m. Registration
9:30 a.m. Product sales
10:00 a.m. Herb Worthington (2/60 Recon, National Chair for the Agent Orange/Dioxin & Other Toxic Substances Committee of Vietnam Veterans id America and the Region 2 [DE, NY, NJ & DE] Director for VVA) will talk about Agent Orange and the health effects on the MRFA and the families of your members.
10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Shopping at Castleton Mall. Sign up at front desk for shuttle. First come, first serve basis.
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. MRF and 9th Inf Division Museum Room
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. MRFA Memorial and Museum Trailer
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Luncheon on the patio (If it rains, will serve inside) **Note: Members and guest pay for their own meals.**
Beer will be supplied on patio at no cost. Food pricing: Cheeseburger \$5.00; Hot Dog \$4.00; Bratwurst, Kraut \$5.00; Bag of Chips \$1.00; Soft drink \$2.00. Condiment bar to include ketchup, mustard, lettuce, tomato, buns, and watermelon slices
Afternoon. Signing table for Chris Noel
Throughout the Day Raffle tickets available from Mable Springer (Raffle Queen) and her staff
7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Delta to DMZ dance with a DJ playing your favorites of the '60s and '70s music held in the Grand Ballroom. Board Member Frank Jones and wife Linda will be hosting the dance. No dress code.
10:00 p.m. Liberty Hall Hospitality Room closes

Saturday, September 5, 2015

- 7:00 a.m. Liberty Hall Hospitality Room opens
10:00 a.m. *Master of Ceremonies*
Gunnery Chet Stanley and Don Blankenship
Speakers
• Chris Noel Weather Girl in Vietnam
• Jack Kitchura RivDiv 153
• Ed Eaton B Co. 3rd/60th
11:00 a.m. *Memorial Service*
Bag Piper Rufus Campbell who will honor us again with playing of a couple songs and Chris Noel singing *Amazing Grace* at the memorial service. We all appreciate what Rufus and Chris are doing this for our brothers and sisters. Chaplain LtCol Jim Johnson U.S. Army (Ret) 3rd/60th and Captain Richard MacCullagh U.S. Navy (Ret) ComRivFlot One Staff
Flags and certificates will be presented to widows, sons, or daughters who attend the reunion of our fallen Brothers from Vietnam and those who have passed on since Vietnam. Gunner Chet Stanley assisted by Don Blankenship will do the honors.
Missing Man Ceremony
Dave Schoenian C Co 4th/47th
Playing of Taps
Roy Moseman
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Luncheon on the patio (If it rains, will serve inside) **Note: Members and guest pay for their own meals.**
Beer will be supplied on patio at no cost. Food pricing: Cheeseburger \$5.00; Hot Dog \$4.00; Bratwurst, Kraut \$5.00; Bag of Chips \$1.00; Soft drink \$2.00. Condiment bar to include ketchup, mustard, lettuce, tomato, buns, and watermelon slices
Noon to 2:00 p.m. Product sales
Afternoon. Signing table for Chris Noel
3:00 p.m. Raffle drawings
3:30 to ? Visiting with shipmates, family, and friends
10:00 p.m. Liberty Hall Hospitality Room closes

Sunday, September 6, 2015

- Check out **Note: Volunteers are appreciated. See Frank Jones**

REUNION

Continued from page 1

include an indoor pool, a spa tub, and a fitness facility. Wireless and wired high-speed Internet access is available in public areas (surcharges apply). Guest parking is complimentary. Additional property amenities include gift shops/newsstands and laundry facilities. This is a smoke-free property.

Guest Rooms: Indianapolis Marriott East has 315 air-conditioned guest rooms featured with coffee/tea makers and complimentary weekday newspapers. Beds come with premium bedding. Bathrooms feature shower/tub combinations, complimentary toiletries, and hair dryers. The MRFA guests are exempt for the fee for in-room high-speed Internet (wired and wireless). Guest rooms offer multi-line phones with voice mail. Televisions have premium satellite channels and pay movies. Rooms also include electronic check-out. Guests may request refrigerators but they are available on a first come/first serve basis and wake-up calls. Housekeeping is available daily. Guest rooms are all non-smoking.

Notifications and Fees: The following fees and deposits are charged by the property at time of service, check-in, or check-out: (1) Pet fee, USD 75.00 per pet; (2) Pet deposit: USD 75.00 per stay; and (3) Buffet breakfast fee, USD 16.95 per person (approximately). The above list may not be comprehensive. Fees and deposits may not include tax and are subject to change.

Discount: The hotel will be giving us a 10% discount for all food and beverages purchased in the hotel restaurant. You have to wear your name badge when asking for this discount.

Handicap Home Health Depot Scooters: To rent a handicap scooter, contact Kathy or Paula at Home Health Depot (317-347-6400). The requirement is a \$400 deposit, \$150 for rental, \$75 for delivery, and \$75 for pick-up. If there are no

damages to the scooter, the rate upon return will be delivery and pick-up for the dates of September 1-6, 2015. The MRFA is not responsible for the delivery of the scooter or the payment.

Castleton Square Mall: Sign up for the shopping shuttle began on May 1, 2015. You can e-mail Christine at noggle@indymarriotteast.com

or call her at 317-322-3716, ext.1255. You must have the names of the riders when e-mailing or calling. Shopping will be from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Friday, September 4, 2015 (times could change a little). This is first come, first serve. When the shuttle is full, it's full. ★

2015 MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Reunion Registration Form • Sept. 2-6, 2015

Name _____

Unit in Vietnam _____ Dates _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ or Cell _____

E-mail _____

Name(s): Spouse/Guest(s)	City	State
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Send my registration form by email? ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ No guests

☐ First Reunion

Registration fee \$60.00
 Cost includes member and spouse/girlfriend
(Does not cover lodging, food, bus trips, or shuttles)
 Total number of other guest(s) (____ x \$20 each) _____
 Guests under 16 are free.
 Registration fee for Nonmember (\$75) _____
 Late registration fee (\$75) _____
 Grand total enclosed \$_____

When filling out the form, be as accurate and clear as possible. Use one unit and one date, even if you have served in more than one unit.

Please send this form with your check or money order (payable to MRFA or Mobile Riverine Force Association) before August 16, 2015, to MRFA 2015 Reunion, 1857 County Road A14, Decorah, IA 52101.

There will be a \$25 processing fee for all returned checks and cancellations prior to the reunion.
Note: You will still have to check in at the registration desk to receive your name tag.

If you wait and pay your registration fee at the reunion, the late registration fee will be \$75. Register early and help the MRFA as we use

your fees to purchase food, beverages, and other items.

If you have any questions, contact Frank Jones (frank@raffertylighting.com).

Thanks for your support in our great association. **Albert Moore, MRFA President**

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 Arding, MRFA Membership Chairman, 1857 County Road, A14, Decorah, IA 52101-7448.

2015 MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Reunion Flight Information • Sept. 2 to 6, 2015

NOTE: Flight info due no later than August 16, 2015, to get on the hotel shuttle. **No exceptions to this rule. If you do not sign up, you will have to find your own transportation to the hotel.**

Name(s): _____

Cell Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Date	Airline	Flight Number	Arrival time INTO Indianapolis Airport	Number of People Needing Ride from Indianapolis Airport
Date	Airline	Flight Number	Arrival time DEPARTING Marriott East Hotel	Number of People Needing Ride to Indianapolis Airport

Flight Information Form: If you are flying and have friends flying, try and work your air travel around each other. The airport is about 16 miles from the hotel and the cost per taxi runs around \$45 or \$50. To provide the complimentary transportation on a prearranged scheduled basis, fill out the form above and send to Christine Noggle by e-mail cnoggle@indymarriotteast.com; fax to Christine Noggle at 1-317-352-9775; or mail to Christine Noggle, Event Manager, Indianapolis Marriott East, 7202 E 21st St, Indianapolis, IN 46219, ATTN: 2015 MRFA Reunion Flight Info.

If you e-mail this form, you will receive a confirmation e-mail back within 3 days of arrival as to what your pick up times will be. If flights are delayed, call 1-317-322-3716, Ext 1255, when you get into Indianapolis airport and they will get you on the next shuttle.

Where did most of the fighting take place during the Vietnam War?

Most of the fighting took place in South Vietnam because the official reason American troops were in Vietnam was to assist the South Vietnamese fight a Communist insurgency, the Viet Cong (VC), who were supported by the North Vietnamese regular army (NVA). Because of this, ground forces were limited to South Vietnam, although special units did go across the border into Laos, Cambodia, and, even, North Vietnam. Laos and Cambodia were officially neutral and the United States did not want to risk a repeat of the Yalu Campaign (in the Korean War, when the United States crossed the Yalu River just south of the border of North Korea and

China, the Chinese Communists sent hundreds of thousands of troops south into the war) in Vietnam and put North Vietnam off limits for major ground offensives. Most of the incursions into Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam were, and still are, secret due to the political sensitivities of the times. It wasn't until April 1970 that the United States launched a large-scale ground offensive against the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Cambodia.

The NVA/VC took advantage of American reluctance to invade Cambodia and Laos and created a massive supply and resupply route just east of the Vietnamese borders of those countries called the Ho Chi Minh Trail. This was not a single road,

but rather a series of paths, many passable only by foot or by motorcycle, that moved supplies and men south from North Vietnam and into South Vietnam. While the United States did not send large numbers of ground forces into the areas, we dropped more bombs on the Ho Chi Minh Trail than we did on Germany in WW2. This included tactical bomber raids and B-52 strategic bombing raids. We also dropped a lot of bombs on North Vietnam. So to say there was no fighting in Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam is somewhat a misnomer as that ignores the tremendous amount of air combat that took place.

I might add that the bombings of the Ho Chi

Minh Trail and Hanoi and other areas of North Vietnam did little real damage, although hundreds of thousands were killed. North Vietnam did not have that many large industrial complexes, but used a number of cottage industries to produce its home-grown war material. Therefore, if one small factory was knocked out, another small factory producing the same thing was up and running within a very short period of time. Also, since the Ho Chi Minh Trail was not a developed road, but a series of paths, repair took a few hours. A B-52 bombing raid, for instance, might crater a number of paths in an area of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, but NVA/VC, Pathet Lao (Laos),

and Khmer Rouge (Cambodian) porters would take alternate paths while work gangs would quickly fill in the craters. At most, a section of the trail would be out a few hours following a bombing run, even by B-52s, before it was repaired. Bombing does well against industrialized societies, but not against decentralized, pre-industrialized societies.

Within South Vietnam, most of the fighting took place in the Central Highlands along and south of the border between South Vietnam and North Vietnam and in the Mekong River Delta around Saigon and west to the Cambodian border. ★

MRFA Member finds lost dog tag

I was raised in Richmond, California, on the east bank of the San Francisco Bay. At age 13-14, I used to take a bus on a Saturday by myself to China Town in San Francisco and just wander around all day long and take in the sights, sounds, and smells of the Asian culture and it grabbed me. In February 1964 at age 17, I joined the Navy and after boot camp in San Diego I was fortunate to get assigned to a Gearing class destroyer, USS Higbee (DD-806), homeport Long Beach, California, as a non-designated SA and was promptly assigned to the deck force. In May 1964, in late June, we changed homeports to Yokosuka, Japan, for a period of 2 years. I was going to be back in my element again. About 2 weeks after arriving in Yokosuka, the Tonkin Gulf incident happened and most of the time spent there we were either chasing bird farms (carriers) or conducting SHOBOM, starshell, and NGFS operations. As a side note, the Higbee and the USS. Black (DD-666) were the first two ships to initiate Market Time patrols and the Higbee was the covering warship for the Danang Marine landings March 8, 1965. We did manage to get some port time (26 days in the first 5 months) in Honk Kong and Subic and once in a while Yokosuka. Around May 1965, my chit was approved and I went into the galley. Much to my sorrow, the ship returned to Long Beach Naval Station in July 1966. I had an option of staying in Asia but I would have had to ship over, not an option. It wasn't long before the stateside routine and regulations began to wear on me. No more sleeping in on days off, quarters at 0730, and then to add insult to injury after the first month we would cast off and steam to Seal Beach to load up 5/38 ammo and go shell San Clemente until Friday and then return to Long Beach. Now mind you we fired over 10,500 rounds of 5" rounds in 3 months off the VN coast in support of troops and SHOBOM. Plus I had a 72 every other weekend and weekend duty on the alternates so that didn't give me much playtime.

In late Nov of 1966, my orders came through for Vietnam, even though I had submitted my chit in Oct 1964 after a SECNAV instruction stating that anyone that went and did 1 year would have their choice of duty after they rotated out.

We had already made some contacts with Navy advisors of the NAG Navy and it seemed like that was right up my alley. Anyway, there was only one hitch. You had to have 1 year left in the Navy and I only had 8 months. No problem! As much as I disliked the Navy, I disliked the stateside bull and the stateside duty. So I extended and was in Saigon in early Feb 1967 assigned to the YFNB-21, later re-designated YRBM-16. The YRBM-16 was mined while I was onboard with a loss of seven men who died from the bomb that exploded against the hull of the YRBM-16 on Thanksgiving night!, 1:15 a.m., November 24, 1967 in the middle of a river at Ben Tre, Vietnam. A fire also damaged much of the interior. Lionel Burns CS3, who was there, supplied this photo (taken in Binh Thuy). It is assumed that a VC swimmer evaded the nets and placed the bomb there.



YRBM-16 explosion hull rupture

John Hendrickson and Dick Strandberg supplied the additional information.

While we were in Tan Chau. I was separated from the Navy on Feb 9, 1968 and went on or should I say tried to readjust to civilian life. It didn't go well for me and I suffered as a lot of us have with alcohol, fights, job, instability and relationship changes.

While working in Nigeria, I worked with a guy from Louisiana that was married to a Thai and he gave me a book on Pattaya, Thailand. After the Nigeria job went away, I went to work for the same company as a radar observer and helicopter dispatcher in December 2009 on an oil rig 3 miles off the Santa Barbara, California

coast, 1600-0600, 21 days on, 21 off. It was during my time out there, I began to formulate my plan to visit Thailand. I made my first trip there September 26, 2011 on an almost empty 747. I guess people were afraid to fly. After about a year, I knew my position was going to be eliminated and so I began to make another plan. I had plenty of experience in a bar on both sides and my cooking skills were kept up so I decided once that occurred I'd go to Pattaya and try my hand at running a bar and restaurant. After 2 years, my liver told me it was time to sell and change vocations so I took my TEFL course (Teacher of English as a Foreign Language) and moved to Bangkok which lasted for 2 years and I moved to Udon Thani in NE, Thailand.

In August 2009, I met a Filipina online and in April of 2010 she came to live with me in Thailand. She expressed a desire to go back to school so we moved to the Philippines November 2010. After 3 years in the Philippines, I needed to move out of the country and she was real good for me giving me the stabilization and understanding I needed. I decided for her future, I would buy a house and bring her back on a fiancée visa. So I moved back and bought a house in northern Arizona in July 2013 and did the immigration paperwork and had it approved in June 2014. It took a little longer than usual as I had some prior divorce paperwork from December 1986 that wasn't completed. In July of 2014, she told me she didn't want to come to the United States anymore and I darned sure didn't want to be there so I sold everything for what I could get for it and left in late January 2015 for SE Asia.

When I relocated to Da Lat, Vietnam, from the United States last February, one of my first priorities once I got settled was to visit some of the places where the United States had bases north of Saigon during the Vietnam War, Buon Ma Thout, Pleiku, Kontum, Quy Nhon, Danang and especially along the DMZ Dong Ha, Doc Meiu, Con Thien, Camp Carroll, Khe Sanh, and Lang Vay. On March 25, I began that journey. After going up through the central highlands, I arrived at Don

Remembering 9th 5th/60th

Article submitted by Tony Puglisi 5th/60th 9th Inf Div Bear Cat (11/66-04/67)

There was one thing while in the 9th 5th/60th that was kind of funny (at least I thought so); I was being sort of punished by the same Platoon Sgt. who infused me (a long story) and he decided on a punishment for me. He ordered me to dig a platoon size sump. I obeyed and started digging and the hard rice paddy and the entrenching tool made the palms of my hands start bleeding. So being a Demolition Man, I got a block of C4 and a blasting cap, set it up in the hole I started, called out fire in the hole three times and pressed the plunger. Everyone started running to see what blew up and when the Sgt. (he hated my guts) got to the scene, I said to the Sgt., "Here's your Platoon size sump Sgt!"

I thought that was humorous because he did not say "How" to dig the Platoon-size sump.

I do not have any photos, but at one time I did have 24 rolls of undeveloped film I had taken of all kinds of things during my tour with the 9th Inf. They were destroyed by fire (our PC took three hits by a 75 mm and it melted on the road along with my film. I was bringing them to base camp (Xuan Loc) so they would be safe and I could sell them to LOOK magazine and National Geographic but they did not make it.

Anyway, I can tell you that before I was infused we were security on a bridge (around April or May 1967?). The engineers built so the nearby village people and we could have a connecting route (the village people used it to go to a Catholic Church nearby). Well we had one PC there on the far side of the bridge and it was my track. I was on Guard duty on the 50 Cal. one morning when it was very foggy and we were pointed towards the village when I heard singing. I alerted the rest of the guys and we watched as two Vietnamese Catholic nuns were taking a group of children to the Catholic Church down the road past us. It was amazing, we heard singing in the heavy fog and then these nuns and children appeared from within it; it was great. Because the engineers rebuilt the bridge the VC blew up and because we were there, they were able to go to church.

Now that bridge holds a personal meaning to me besides that. After years of being back home, I was chatting about war stories with a guy from home, at home, about the 9th Division 5th/60th Mech. He told me that he was drafted and was sent to the same company and my same platoon (he was my replacement) and to the same squad and that same personnel carrier guarding that same bridge. Small world, huh?

He went on to tell me that he and two others were securing that bridge and two were killed by a VC attack and he was able to escape capture by going down a ravine and was found the next morning by reinforcements. He was the sole survivor.

Tony was transferred to the 11 Armored Cavalry Div. where he earned a Bronze Star and Purple Heart. ★

KANSAS

Continued from page 2

flee their damaged hideouts. The 3d/39th combines with the 2d, 3d and 5th Battalions, 60th Infantry to kill 209 of the disorganized enemy.

May 2—Units of the 2d Brigade tighten the noose around a major Viet Cong force at Ap Bac, near Dong Tam, killing 196 enemy and capturing numerous weapons.

May 13—Company B, 2d Battalion, 39th Infantry discovers an enemy hand grenade and Claymore mine factory just 2 miles from Camp Bear Cat.

May 15-16—2d Brigade units wipe out 90 Viet Cong during Operation PALM BEACH in the Cam Son area, about 20 miles west of Dong Tam.

June 1—Major General G.G. O'Connor takes command of the 9th Division, as General Eckhardt departs for II Field Force.

June 2—For the first time since the Civil War, the Army and Navy team up to form a mobile waterborne fighting force. The Mobile Riverine Force, composed of two battalions from the 2d Brigade and Naval Task Force 117, uses 100 small speedy assault craft to secure the Long Tau shipping channel between Saigon and the South China Sea.

June 19-22—MRF units kill 256 VC at Rah Nui Canal, west of Rach Kien.

July 10—The 1st Brigade, together with the 1st Australian Task Force and two battalions of the Vietnamese Marine Corps, begin Operation PADDINGTON in Phuoc Tay Province. The 6-day mission, designed to open previously VC-dominated jungle, results in 93 VC killed.

July 21—While clearing jungles where Highway 20 crosses Highway 1, elements of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment are suddenly attacked by an estimated battalion of the 275th VC Regiment. A savage counterattack produces 90 confirmed enemy dead.

Aug. 3—After the 8-day Operation CORONADO II, Allied forces from the 2d Brigade, Navy Task Force 117, along with ARVN Rangers, Marines and soldiers, count 285 dead Viet Cong in the Cam Son Secret Zone.

Sept. 12—Units of the 2d and 3d Brigades, plus the 7th ARVN Division complete the 27-day Operation CORONADO V in the Cam Son Secret zone. Totals include 330 enemy killed and numerous weapons and ammunition captured.

Sep. 21—The 2,200 man Royal Thai Army Volunteer Regiment lands in Vietnam as the 5th free-world force to join the South Vietnamese in their counter-insurgency struggle. The Thai unit, the Queen's Cobras, sets up base at Camp Bear Cat.

Oct. 1—Company B of the 9th Supply and Transportation Battalion records its one millionth mile traveled in support of the Division in Vietnam. The unit has also hauled almost 200,000 tons of goods, trucked nearly two million gallons of fuel to forward base camps, and provided transportation for more than 80,000 soldiers.

Oct. 8—The largest enemy arms cache ever found on Vietnamese soil is uncovered by the 9th Division during Operation AKRON III—a jungle-clearing operation 13 miles southeast of Bear Cat. A massive system of bunkers and tunnels yields 1,140 weapons, almost 95,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, 3,634 grenades, 2,373 recoilless rifle shells and 452 mortar rounds.

Nov. 5-11—Division MEDCAPs treat their 250,000th patient.

Dec. 4—Action in Operation CORONADO IX explodes as the 2d Brigade's MRF and the 5th Vietnamese Marine Battalion kill 250 VC in day-long encounters 65 miles southwest of Saigon. ★

"Been There and Done That!!!" Mekong Delta, Vietnam (1968-1969)

By Jim Silva

4th/39th Inf 9th Inf Div Vietnam

Rice paddies, VC, NVA, Dog tags, Flower Power, Psychedelic Asshole, Napalm, F4's, HE, Willy Peter, illumination, Puff the Magic Dragon, jungle trails, booby traps, trip wires, rats, huge spiders, mosquitos, fire ants, medi-vacs, Dong Tam, Ambush Alley, Tombstone Territory, FSB Danger, F4 Phantoms, Hackworth, pulling base camp guard, Nippa Palm, M79s, M60s, M16s, 45s, SKSs, AK 47s, chi-coms, 81 mortars, 4 Deuce mortars, 105 Howitzers, marking rounds, canister rounds, sick call, shot cards, Doc, medics, CS gas, PRC25's, whip antennas, c-rations, bouncing bettys, plastic canteens, bandoliers, VC number fucking 10, C4, P38s, RPGs, incoming, PZs, LZs, 50 calibers, Starlight scopes, command detonated booby traps, land mines, FNG's, quad 50s, green tracers, red tracers, white tracers, boom-boom girls, APCs, claymores, grenades, firefights, dustoffs, Cobras, R&R, My Tho, Vin Kihm, Nha Bei, Can Tho, letters from home, care packages, a cold beer, a warm beer, company parties, coconuts, palm trees, memorial services, EM clubs, "We've Got to get out of this Place," "Leaving on a Jet plane," "The good, bad and ugly," "Ballad of the Green Beret," "My Girl," Bob Hope, Reliable Academy, point man, ambush, eagle flights, canals, mud, "It don't mean nothing!", La Dae, Diddi Mow, Bou Coo, No Bic, poncho liners, jungle boots, jungle rot, to dai signs, death choppers, Peace signs, St. Christopher medals, Long Binh jail, sand bags, garbage dump, TOP, sick call, burning shit, GI buy me tea, conscientious objector, Chieu Hoi, water jugs, Dinky dow, ponchos, being wet, sweating, snakes, ham and lima beans, Tigerland, LRRPs, snipers, riverine boats, shrapnel, malaria pills, diarrhea, river crossings, salt tablets, leeches, bunkers, tree lines, mamasan, KIA, WIAs, sampans, Mobile Riverine Force, ARVNs, coke girls, beetle nut, whore houses, penicillin shots, arms caches, capturing VC, hour on/hour off, sleepless nights, FTA, short, PTSD, short timer stick, Battle, Alert, Claymore, Dagger Companies, lifers, return to the World, Hueys, search and destroy, number 1, number 10, Agent Orange, Purple Hearts, Bronze Stars, Silver Stars, DSCs, short time calendar, iodine tablets, hooches, C141, Caribous, door gunners, c-ration cigarettes, LOHs, platoon leaders, captains, NCOs, RAs, no fuckin' slack, draftees, basic training, AIT, forced marches, escape and evasion, class A inspection, Oakland Army terminal, 90th Replacement, Travis Air Force Base, Japan evac hospital, body count, body bags. If you were there and in the 4th of the 39th 9th Infantry Division everything should ring a bell. You would only remember if you are a ground pounder, grunt, rice paddy daddy, Hardcore Recondo, and a true American combat infantryman!!! To all that were part of this unique unit "Thank You" for your service and for your contribution in helping your fellow brother complete his tour and make it home to his loved ones. Welcome Home to a great bunch of very dedicated individuals! ★

MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE SUMMARY

ComRivFlotOne / ComRivSuppron – Seven

Command History – February 1967

On the 1st of February 1967, ComRivFlotOne/ComSupRon-Seven, Captain Wade C. Wells, USN, and the major portion of his staff were at the Naval Amphibious Base Coronado preparing for their deployment to Vietnam. The advanced echelon of the command divided between the *USS Whitfield County* (LST 1169) and the Headquarters for Commander Naval Forces Vietnam, Saigon. Under the leadership of Chief Staff Officer Captain Edwin P. Smith Jr. USN, this advanced group of 10 officers and 15 enlisted men was preparing for the arrival of the staff of River Assault Flotilla One and was overseeing the training of River Assault Squadron Nine 4 officers and 9 enlisted men and River Assault Division Ninety-One 2 officers and 135 enlisted. Both of which were embarked on the *Whitfield County*. Serving as temporary support



USS Whitfield County
(LST-1169)

ship, *Whitfield County* was anchored in Vung Tau Harbor, 1 mile from Vung Tau.

Elements of River Assault Squadron Nine (RAS-9) and River Assault Division Ninety-One (RAD-91) continued training with the 9th Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade, using boats borrowed from the Vietnamese Navy (VNN). RAS-9 and RAD-91 were exercising with the Army in LCM operations. This training followed a 4-day cycle set up by ComRivFlot One personnel.



Hog Backs borrowed from Vietnamese Navy Montrose

Day 1. Movement to the ship, lectures by ship and flotilla personnel.

Day 2. Wet net training and beaching and gunnery exercises.

Day 3. Day and night exercises with several insertions and extractions at selected areas in the RSSZ.

Day 4. Another exercise in the RSSZ with insertion and extraction, at various operation areas, and a return to the support ship. By February 5, five such cycles

had been completed. Other elements of the squadron and division were undergoing training as observers aboard VN RAG boats at Can Tho and My Tho.

During the TET holidays from 9 to 12 February, training operations were secured and the time was used for boat maintenance and repairs. On February 12, RAS-9 and RivDiv-91 began working with the 3rd/47th 2nd Brigade 9th Infantry Division. In the first 4-day cycle "A" and "B" Company participated. On February 16, 1967, "C" and "E" Companies were scheduled to start the same 4-day cycle. That "A" and "B" Companies had just completed. Increased enemy activity in the Long Tau Channel of

the RSSZ caused a change. ComNavForV on 16 February 1967, ordered RAS-9 and RAD-91 to support two companies of the 3rd Battalion in the Rung Sat Special Zone (RSSZ). This message marked the end of training and the beginning of combat operations for River Assault Flotilla One. At 0800 hours, units of RAD-91 landed "A" and "B" companies of the 3rd/47th in the RSSZ, thus began Operation River Raider One, the first

U.S. Riverine Assault operation since the Civil War. Also on the 16th of February, the arrival of the *USS Askari* (ARL-30) gave Commander River Assault Squadron SEVEN, a repair capability. The following morning at 0800, Army and Navy personnel gathered at the Command Post in the RSSZ for a brief on the already commenced operation. On the 18th of February, a Joint Tactical Operation Center (JTOC) was established on the *Whitfield County*. Search and destroy and ambush attempts by the Army failed to produce and significant contact with the enemy. However, positive evidence of his recent presence was ascertained.

On the 23rd of February, the staff of ComRivFlot One arrived in Danang and was transferred to Vung Tau on the 25th. The *USS Henrico* (APA-45) stood in Long Tau Harbor on the 24th of February to relieve the *Whitfield County* as interim support ship for ComRivFlot One.

Captain Wells arrived in Saigon on the 27th of February after participating in briefing at CinPacFlt Headquarters. RAD-92 arrived in Saigon on the 28th and was shuttled to Vung Tau and *USS Henrico* during the day. At 0801 (local time) on 28

February Riverine Assault Force (TF-117) was activated under the command of Captain Wells. Units assigned to TF-117 were River Assault Flotilla One/ River Support Squadron Seven Staff/ River Assault Squadron Nine Staff, River Assault Division Ninety-One and Ninety-Two and the *USS Askari* (ARL-30). Captain Wells flew to Vung Tau on the 28th and broke his pennant at 1010 (local time) in *USS Henrico*.



USS Henrico (APA-45)

Significant among February 1967 activities for ComRivFlot One was (1) the change of operational status on the 16th, (2) the arrival of ComRivFlot One on the 27th, and (3) the activation of TF-117 on 28 February 1967.

The *USS Henrico* was relieved by the *USS Montrose* (APA-212) May 1967. ★



Boats of Task Force 117 alongside Montrose

DOG TAG

Continued from page 4

Ha. I contacted a tour arranger and was paired up with a former ARVN soldier, Hoa (Hwaa) and his 100-cc Honda as my guide. He showed me various places around Dong Ha. After leaving Dong Ha, we went to Con Thien firebase. He had only gone to it twice before and that was some time ago, and the area was heavily forested with rubber trees. He took a trail that meandered through the trees and we came upon a clearing and a hootch. He asked the Viet that approached us about the location of the bunkers. After some discussion, my guide Hoa turned to me and told me the Viet had a war souvenir for sale and wanted to know if I wanted to

buy it. I told him no but I'd take a look at it. The Viet went around to the back of the hootch and returned with something in his hand and was rubbing the dirt off it. He said during the course of scratching in the dirt he found the item. It was a U.S. dog tag still encrusted in dirt. I was immediately interested in it and took a closer look at it. It had to be rinsed off with water to be legible. Once it was rinsed I took a closer look at it and read the name. It belonged to one Tyrone R Dilligard, serial number U.S. 67198302 and other information that goes on a dog tag including I was to find out later a social security number. It had also been bent in half and restraighnted. I immediately retrieved my notebook



out of my daypack and jotted down the information thinking all the time that this might belong to an MIA.

As an afterthought, I asked how much he wanted and was told 40,000 VND Dong. Well 40k VND is less than \$2 so I purchased it.

As soon as I got back to my room after the 10-hour tour, I googled the name and came up with it. I found out he was born 10/1/1947 and died 1/29/1984, age 36 and was buried in the

Calverton New York National Cemetery. I sent the dog tag information on to Albert (Cookie) Moore before hitting the rack and added that I'd like to get it back to the next of kin if at all possible and if the MFRA could be of help.

Next morning at 0545 I opened my e-mail and had an answer from Albert (Cookie) Moore, Steve Fetty, and Mike Harris. Included in the information was the date of enlistment 1969, separation date, 1970, MOS (11B), and among other things that he had been married and his wife had remarried. Member Steve Fetty had come up with a few possible names, addresses, and a phone number for his widow. The first one on the list had a phone number in the Bronx so

I called it via Skype from Dong Ha.

A woman answered and I explained who I was, where I was, and where I had been. I told her I found a dog tag that belonged to Tyrone and she said Dilligard? I said, "Yes," and asked her if she wanted it and she answered in the affirmative. So, I told her I'd send it to her as soon as I returned to Da Lat. So, a Bravo Zulu to Al, Mike, Steve Fetty, and the MFRA in helping me and for an outstanding thorough job and got it done extremely quick to return the dog tag that belonged to a loved one from a firebase along the DMZ in Vietnam after about 45 years. They did a fast job locating the widow. Lionel Burns ExCS3 (ibethereto@hotmail.com) ★

Red's Hit U.S. Ships in the Mekong Delta

Stars and Stripes Thursday April 18, 1968

SAIGON (AP)—“The Viet Cong launched their sharpest attack of the war against the U.S. Navy’s Mobile Riverine Force which patrols the Mekong Delta,” Military spokesmen said. In a brief attack Monday afternoon, April 14, 1968, Viet Cong troops hiding along the banks of a river 50 miles southwest of Saigon opened up with 75-mm recoilless rifles on several ships of the Task Force 117. Headquarters said three of the ships, including the flagship, the 328-foot barracks ship *USS Benewah*, and the *USS Tom Green County*, a 384-foot tank landing ship used for logistical support, sustained minor damage. A 56-foot landing craft medium, a standard amphibious landing craft used to carry men or supplies, burned and sank. There were no fatalities, but 14 U.S. sailors and four U.S. Army personnel were wounded.

The *Benewah* served her country loyally during war and peace. She was hit numerous times during her service on the Brown Waters of the Mekong Delta. She received many awards and decorations for her Vietnam service: Combat Action Ribbon, (4) Presidential Unit Citations (4); Navy Unit Commendations; (1) Meritorious Unit Commendation; Vietnam Service Medal with (15) Battle Stars; RVN Gallantry Cross with Palm, RVN Civil Action Medal, First Class, with Palm, and the RVN Campaign Medal with 60s device. *Benewah* was one of the most decorated ships of the Vietnam War.

Although the *Benewah* was one of the first “Green Ship” to serve in the Mekong Delta, as part of the Mobile Riverine Force, she wasn’t alone. There were three more APBs: *USS Colleton* (APB-36), *USS Mercer* (APB-39), and *USS Nueces* (APB-40). There were 5 ARLs: *USS Satyr* (ARL-23), *USS Sphinx* (ARL-24), *USS Askari* (ARL-30), *USS Indra* (ARL-37), and *USS Krishna* (ARL-38) and many APLs and YRBMs. There were also hundreds of small Green River Boats: the Monitors, Zippos, Assault Patrol Boats, Armored Troop Carriers, PBRs, and although not “Green,” the Swift Boats of Task Force 115. We cannot

forget the LSTs who made the dangerous supply runs up the narrow, shallow rivers of Vietnam and the numerous other “Green” and “Gray” auxiliary vessels that made up the great “Green Fleet” of Vietnam.

Here is a photo of the *USS Benewah* before she was sunk for an artificial reef. It was a sad day for a gallant old ship that served many and accomplished much. Albert B. Moore



75-mm recoilless rifles hit on *Benewah* April 15, 1968. Photo courtesy of Paul D. Bessler.



Former *USS Benewah* (APB-35) MRF TF-117



Ex *USS Benewah* as a hospital ship of the Philippine Navy



***Tom Green County* (LST-1159) during a PUC Ceremony for the Task Force 1969**

exploded in the mess decks of *Tom Green County* inflicting heavy material damage and wounding several men in the after part of the ship. Awards earned during the Vietnam War: Combat Action Ribbon, (3) Navy Unit Commendations, (4) Meritorious Unit Commendation, RVN Gallantry Cross with Palm, RVN Civil Action Medal, First Class, with Palm, RVN Campaign Medal with 60s device and the Vietnam Service Medal with (12) Battle Stars. ★

MRF Operations in I Corps

(Info furnished by Mike Harris
mekong152@99w.us)

On 3 March 1968, COMUSMACV directed that elements of one river assault division be deployed for a period of about 30 days to provide heavy escort services for waterborne logistic convoys of the Cua Viet and Perfume rivers. The deployment of these 14 riverine craft from RAD 112 decreased the MRF troop lift capability by about 25%. For the period of the deployment to I Corps, RAS 9 was tasked to support both infantry battalions while RAD 111 augmented by the RAD 112 boats that were left behind, provided base defense and close support for Task Force SIX GUN.

The riverine unit, under command of CTG 117.2 and comprised of 1 CCB, 3 monitors and 10 ATCs, arrived in I Corps on 9 March and commenced operations under the operational control of Commander Task Force CLEARWATER.

On 10 March, TG 117.2 commenced its first sweep and clear transit of the Cua Viet River from Cua Viet to Dong Ha. Four ATCs, one monitor and a CCB escorted two Landing Craft Utility (LCU) boats and six LCM8s up the 8-mile stretch of river and returned escorting a similar group of resupply boats without incident.

About 1345 the next day, a command-detonated mine was exploded astern of an LCM minesweeper in an area that had been swept four or five times. The command wire and part of the detonator were recovered by ATC-112-2 on the south bank of the river near a resettlement village.

The following day the riverine assault craft detached was subjected to an enemy artillery attack that completely destroyed the maintenance, messing and berthing facilities at the Cua Viet Naval Support Activity Detachment loading ramp. There were no casualties to either the personnel or craft of TG 117.2; however, as a result of the attack, the assault boat crewmembers were required to berth on their craft.

On 14 March at 0719, ATC-112-7 was sweeping close to the west bank of the Cua Viet River 2 miles southeast of Dong Han in Quang Tri Province when the boat hit an estimated 900-pound water-mine. The force of the explosion was so tremendous that it flipped the 72-ton troop carrier upside down causing extensive damage to the bow and starboard side of the craft. There were six crewmembers killed and one seriously wounded in the mining. Because of the extensive hull damage, the boat was deemed unsalvageable.

Task Group 117.2 assault craft continued to keep the Cua Viet River supply route to Dong Ha open and, on 18 March, commenced enforcing a 1630-0830 curfew against sampan traffic on the waterway. Sporadic enemy harassment continued throughout the following week as evidenced by one 60-mm mortar attack on the assault boats, which failed to cause any personnel or material damage. These continuous patrols were most instrumental in enabling the logistic craft from Naval Support Activity, Danang, to maintain their independent transits of the Cua Viet River.

On 28 March a monitor, M-112-1, on a routine sweep patrol operation on the Cua Viet River, experienced a near miss when an estimated 200-pound water-mine was command-detonated about 10 feet astern of the craft. The monitor lost steering control but did not suffer any personnel casualties. ★



Battle of Doi Ma Creek

by Gino Vasquez Bear Cat Dong Tam, Binh Phuoc (12/66-01/67)

I spoke about this battle at one of the reunions. At that reunion, there was an ex-helicopter pilot who validated a point that I spoke about during my recollection of the events. He saw the boat that I hit with my M-79 grenade launcher. Here we go; we were relaxing one afternoon at Binh Phuoc when the word came up for us to mount up and head to the rescue of the 3rd/39th because they were going to be attacked by a superior VC force. We were the second track and we received fire from the VC about a mile before entering their basecamp. When we were inside the 3rd/39th basecamp, I could not help but say; Damn! This basecamp is worth fighting for! Nice huts that were much nicer than ours. As we waited, word spread that two ARVN tracks have hit mines trying to go in the direction that the VC were thought to be located. A thought occurred to me that if the VC started to mortar the base camp they could wipe out all of our tracks. Later, word came that we would drive through a mine field and meet Charlie wherever they were. Pat Donnelly was driving our track that was given the task to lead the company through the mine field. I had just gotten out of the hospital after hitting a mine with our track a month earlier. I remember having the thought that if we were going to hit a mine that night to please let it be big enough to blow my ears drums again and send me home for good. God had other plans. We traveled all night with the cover of gunships and Puff the Magic Dragon who not only was puffing fire but also dropping huge flares that gave us light to see our way to Doi Ma Creek. We arrived around 4:30

a.m. and I took the first guard at 5:00 a.m. I woke up the next guy in line for guard at 5:30 and told him to be very awake and alert because Charlie was around us. He said ok, but, I knew him better than that. I made him believe that I was sleeping and 10 minutes later he laid down and fell sleep. At that moment, I woke everybody up and we stayed up until daybreak when we started to eat our C rations. I was sitting on top of the hatch eating when a shot just missed my head. I put my helmet at the end of my rifle and pushed it up in hopes that the VC would do it again? He did and I saw the smoke of his gunpowder. I told Lester Brown to call Lt. Palmer and tell him that Charlie was on the tree line right behind us. We turned our tracks and charged the tree line with every weapon blazing. After what seemed an eternity of heavy fire from both sides, I knew that we had the upper hand. Word also came that four of our guys had been killed in the exchange. Word came that we had to dismount and go into the tree line and chase Charlie all the way to the other side. As I was about to enter the tree line, a VC jumped up in the tree line, I fired a burst, he dropped a grenade and as I was falling I yelled grenade. When I got up I turned to tell the guys to follow me into the trees when Lester Brown yelled Vazquez you're hit! I looked at my chest and saw blood streaming down. Lester told me to go back to the track and get patched up by the medic. Lester took our squad through the wood line, when I got to the track Donnelly patched me up when the word came through the radio that Charlie was coming out of the tree line at the other side. I looked at the guys that were left in the track and they were Donnelly the driver, Ace Johnson on

the M-60, Willie Pitts became the magazine loader for my rifle, and the other guy was the guide that gave us directions on how to arrive at that place. I told Willie Pitts to load as many magazines as fast as he could and we charged around the other side where Charlie was coming out and many had crossed to the other side. We got caught in a cross fire, I fired automatic with my M16 "Over and under" that I had until it turned red hot, I dropped it inside the track and Willie handed me his rifle, I switched my firing because Charlie was coming out of the tree line again. I used my M-79 to get a VC that was about to get away from us as he entered a hut (that's about the only time that I can say that I hit something with it). When the VC stopped coming out of the tree line, we dismounted and went to the tree line again, this time I found myself in front of the Doi Ma Creek. I started to shoot at anything that looked like a head in the water. Suddenly a boat appeared going slowly down the creek, and I saw a VC trying to climb into the boat, I fired my M-79 and hit the boat. Later on that day we finally had a break. When we were resting, word came through the radio asking if we deserved any medals for what we did that day. We just replied we did what we were supposed to do. I never got my second Purple Heart for that wound. I also want to mention that day was Andrew Johnson's finest hour. During the firefight he changed barrels on the M-60 machine gun twice because they turned red hot. After the fight was over, there was a huge pile of empty shell cases next to his machinegun. Later on that night we sent a patrol to the entrance of the tree line, the guys killed another VC trying to come out of the woods. ★

The Mekong Delta was always wet...



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MRFA Memorial and Museum Trailer

The MRFA Memorial and Museum Trailer will be at Camp Ripley, Little Falls, Minnesota, for the grand opening of their 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War display, July 18; at the Viet Nam Vet Thank You Weekend at Forest City, Iowa, August 27 through August 30; and at Fountain City, Minnesota, October 3, 2015.

Monument for Disabled Veterans Opens

Disabled veterans' service and sacrifice is now being honored with the dedication of the nation's first memorial explicitly designed for them. The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial at 150 Washington Ave. in Washington, DC, was officially dedicated with a public ceremony on October 5, 2014. Only a stone's throw from Capitol Hill, the monument of granite and glass attempts to convey the strength and vulnerability of the troops who defend our nation. The memorial includes an eternal flame, star-shaped fountain, reflecting pool, four bronze relief sculptures, and laminated glass panels whose text and images tell the story of service, sacrifice, and dedication of America's disabled veterans.

To learn more about the memorial, visit the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial's dedication page at www.avdlm.org.

Vietnam Armored Personnel Carrier

From Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia

The Vietnam War was the first combat opportunity for "mechanized" infantry, a technically new type of infantry with its roots in the armored infantry of World War II, now using the M113 Armored Personnel Carrier. In addition, Armored Cavalry squadrons in Vietnam consisted largely of M113s, after replacing the intended M114 in a variety of roles, and Armor battalions contained M113s within their headquarters companies, such as the maintenance section, medical section, vehicle recovery section, mortar section, and the scout (reconnaissance) section. U.S. Army mechanized infantry units in Vietnam were fully equipped with the M113 APC/ACAV, which consisted of one headquarters company and three line companies, normally with an authorized strength of approximately 900 men. Ten U.S. mechanized infantry battalions and one mechanized brigade were deployed to Vietnam from 1965 until their departure in 1972.

Company D, 16th Armor, 173rd Airborne brigade was the first US Army armor unit deployed to Vietnam. It originally consisted of three platoons of M113s and a platoon of Self-Propelled Anti-Tank Systems (SPATS). It was the only independent Armor Company in the history of the US Army. Upon the company's arrival in Vietnam, a fourth line platoon was added; this was equipped with M106 4.2" mortar carriers (modified M113s). The mortar platoon often operated with Brigade infantry units to provide indirect fire support. It also deployed at times as a dismounted infantry unit. The remaining SPAT platoon was reequipped with M113s in late 1966 and the mortar platoon was deactivated in early 1967. From early 1967, D/16th had three line platoons equipped with M113s and eventually, its diesel version, the M113A1. It also standardized in late 1968 with three machine guns per track, one M2 .50 caliber and two M60 machine guns mounted on each side. After several years, the machine gun array varied considerably from APC to APC. The company conducted search and destroy missions, road, and firebase security. Twenty-five D/16th paratroopers were killed in action and many more were wounded during the course of the war. D/16th's largest battle took place on 4 March 1968 at North Tuy Hoa. During the day, the company lost 5 men killed, 16 wounded, and 3 missing (who are believed dead as two unrecognizable [sic] bodies were found). The enemy took a much greater loss. An estimated 2 enemy battalions, 85th Main Force (VC) and the 95th NVA Regiment, were rendered ineffective as they had 297 KIAs, with D-16 Armor

receiving credit for killing 218. The revised official count for D/16 was 8 KIAs and 21 WIAs. The company commander, Captain Robert Helmick, was awarded the DSC, and many D/16th soldiers earned awards for valor. D/16 was awarded a Valorous Unit Award and a Meritorious Unit Award for its actions in Vietnam. It was deactivated in 1969 and the company's M113s were distributed to E Company, 17th Cavalry, 173rd Airborne Brigade.

M113s were instrumental in conducting Reconnaissance In Force (RIFs), Search and Destroy missions, and large invasions (incursions) such as during the U.S. invasion of Cambodia on 1 May 1970 and later Laos (Operation Lam Son 719) in 1971; all of which used the M113 as the primary work horse for moving the ground armies. While operating with Cavalry and Armor units, the M113s often worked in conjunction with U.S. M48 Patton and M551 Sheridan tanks. During the Vietnam War, U.S. Army gun trucks (modified 2½-ton and 5-ton cargo trucks), along with V-100 armored cars, conducted convoy escorts for military traffic.

The USAF used M113 and M113A1 ACAV vehicles in USAF Security Police Squadrons, which provided air base ground defense support in Vietnam. M113s were also supplied to the South Vietnamese Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). One notable ARVN unit equipped with the M113 APC, the 3d Armored Cavalry Squadron, earned the Presidential Unit Citation. M113s were also supplied to the Cambodian Khmer National Armed Forces, equipped with a turret for



ACAVs of the 3rd Squadron 11th Armored Cavalry assume a herringbone formation during Operation Cedar Falls. This formation gave vehicles optimal all-round firepower in the event of an ambush in a restricted area.



A combined arms operation in Vietnam. M113s clear the way through heavy brush while infantry follows.



The 4.2" Mortar Platoon of D/16 Armor, 173rd Airborne on a fire mission in Operation Waco in Vietnam.

the machine gun and a recoilless rifle mounted on the roof.

The Australian Army also used the M113 in Vietnam. After initial experience showed that the crew commander was too vulnerable to fire, the Australians tried a number of different gun shields and turrets, eventually standardizing with the Cadillac-Cage T-50 turret fitted with two 0.30 cal Browning machine guns, or a single 0.30/single 0.50 combination. Other turrets were tried as were various gun shields, the main design of which was similar to the gun shield used on the U.S. M113 ACAV version.

In addition, the Australians operated an M113 variant fitted with a Saladin armored car turret, with a 76-mm gun as a fire support vehicle, or FSV, for infantry fire support. This has now also been removed from service.

Subsequent to Vietnam, all Australian M113 troop carriers were fitted with the T50 turret. The FSV was eventually phased out and replaced with a modernized version known as the MRV (medium reconnaissance vehicle). The MRV featured a Scorpion turret with 76-mm gun, improved fire control, and passive night vision equipment.

The US Army stopped buying M113s in 2007, with 6,000 vehicles remaining in the inventory.

TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One

Ronnie Lee Boal died October 12, 2013. Ronnie served on LCU-1477 (01/66-01/69). He was residing in North Las Vegas, NV, at the time of his passing.

Douglas B. Hinchliff passed away after a long hard battle with ALS, March 8, 2015. Doug served in the Supply Department onboard the USS Benewah APB-35 (1966-68). He is survived by his wife Jeannie Hinchliff, 1914 Pumpkin Ridge Dr., Anthem, AZ 85086.



McKean in the Navy



McKean

Member **Lee "Tex" McKean** passed away because of cardiac arrest March 22, 2015. Lee served on the USS White River LSMR-536 from Dec. 1966 to October 1968. You may contact the family c/o Nicole McKean, 13618 Stonehenge Dr., Sugarland, TX 77478. Lee was a long time member of the MRFA. He also was a very large part of the USS White River's crew. He was always willing to go that extra mile for a shipmate or brother Veteran. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

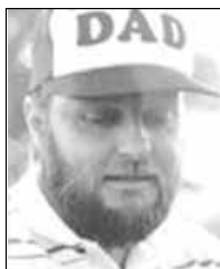
From shipmate (and brother) BM2 Joe Harper and wife Vickie Harper: Dear shipmates and friends let's keep Nicole and the rest of Lee's family in our thoughts and prayers. He was a good man and an outstanding shipmate.



Smith

Member **James Wayne Smith** passed away after a long battle with Agent Orange-related cancer March 30, 2015. James was an original crew member on R-92-1 (1966-68). You may contact the family c/o Kathy Smith, 104 Sherwood Dr., Thomaston, GA 30286-2739, lakeway-neboats@yahoo.com. He was a friend and a shipmate for a lot of years.

May our brother rest in peace. Crew member Johnny Jones R-92-1.



Lee

David W. Lee passed away March 24, 2015. David served in-country with the 2nd/47th and later with C Co 2nd/39th 9th Infantry Division Vietnam. You may contact the family c/o Cindra Lee, 200 Cardinal Ln., Vallejo, CA 94589.

Gary Forshee passed away April 4, 2015. Gary served on the USS White River LSMR-536 as an RM2 (1966-68). You may contact the family c/o 40322 Poppy Dr., Hemet, CA 92544. *May our Brother Gary rest in peace and in God's Hands. Fair sea's my Brother. Shipmates USS White River.*



Delaney

It is with regret that I inform you of the death of Rear Admiral Kevin Delaney. Admiral Delaney passed away from exposure to Agent Orange (lung cancer) April 7, 2015. He was 68. Rear Admiral Delaney, although not a member of the MRFA, he was there with us, providing cover when things were going bad. He flew those wonderful "Huey's" and his courage was beyond belief. This man was a hero, a friend, and a warrior. I had the privilege of knowing him for several years. Rear Adm. Kevin Delaney who flew 686 combat missions in Vietnam Helicopter Attack Squadron 3—better known as the Seawolves—was a land-based, Navy helicopter unit charged with helping naval riverine forces to block North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong infiltration and use of the rivers, canals, and jungle that made up the Mekong Delta. Rear Admiral Delaney retired as the most decorated officer in the U.S. Navy. May my friend and Brother

Rest in peace. Gary Newman.

Member **Myron J. Schober** passed away November 10, 2014. Myron served in HQ Co. 9th Inf (04/68-04/69). You may contact the family c/o Darlene Schober, 44476 Hillview Dr., Rushford, MN 55971, 507-864-2181.



Greer

Member **Larry Greer** passed away May 11, 2015. Larry served on the USS White River LSMR-536 as a EM3 during the Vietnam War (1965-67). You may contact the family c/o Doris Elaine Greer, 621 700 N. Hobart, IN 46342, legfarmer45@comcast.net. *May our brother rest in peace. Crew USS White River*



Lind

Herbert E. Lind passed away May 10, 2015, after a 19-year battle with cancer. Herb was the Commander of C Co. 4th/47th Inf 9th Inf Div in the Mekong Delta, 1967. You may contact the family c/o Becky Lind, 3550 McDowell Creek Road, Manhattan, Kansas 66502.

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.

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Brothers of the 2nd/47th Inf for all Army and Navy KIAs
Craig "Doc" Champion in memory of KIAs 3rd Plt D Co. 3rd/47th (1968)
John and Doris Chrzanowski in memory of SP/4 Humberto Ruiz Santiago Jr. Grenadier A Co. 4th Bn 47th Inf. Rgt 9th Inf. Div. Died of wounds 06/27/69, Kien Hoa, South Vietnam (DC Wall Panel 21W Ln 025)
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Dennis D. Erlanson for Verlyn H. Hanson Co D 3rd/47th (1968-69)
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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, Dave Nelson, James Callan for Sgt Tony Spradling, Sgt Gerald Thurman, Spec James B. Johnson, and all our Brothers lost on June 19, 1967, from A Co. 4th/47th 9th in AP BAC, Long An Province
Gordon Hillesland for Pat Lawson NSA Dong Tam (1967-68)
Joe Hilliard for Joe Benack from Florida and Donald Hartzell from Pennsylvania
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 Robert "Bobby" Scharpnick A Co 2nd Platoon 3rd/60th and Dennis McDougal A Co 3rd/60th
Bob Land, Rich Lierman, Jim Zervos, and Pete Oakander for Frank Dettmers, our boat captain on CCB-131-1 (May 69-May 70). We do this in his honor and remembrance.
Richard MacCullagh for John (Doc) Phillips, HMC, USN (Ret) RivRon 15
Richard MacCullagh for Chaplain Rene L. Petit, LT, CHC, RC, RivRon 13 and 15
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
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John Smith for Paul D. Jose B Co. 3rd/60th KIA Westy 11/01/68
Chet "Gunner" Stanley for all the USN and USA KIAs of the MRF (1967-70)
Ken Sundberg for Michael David Sheahan 5th/60th KIA 02/25/68, Robert L. Conley 5th/60th KIA 02/01/68, and Glenn Dean Taylor 5th/60th KIA 02/01/68
Robert Sutton for LT James F. Rost Jr. Vin Te Canal Chau Duc KIA 11/69
Robert Thacker for SFC Earl T. Pelhan, Jr., 15th Eng, 9th Inf Div, KIA in Delta Lo
Okey Toothman in memory of Sgt Dick Arnold A Co. 3rd/47th, Max DelaCruz and G. P. Jones C Co. 3rd/47th
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
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BMCM Donald Witta USN (Ret.) T-111-13 (03/67-02/68)
Norm Wilkinson B Co. 4th/47th Inf (03/67-03/68)
Tom Wischman USS Indra ARL-37 (1967-70)
Rhett Wise A Co. 3rd/47th Inf (03/67-04/68)
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)
James Ziernski EN2 Boat Captain RivDiv 153
ASPB 6854 (04/69-04/70)
Robert Zimmer XO USS Mercer APB-39 (02/68-07/69)
Admiral Elmo Zumwalt ComNavForV