



River Currents



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From the Galley
will return in the next issue.

Unconventional Warfare on Unconventional Boats

by M. B. Connolly Captain USN (Ret.)

There is nothing pretty about a Tango boat. In fact, most of the River Assault Craft (RAC) lacked the lines and appearance of a classic boat. Early on, the unaware tagged our group as McHale's Navy. It took a good while for the boats and their crews to dispel the preformed opinions of the rest of the Navy in Vietnam. The early riverine operations were done with professionalism, courage and with virtually no fanfare. Hence, only we knew what we did and we took great pride and satisfaction in our accomplishments.

In early 1969, when troop lifts and major operations were waning in anticipation of the withdrawal of the 9th Infantry, river assault craft began to be deployed to other Navy op-areas, namely Giant Sling-shot and other interdiction operations. These op-areas were manned primarily with PBRs and commanded by PBR officers. The "big ugly RACs" didn't fit the public relations image of the sleek and speedy PBR and in some cases, we were not really welcomed with open arms. Likewise, with standing military procedure that the senior officer in the op-area was in command, care was taken at first to ensure that the River Assault Division officer was not senior to the commander of the op-area. Heaven forbid that a RAC officer would have command over a group of PBRs! That was one of the reasons that our boats were moved around so frequently on our early deployments out of Dong Tam.

The integration of all of our boats into the general Navy interdiction and surveillance effort in III and IV Corps was successful because of the amazing capabilities of the boats and the ingenuity and extraordinary efforts of the boat crews and support personnel. Gunfire support, psyops, helo and medcap platforms, river patrols, VN troop lifts, and ambush operations became common for river assault craft after mid-1969. Try hiding a Tango in a rice paddy



Tango 92-10 MRF TF-117



ATC-Tango Medvac Boat MRF TF-117

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War Widow Waited 35 Years for Phone Call

by Harold Payne (payne.h@sbcglobal)

Last spring, Harold Payne was in the chair at Fred Fromm's barbershop at 15th Street and Cornell Avenue in Springfield. Harold is a Vietnam veteran. Like many of those who saw action over there, he came back determined to move on with life and never again think about what he had just experienced.

But that day in Fred's barber-shop, Harold revisited something that happened to him in Vietnam, something that reverberated throughout his life. This is the story he told.

It was August 17, 1969, Woodstock weekend in the States, but Harold Payne was on a beach in South Vietnam, a long way from 3 days of peace and music.

Harold was in the Navy, assigned to a Mobile Riverine Force along the Vam Co Dong River in Tay Ninh Province, bordering Cambodia. An American patrol boat was docked at the river. On one of the boats was a South Vietnamese soldier.

The boat was armed with a 20-mm cannon with an electric fire key. The South Vietnamese soldier, either deliberately or by accident, engaged the trigger. The gun fired randomly onto the shore. Harold watched as the bullets churned up the beach.

"You could see the rounds tracking right toward a truck in which a couple of soldiers were sitting," Harold recalls. "It was utter confusion and astonishment." He knew what was going to happen, but was helpless to stop it.

The truck was hit and caught fire. One of the soldiers inside was badly hurt. Harold was one of the first to reach the wounded man as he crawled out. He was a stranger to Harold, but Harold held him as they waited for a helicopter to take the man for treatment.

"I grabbed him and pulled him over," he says. "It wasn't the bullets; it was the shrapnel from the truck that injured him."

Before the helicopter arrived, the man said something to Harold. He clearly said, "Tell my wife I love her."

"I told the guy, 'Hey, buddy, you can tell her yourself when you get home,' says Harold. You know, like you do. But the other guy who was with me, he looked at me and shook his head like, 'He's not going to make it.'"

A helicopter took the wounded soldier away and the war went on just as before.

What if?

Harold came home determined to put some distance between himself and Vietnam.

He and his wife, Cherie, married in 1972. They raised two children, Chad and Rachel.

Before the war, Harold had worked at Fiat Allis in Springfield. That job was gone when he returned. He spent most of his life working at the John Hobbs factory. He also owned a Phillips 66 gas station at 11th and Ash streets.

But somewhere in the back of his mind were the words he heard that day on the beach in Tay Ninh: "Tell my wife I love her."

What if the guy didn't make it? Harold didn't know his fate, much less his name.

What if somewhere there was a woman who never saw her husband again and never knew what his final wish in this life was? What if?

The questions gained a louder voice as he got older. The wounds of those Vietnam years had healed. He enjoyed attending reunions of his outfit, where they could talk about the war. Maybe it was time to take another step toward "whole." And so, Harold did something he had never done before.

He told the story of the wounded soldier to his wife, Cherie. In more than 30 years of marriage, Harold had never said anything about it until 2003. Cherie knows what it would be like if the woman had lost her husband in war. Her reaction to Harold's story was emphatic: "You have to find that woman."

Cherie told Harold that when he attended the 2004 reunion of his Riverine outfit, he should tell his story and ask for suggestions on how to find the man's name and eventual fate.

The reunion that year was in Fort Mitchell, KY. Cherie and Harold talked about his story on the way. Harold arrived in Fort Mitchell committed to taking the next step.

His buddies were amazed at what Harold told them. They agreed that he owed it to that wounded soldier to at least try to find him or, if he died, to find his widow, whoever and wherever she was. If the guy had survived and made it home to tell his wife himself, then no harm done, but if he hadn't?

They suggested Harold contact Ralph Christopher. Someone had his e-mail address, so when Harold returned to Springfield, he sent an email to Christopher telling the story

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UNCONVENTIONAL

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for night ambush! Add the use of the Zippo (flamethrower), Douche (water cannon), the Monitors, Alphas and the ubiquitous Tango for just about any imaginable operation and it can be argued that they became the backbone of the Navy inshore efforts in 1969 and 1970.

Waterborne Guard Post (WBG) or Ambush

The use of RAC in some of the interdiction operations was hampered by a lack of speed, but the defensive capabilities of the boats made them perfect for ambush operations. The large number of boats available made it feasible to station craft every click on many waterways that were crossed by enemy personnel entering the Republic of Vietnam from Cambodia. While it is hard to hide a Tango boat, the flight deck provided a high vantage point and its defensive capabilities were such that it could stand and fight.

Consider that the plain old Tango boat had two 20-mm cannons, one Mk-19 grenade launcher, an improvised bank of as many as six machine guns, and an array of hand-held weapons. With the exception of artillery, this was more fire power than that of the average VN outpost on the border. Add a 105-Howitzer monitor and air support, and the lone Tango in ambush became a fortress.

The "stand and fight" modus operandi required that the boats in ambush have perimeter security against both waterborne and land-borne sapper squads. RAC crews used some very unique measures to effect perimeter security. Claymore mines, PSID sensors, and concussion grenades were used to advantage. Early in the deployment of RACs to Operation Giant Slingshot, the Navy in Tra Cu was trained in the use of Claymore mines for base defense. An Army major "expert" demonstrated how to set them up for maximum effectiveness in protecting the perimeter. His first test firing injured two sailors and scared the hell out of all the rest of us. We learned respect for the Claymore mine. Later, on the Vinh Te Canal, Tangos in WBG protected their perimeter from attack by mounting two command-detonated Claymores on the ramp. Visual sighting or PSID alert from sensors placed ashore near the boat could be responded to by detonating the Claymores. They are a wicked weapon and if improperly secured can be dangerous. The 3-ton ramp of the Tango was a solid base for the Claymore. One PBR tried mounting two Claymores on the bow and ended up blowing the whole bow off the boat. The best defense for swimmer attack was having concussion

**Zippo Boat MRF TF-117****Monitors MRF TF-117**

grenades hanging on the reinforcing rods around the superstructure of the boats where they were readily accessible to all hands topside. The 105 Monitor perimeter defense utilized Beehive rounds with no delay setting.

In ambush, two Night Observation Devices at each Water Borne Guard Post (WBG) were essential to cover upstream and downstream. Near the Cambodian border scanning the rice paddies was also necessary. On the Vinh Te Canal, we placed a large combination infrared/search light on the flight deck of one of the Tangos. The power source was a jeep that we backed into the well deck. Both were courtesy of the Army and even came with a Sergeant to service the light and drive the jeep. The infrared search function located targets that were then illuminated with the search light. All of the boats that could bring guns to bear and air support could fire down the beam of light. It was incredibly successful in thwarting numerous attempts to cross into Vietnam. The platform light sitting on the flight deck was pretty obvious and the enemy often concentrated their attacks on that boat when it was moving into ambush position for the night. On one occasion, a B-40 round got into the well deck and showered the jeep with shrapnel. Our CASREP reported "four flat tires" but the next echelon of command did not find any humor in our levity. The enemy continued to punish that Tango and late in October of '69, the sergeant was killed in action and the Army retrieved their light and jeep.

A technique that was perfected on the Vinh Te Canal was the use of the Mk-19 grenade launcher for indirect fire spotted by another boat in ambush. Often, ambush sites had limited distance vision because of tree lines or low brush lines. By elevating the grenade launcher, a boat that could see the target could talk the fire in by such exact terminology as "up a little, down a little, come left a little," etc. Combined with the

**Douche Boat****Alpha (ASPB) TF-117**

infrared spotter, it was an effective device in stopping many crossings out of Cambodia.

Unconventional Underway Operations

Just as the RAC proved versatile in static operations, their utility was exercised with success in underway operations as well. Interdiction, "float ops," and transportation services were amongst those operations.

**Lt Mike Connolly and Admiral Zumwalt**

On the Vam Co Te and Vam Co Dong Rivers, sitting in ambush was a dicey proposition so the RAC usually stayed underway and joined the interdiction efforts of the PBRs in attempting to stop infiltration out of the Parrot's Beak into South Vietnam. The slow RAC had the advantage of being able to stand and fight if fired upon and had weapons that could be used without spraying the whole countryside with ammunition. Enemy fire from a hooch could be addressed with the Zippo or possibly a beehive 105 round (set with no delay) without wiping out a whole village or spraying the neighboring province with 50 cal. rounds. When underway, the RAC were loud and made their presence known at some distance. Enemy units attempting to cross the river often squatted down in the brush on the shoreline and waited for the boat to pass and then slipped across in a sampan. They had learned early-on what the profile of the Zippo

looked like and did not fire on that boat. We had some success in floating a Tango downstream making a lot of noise and having the Zippo hang back and wait for the enemy to fire at the Tango. When Charley ducked into his spider hole to avoid the Tango's response, the Zippo moved in and filled the spider hole with napalm. The enemy in the Delta was NOT a slow learner. They figured that out pretty quickly and we all became bored with just floating down the river every night knowing that they were crossing despite our efforts. Finally, we devised a technique that nobody believed. We sent the Douche Boat (appropriately named Irma) out at night floating and hosing down the bank closest to the Cambodian Border. When the enemy got a blast of water that could knock a hooch down, he often responded by firing his weapon . . . and the Zippo was right behind Irma!

We got information from the Army intel folks that the interruption of supplies out of the Parrot's Beak had caused the enemy to try using a heavy duty rope across the river to "high-line" supplies. It was lowered when boats passed. We began to troll the river with our minesweeping gear. It was a simple chain with angle iron welded to it at a 45 degree angle. On the first night, the trolling boat caught a rope and pulled somebody who was hand tending it into the water. Next success was hooking a rope that had been secured to a tree, pulling the tree into the river.

One Tango boat had the large Psyops speakers onboard. The psychological warfare group gave us some cassette tapes of Chinese funeral music and Vietnamese text about horrible things that had befallen the enemies of Saigon. It was recorded with electronic distortion and contained graphic details of dismemberment and a poor soul doomed to roam the earth looking for his missing body parts to enter heaven. Some of the young Vietnamese sailors assigned for training would hide below when we played it. Apparently, the enemy was more perturbed by country music that was also played. The boat was fired at more when it was playing Willy

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7**Tango on the River headed with Riverine Infantry up a small canal**

WAR WIDOW

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and asking if there was any way Christopher could identify the soldier wounded in the truck on August 17, 1969.

He hit "send," then waited. Christopher's response arrived in Harold's inbox on February 4, 2005.

Fate Stepped In

Christopher found the name. He was Ronald Dean Tillery from Kansas City, MO. His wounds had been fatal.

"Sorry to have to bring you this sad message," Christopher wrote to Harold in 2005, "and I understand you wanting to know..."

From the record: Ronald Dean Tillery. U.S. Navy. Builder 3rd Class. ID No. 487545384. Two years' service. Age at loss: 20. Casualty Type: Non-hostile, died of other causes. Casualty Reason: Ground casualty.

Ron's name is on The Wall. Panel W19. Line 56. After 36 years, Harold finally knew the wounded man didn't make it. But at least now Harold had a name and a city.

"I still wasn't done," says Harold. "This wasn't going to be the end of the story."

One night at VFW Post 755 on Old Jacksonville Road, Harold told the story to the guys and wondered how he would ever find the widow of Ronald Tillery of Kansas City. Was she still there? Had she remarried? Taken another last name? Was she even alive? It seemed impossible so many years later.

"This is the Internet age, Harold," they told him. "You can find anybody."

Harold isn't all that Internet savvy, but he was determined. When he got home that night, he put the Tillery name into a search engine. He came up with telephone numbers and addresses for quite a few Tillerys in Kansas City.

"This is the Internet age, Harold... You can find anybody."

"Now what?" He asked Cherie. "Start dialing," she said. "Start at the top and work your way down the list."

"And this," says Harold, "is where fate steps in."

A woman answered at the first number he called. When she did, Harold realized something

important. He never thought about what he would say if he ever got this far. But there was no going back now. He plunged on.

"I say, 'My name is Harold Payne. In 1969, I was in Vietnam...' And I tell the story and that I was looking for someone who was in the family of Ronald D. Tillery of Kansas City and did she know anybody by that name."

The next few seconds he will never forget.

There was this big, long pause. I hear her take a big, deep breath. She said, 'I've been waiting for this phone call for 35 years.'

Fate, indeed. The first phone number was the right one.

Message Delivered

Delore June Tillery told Harold that she had never been given the details on how or why her young husband had been killed. She knew only that it was some kind of accident.

"I'm going to tell you now," Harold said to June, which is the name she went by, "what he told me just before he died." And I told her that Ron's last words were of her and she cried. She said she was grateful for me to fill in what had happened.

I didn't ask to meet her. I told her I had some pictures and would send them to her if she wanted."

After that initial phone conversation, Harold and June exchanged letters, photographs, and Christmas cards. June's first letter to Harold was six pages long. In it, she described "Ronnie" and their marriage and the hard life she had since he had died.

"He liked his '57 Chevy," she wrote. "He liked '50s and '60s music. He liked to dance, but he loved to water ski. And he was very, very good at it. He played the sax in high school, he was only fair at that, but enjoyed it. He liked to kid around. He was good with people and had a lot of friends. He was just one of those tremendous guys."

She sent pictures of herself and Ron. She wrote that he had worked in construction with his father in Kansas City, which led him to join the Seabees. In 1969, he was on his second tour of duty in Vietnam.

"I was so angry at God when He took him," June wrote. "But I'm past that, and I know God had his reasons. He's buried at a local cemetery. I still go there quite often."

She sent her thanks to Harold for finding her. "God also allowed you to bless me with Ronnie's last words. I cannot thank you enough."

The most poignant part of her letter comes toward the end. "Jeff, our son, doesn't talk about him much. But he was only 1 when Ronnie died. So he never knew him."

After a couple of years of letters and holiday cards, Harold and June had said everything they

had to say to each other. The cards and letters ceased, and life, once again, moved on its way.

Lost Contact

After I heard the story, I knew that I had to talk to June. I spent this summer searching for her. Her phone was disconnected. Harold sent her a letter, but there was no reply, although the letter did come back to Springfield marked "undeliverable."

I contacted an amateur genealogist who found some distant Tillery relatives, including Shirley Banner, a second cousin to Ron. Shirley, who lives in California, agreed to contact June and Jeff through social media and e-mail. She received no reply.

"God also allowed you to bless me with Ronnie's last words. I cannot thank you enough."

By late summer, Harold and I became convinced that June knew we were looking for her, but did not want to be found. We reluctantly dropped the project and chalked it up as just one of those things that happen. Not everyone wants to be in the newspaper, but without June's permission and her side of things, I couldn't go forward.

Then, a month ago, we learned the reason why we never heard from June Tillery this summer. She was dying.

Her husband died in Vietnam on August 17, 1969. Cancer took June's life in Kansas City on September 17 this year, 43 years and 1 month later.

Shirley Banner got the news from June's son, Jeff. He agreed to talk with me, and we spoke briefly by telephone a couple of weeks ago. He had never heard the story of his father and Harold Payne.

"I had a call years ago from somebody with a connection, but the understanding wasn't quite there," Jeff says. "He said he knew something about my dad or something."

Jeff says his mother had a cedar chest in her apartment that held the U.S. flag from Ron's casket, along with letters he and June had exchanged. "I'm not certain what happened with that," Jeff says.

June's memorial service was held at Free Will Baptist Church in Kansas City. Her body was cremated. Her ashes were spread in Arkansas, where she was born.

Harold and June never met.

June Tillery never remarried. ★



Sleeping Outside Cat Lo (Ditch)



Cat Lo Today

Typical Sailor Liberty

by D. D. Hoffman GMG 3 DragonFly Alpha 8 AKA "Nun Honey"

Sometime late in 1968, our Boat A-91-8 was in Vung Tau for repairs. Steve "Pineapple" Lewis and I went into Vung Tau to the barbershop for a steam bath and massage and ended up staying late in town to have a few drinks.

To make a long story short, it was about 2:00 a.m. when we got one of those Lambretta taxis to get us back to the base. As I remember, the gates were secure when we got back and the guards said they would not open them until 6:00 a.m. Being a little under the weather, we didn't know what to do?

Steve said, "We cannot go back to town." So we went across the road from the gate and slept in a ditch . . . with no weapons. At daylight, the guards woke us up, and we were let back on base. Thank God, it wasn't Monsoon season.

Your boat had to be at Cat Lo. That was a bad trip at night going to Cat Lo from Vung Tau about a 12-mile run through VC country. If you had been sober about 20 feet back from the ditch alongside the road were houses of joy. All you had to do is knock on the door and they would have let you in for the rest of the night which would have been a lot better than sleeping in a ditch. Albert speaking from experience. ★

The River of Death

Here's the story upon which the Men in the Boats poem was based. (Rerun by request Albert)

by John Albright

"In a matter of seconds, the muddy waters of the Rach Bai River transformed from a poetic tropical setting into a blazing inferno of rocket, machine gun, and rifle fire for the unsuspecting troops of the riverine armada."

The murmur of voices and the scrape of weapons against the sides of the steel ship penetrated the damp night as the men of the 3rd of the 60th Infantry, climbed from a barracks ship, the USS Colleton, and into waiting armored troop carriers alongside, 15 September, 1967.

Within minutes after boarding the boats, most men slept. Late the previous day they had come back from a 3-day operation which, in one sharp, day long battle, 9 of their comrades had fallen, along with 60 of the enemy. There had been time during the night to clean weapons, shower, eat a hot meal, and receive the new operations order, but not much time to sleep off the now familiar weariness after days of fighting both the Viet Cong and the mud of the Mekong Delta.

Three days before, Col. Bert David's Mobile Riverine Force, the 2nd Brigade of the 9th Infantry Division, and its Navy counterpart, Task Force 117, had set out to search for and destroy the 514th Local Force and 263rd Main Force Viet Cong Battalions. When the enemy was finally found, the ensuing battle had only weakened, not destroyed, the Viet Cong Battalions, which broke off the fight and slipped away.

Thus, when intelligence reports that reached the Riverine Brigade's headquarters on the afternoon of the 14 September place the Viet Cong in the Can Son Secret Zone along the Rach Ba Rai River, Col. David resolved to attack. Quickly he pulled his units back from the field and into their bases to prepare for a jump-off the next morning. For the 3/60, that meant a return to the USS Colleton anchored in the wide Mekong River near the Mobile Riverine Force's base camp at Dong Tam.

Col. David planned to trap the VC in their reported positions along the river, a narrow river that flows from the north into the Mekong. About 10 kilometers north of its confluence with the Mekong, the river bends sharply to the west for 2 kilometers, then turns abruptly east for two more before returning to a north-south direction. This bend in the river produces a salient of land that juts out to the west, washed on two

sides by the river. It was here that the enemy had been reported.

North of the bend, Col. David planned to emplace the 3/60 as a blocking force, but to get to its assigned positions the 3/60, in Riverine Force boats, would have to sail past the suspected enemy positions. South of the bend, Col. David planned to deploy another blocking force, the 3rd Battalion, 47th Infantry. This battalion, also in Riverine Force boats, was to follow the lead unit, the 3/60. Together the two battalions would close in on the enemy from the north and south. Once the two infantry battalions had gone ashore, the Navy crews were to employ the empty boats as a blocking force. The monitors, gunboats with 20- and 40-mm guns and 81-mm direct fire mortars, would reinforce the troop carriers.

While these forces to the north, south, and west formed an anvil, the 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry were advancing overland from the east in armored personnel carriers, would act as a hammer. Other forces could be airlifted into the combat area if needed. Once the enemy troops were trapped, Col. David planned to destroy them with air strikes and the brigade's three batteries of artillery. The two infantry battalions and the mechanized battalion could then move in and finish the job, any VC escaping across the river, through the patrolling Navy forces might be intercepted by the South Vietnamese 44th Rangers, operating on an independent mission west of the river.

The commander of the 3/60, LT. Col. Mercer Doty, planned to put two of his three companies ashore at the start, Company B on Beach White One and Company A 1,000 meters to the west on Beach White Two. Both units were to land at 0800. Company C of the 5th/60th was to stay on the boats as a brigade reserve. Traveling in three ATCs, each company was to be reinforced by an engineer squad, a welcome addition since all companies were under strength.

At 0415 the naval convoy transporting the 3/60, moved out into the Mekong River preceded by two empty ATCs acting as minesweepers. A monitor gunboat leads each of the three groups of armored troop carriers. Interspersed in the column were a helicopter deck medical aid boat and a command and communications boat. The latter, itself a monitor lacking only the 81-mm mortar, carried Col. Doty's staff.

Doty, himself circled overhead in his command and control chopper. Beside him rode Capt. Wayne Jordan, an artillery liaison officer and observer. Lt. Cmdr. F.E. "Dusty" Rhodes Jr. USN, commanded the boats. Behind the 3/60, moved the 3/47, in basically the same convoy formation.

As the boats churned through the Mekong River toward the entrance of the Rach Ba Rai, most of the riflemen slept while the Navy crews manned

the guns. On the battalion radio net, routine communications traffic and last minute planning and coordination passed between stations. Among the decision was to hit Beach White Two at 0730 with a 5-minute artillery preparation, followed by another 5 minutes' shelling of Beach White One. With only three batteries of artillery available, effective fire could not be laid on both beaches at the same time.

At 0700 the convoy entered the river and headed north, up the narrow channel. Helmets off, flak jackets unzipped, some of the men lay on the troop compartment deck asleep; others rested against the bulkheads, smoking and talking low. On a hunch that the men should be alert, one leader in Company B woke his weapons squad just as the convoy entered the little river. Fifty feet apart, the boats proceeded in a single file, moving about 8 miles an hour through the mist of the new morning. Passing a hairpin bend in the river appropriately called "Snoopy's Nose" without incident, they reached the point where the river turns west and began to pass the Red Beaches that were to be assaulted by the southern blocking force.

The first morning that something might be amiss came just before 0730. A few rounds of enemy small arms fire kicked up little geysers in the water as the leading boats were nearing the salient land that was the objective. Then precisely at 0730, the sound of an exploding anti-tank rock split the morning calm, followed almost instantly was a second blast. Minesweeper tango 91-4 reeled from the shock of both rockets exploding against its starboard bow. The radios' in the boats crackled with the minesweepers report, "we have been mined". Another boat reported recoilless rifle fire. Through the din came the unmistakable sound of AK47 and assault rifle and of machine guns.

Radios in the boats came alive with reports. A monitor called, "I'm hit, I hit a mine!" Then came another voice—"Somebody's fired a rocket!" Recoilless rifles and rockets, both the RPG-2 and the newer, deadlier RPG7, slammed into minesweeper, monitors, and troop laden tango boats. The roar of dozens of Navy guns joined the roar of enemy fire, and as boat after boat entered the ambush and brought more weapons into the fray, 20- and 40-mm automatic guns and 81-mm mortars firing point-blank added to the din. Smoke mixed with the morning mist until it became thick, like heavy fog.

Within the first minute, the other tango that was serving as a minesweeper, T-91-1, took a hit from an RPG2. In the next 7 minutes, T-91-1 took four more rockets and wounded eight of its crew. Although ordered to the rear, the boat remained in the battle. From the Navy radios came

a message from Cmdr. Rhodes: "Fire all weapons." Those boats that had refrained from firing their far-ricocheting 0.50 caliber machine guns brought the guns to bear. With their peculiar measured roar, the fifties joined in battle.

As the fighting continued, automatic fire beat against the hulls, some of it coming from bunkers no more than 2 feet from the waterline. For all the counter fire from the boats, anti-tank rockets and recoilless rifle rounds kept pouring from mud bunkers on either bank. The heaviest fire came from the east, from the area where the intel reports had placed the Viet Cong. Firing a string of explosive 40-mm rounds into the aperture of one bunker on the east bank, a Navy gunner blew the top off the fortification and silenced it. Although most enemy positions were within 5 meters of the water and formed a killing zone of 1,500 meters long, few of the Army troops saw much more of the enemy than his gun flashes. As the line of boats moved deeper into the ambush, the intensity of the fight grew. Some boats slowed while others speeded up, but all poured fire from every operable gun. As fast as they could, the gunners fired, reloaded and fired again. After only a few minutes of letting the Navy do the fighting, the troops joined in with M-79 grenade launchers, M60 machine guns, and M16 rifles. The men climbed, crawled, or ran to firing positions, while officers saw to it that machine gunners and M-79 grenadiers got the better locations.

In the first flush of enemy engagement, many of the Navy weapons momentarily fell silent, their crews wounded or killed. Acting sometimes under company officers, but in most cases on their own, soldiers took over Navy guns so that few weapons went long unused, even though casualties constantly mounted.

Commanding the 3rd platoon of Bravo Company, 3rd of the 60th, 1st Lt. Peter M. Rogers saw six of his men hit in the first few seconds, many of the Navy crewmen of Rogers' boat were hit and riflemen took their places. When the company commander, Capt. Wilbert Davis took hold of a Navy machine gun to fire, one of his platoon sergeants moved in to relieve him, only to take an enemy bullet in the chest. As he fell to the deck, another soldier quickly took the gun.

Running from the main deck to the gun turret in search of a better view of enemy position, Capt. Gregg Orth, commander, Company A 3/60, took over an unmanned machine and opened fire. When the gun malfunctioned, he ran below decks, found a machine gunner and sent him to fix it. Just then, he noted that two Navy machine at the bow had quit firing. Surmising that they had malfunctioned, he sent two machine gunners to remove the Navy weapons and

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RIVER OF DEATH

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replace them with two of the company's M60s.

Sgt. John White of Company B, 3/60, spotted a man in a tree, turned to a nearby machine gunner telling him there was a sniper in the tree. The gunner fired a long burst from his M60 and set the tree ablaze. As the two men scanned the area for another target, the blast from an exploding rocket knocked both of them down, but seconds later were on their feet and firing.

So fast and sustained was the fire from the American weapons that at least two M60 machine gun barrels burned out. To help the M-79 gunners, other soldiers knelt by the bow, ripping open cases of ammunition. On one boat alone, three gunners disposed of three cases of ammunition in 20 minutes. With only sporadic breaks the battle continued. Round after round struck both troop carriers and monitors. The boats veered right and left in the narrow channel, some jockeying for position, some temporarily out of control as coxswains were wounded. The blast from a rocket explosion knocked one boat commander off his feet and under a 50 cal. Gun tub. Although stunned, he made it back to the wheel a minute later, but in the meantime the boat had careened dangerously.

Three minutes after the fight started a monitor, M-112-2, took two RPG2 rounds, one in the cockpit that shot away the steering mechanism. The boat captain managed to beach the monitor while crewman worked frantically to repair the damage. The job done quickly, M-112-1 lunged again into midstream. At the same time the monitor was hit, the command and communications boat took two anti-tank rockets on the port 40-mm gun mount. Although the rounds did no damage, they served to acquaint the battalion staff fully the nature of the situation. A few minutes later, the command boat took another hit. This round knocked Commander Rhodes unconscious, but a few seconds later he was back on his feet.

To the men in the troop carriers it appeared that the VC were trying to hit the frames holding the canvas sun cover over the troop compartment and rain down fragments on the closely bunched men below. Most of the rounds seemed to be aimed that way sailed harmlessly over the boats, for such shooting demanded the best marksmanship or incredible luck. The few rockets that struck the metal frames wounded scores of men, in one case killing one and wounding every other man in a platoon of Company B.

However fierce the enemy fires the Army and Navy radios went on operating. Amid messages asking

for the medical aid boat and questions as to where there were any friendlies on ashore, fragmentary reports on the battle flashed back to command and communications boat and from there back to brigade headquarters. Word of the ambush had reached the brigades operation officer Major Johnnie Corns, who was monitoring the progress of the convoy, about 3 minutes after the fight began. The first report had it that two of the boats were on fire. With the concurrence of the brigade commander, Col. David, Major Corns directed the 3/47 that they be prepared to assume the mission of Col. Doty's battalion—landing on Beach White One and Two. If that turned out to be necessary, the 3/60 would land south of the bend, close to the beaches previously given the name of Beach Red One and Two. Flying above the action, the commander

of the 3/60 also listened to the first reports of the fighting. His first reaction was a wry satisfaction that at least the enemy was where they had expected them to be. It was all the more important now, Doty believed, to proceed with the operation as planned, to run the gauntlet and get the men ashore on Beach White One and Two. Artillery observers flying overhead in spotter aircraft called in fire on the VC positions minutes after the first enemy round crashed into the lead minesweeper. Two batteries of 105-mm howitzers, B Battery and C Battery of the 34th Artillery fired from support positions south of the battle site while Battery A, 1st Battalion, 27 Artillery, reinforced their fires from a support base to the northeast. Although they cut down the volume of enemy fire, three batteries could not cope with all the enemy fire coming from an ambush over 1,500

meters long. The 105s could deal effectively with spider holes and other open enemy positions, but a direct hit from a piece as heavy as 155 was needed to knock out a bunker.

At 0735, Monitor 111-3 was hit by two RPG2s. The first knocked out the main gun, the 40-mm encased in a turret, killing the Navy gunman and wounding two others. The second wounded three more crewmen. Two minutes later a third anti-tank rocket smashed into the 81-mm mortar pit, wounding two marines and a sailor, but the monitor stayed in the battle. Elsewhere many of the direct hits by RPG2s did little damage. Each of the boats carrying Capt. Richard Botelho's Company C, e.g., took at least one rocket hit, but no Army or Navy personnel were injured. He was grateful for the fact that the VC were lousy shots. Few of the thousands

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The Men In The Boats

(rerun by request of membership)

Written by LtGeneral Johnnie Corns, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Operations Officer, 2nd Brigade 1967-68

The mist of the morning cools and softens the air
As the last of the soldiers heads down the steel stair.
He crossed the barge tied alongside the ship
And boarded the craft, making sure not to slip.
The assault craft and boats are now well underway
Executing the plan which was briefed yesterday
The boats flow out smoothly, moving into the line
From the air their formation looks dark, serpentine.
Up the brown, muddy river they move with the tide
Some enjoying the scenery on this their first ride.
Others seem not to care, unaware of the beauty
Their thoughts are focused on performing their duty.
These are the veterans who have been here before
Who've lived through the fire fights, not anxious for more.
But should one occur, these brave men are good
Their valor and skill is well understood.
The likes of this force is seldom seen.
They fight from the water and are called riverine.
Grant used them at Vicksburg in the great Civil War
And the French proved the concept on the Red River shore.

When the power was combined of Army and Navy
The first thoughts generated were just short of cagey.
But these didn't prevail when it came to a fight
Both soldiers and sailors knew what was right.
Soldiers saw water like moats 'round a castle
An unwelcome obstacle when it came to a battle.
But sailors saw water like the Daytona track
A way to get in and a way to get back.
Attacks from the water were new to their foe
Who aimed at the highways where troops usually go.
But for riverine troopers, this was the way
To attack with surprise at the first light of day.
And this was the plan they would follow today
To spring their attack, the riverine way.
Some early doubts for the plan soon arose
When they learned they'd be running right by Snoopy's Nose.

An elaborate plan that would probably work well
But for boat crews and platoons it was difficult to tell.
Artillery was firing, of this they'd been told
A battalion in choppers found the first LZ cold.
But what was that pounding on the side of the craft

Shaking the boat from forward to aft.

An antitank rocket had exploded top side
But in spite of hot shrapnel, the platoon has survived.

There's a monitor turning to a stream up ahead
No one at the wheel, the helmsman is dead.

The assault craft turns wildly, rams into the bank
A split-second decision before the craft sank.

The infantry platoon along with the crew
Scramble ashore where the artillery blew.

Their foe is retreating, crawling over a dike
That's getting chewed up by a boat's forty mike.

There's plenty of action, new troops have their fill
The artillery's pounding, the jets screaming shrill.

The time is at hand, it's good against evil
Death goes ashore through cordite and diesel.

But the noise of the battle slowly passes away
There are men to be cared for, there's time now to pray.

The enemy is pursued by chopper and boat.
Medics work wonders with lumps in their throats.

It seems like forever, but they're back on the ship
Some slightly wounded—broken finger, bruised hip.

But thoughts are of Willy who made them all laugh
And of Jose and Bob who did not make it back.

They laugh at Frank's letter that he got from back home
The candy from his wife has been misssent to Nome.

The box will be forwarded, though mangled and tattered
But Frank didn't care; it's the letter that mattered.

They laughed and they joked and played lots of pranks
And made a few jokes about those with some rank.

And every face beamed as the brass just announced
It was a main force enemy that they had just trounced.

That kind of news would be in their letters
But what mattered most was they had fought even better.
There was a deep sense of pride when facing great danger

Of meeting a test, risking life for a stranger.

Most pictured the stranger as a small Asian child
Who'd suffered so much in such a short while.

And the main thing, of course, that most of them feared
Was continuing to live being homeless and scared.

Many years have passed since the days of these battles.
For each old Raider and Rat the memories still rattle.

A few of these warriors have even gone back
In search of something they feel that they lack.

Not to recall the carnage or view the rubble
But to see once again, those they helped when in trouble.

They're warmed by the smiles of kids three or four
But in the old USA they have even more.

And the main experience that gives them a chill
Is to fly over the land, lush, green and now still.

To feel tears sting their eyes looking down at the moats
And feel their chests swell for the Men in the Boats.

Colonel Edwin W. Chamberlain and Bandido Charlie Company

Hi Albert,

I have noticed that, while a number of articles have been written about various commanders, none have been written about Colonel Chamberlain, who was 3/60 CO from its formation at Fort Riley, Kansas, until the middle of 1967. Attached is an article I wrote and sent to the Bandido Charlie Association, but think it is appropriate for our broader history as well. I hope this meets with your approval.

I know that sometimes memory can be tricky, but I believe that the facts are true to the best of my recollection and research.

Sincerely, Lucien Hinkle

by Lucien Hinkle

The 9th Infantry Division formed up and started training in the spring of 1966 at Fort Riley, Kansas. I joined HQ Co. of the 3rd Battalion 60th Infantry in the beginning of June. The battalion commander was Lt. Colonel Edwin W. Chamberlain. He had been a young officer in the Korean War, so had valuable combat experience. He was a stickler for discipline and protocol, and we trained hard that summer and into the fall. This training stood us in good stead in Vietnam. Our battalion was one of the first in the division to arrive in Vietnam in December 1966, and the first to go to our new base at Dong Tam, then under construction.

Colonel Chamberlain was tough and demanding, no less so of himself than others. He always paid great attention to detail, expecting the best from his soldiers. However, he was never mean or petty, but always fair. If one committed some transgression, once he had chewed you out he was done with it. At the end of one operation, when all the troops were coming in from the field, the Recon Platoon leader came in by chopper before all the rest of his men had arrived safely back at base. When the Colonel heard about this, he called the platoon leader up and chewed him out right over the battalion net, admonishing him that, as unit commander, he was always to be the last one to leave the field.

On another occasion, our ARVN counterpart had captured a VC and had taken him up in a chopper. They were threatening to throw him out if he did not talk and give them intelligence information. One of our officers was along in the chopper, and when Colonel Chamberlain heard about all of this he called up our officer and told him in no uncertain terms that he was not to allow the ARVN soldiers to throw their captive out the door.

Early in the spring, C Company, 5th Battalion 60th Infantry was assigned to our battalion, and our Charlie Company was detached to 5/60th. C Co. 5/60 was a mechanized company with heavily armed APCs. It was led by Lt. Larry Garner. Early on Lt. Garner showed particular originality and individualism in his use of the tracks. He was a student of General George Armstrong Custer and preferred to refer to his tracks as A-CAVs, armored cavalry. His tactics showed his penchant for the cavalry. He somehow managed to arm each track with at least one 50 cal. machine gun, and one track had a 106 recoilless rifle, and I believe another had a flame thrower. Lt. Garners' own attire was at times flamboyant and "out of uniform" with accepted army standards.

Because of all of this, at one point Colonel Chamberlain exclaimed that they all looked like "a bunch of Bandidos." Bandido Charlie became their name and call sign from that point on. On one occasion, the colonel had to argue with the brigade commander to accept the unorthodox

dress and actions of Bandido Charlie, saying that it was good for the morale of the battalion. The brigade commander finally acquiesced. One morning when returning to my tent from duty, I was stopped by the column of Bandido Charlie tracks pulling out of base on a routine patrol. Some of the local ladies had made a large flag for each track. It was indeed a stirring sight to see the tracks surging by with the flags, attached to the whip antennas, snapping in the breeze.

Bandido Charlie earned their reputation at the battle of Ap Bac 2 on May 2, 1967. The VC 514 Local Force Battalion was dug into heavily fortified positions in the shape of a large L. The main leg of the L ran north to south to a juncture with a watercourse running east and west. The second leg then ran from that point west along the north side of the watercourse. In the early afternoon, A Co. 3/47, advancing up from the south, came under heavy fire from the VC forces on the north side of that stream. After taking serious casualties, they were forced to take up defensive positions along the south shore, but in so doing

*Colonel Chamberlain
was a fine officer, and
through his efforts helped
Bandido Charlie to excel.*

became a de facto blocking force. B and C Cos. 3/47 advanced to blocking positions further to the east and northeast of A Co. 3/47. For some unknown reason, B Co. 3/60 was attached to 3/47 for operational control as a blocking force, even though they were way off to the northwest and formed the left flank of 3/60 advancing from the west. This left Colonel Chamberlain with only two companies: Bandido Charlie and A Co.

In spite of taking a terrible pounding from artillery, aircraft, and helicopter gunships all afternoon, the VC could not be dislodged from their positions. Colonel Chamberlain was determined to launch a classic frontal assault, and ordered Bandido Charlie to maneuver down from the northwest and form a north/south line to the west of, and opposite, the main VC leg of defense. There were many waterways that crisscrossed the area, and Bandido Charlie had difficulty maneuvering across them and arrived late in the afternoon at their position, I believe around 1630 hours. A Co. was already in position on the right flank of Bandido, but on the north side of the watercourse.

Because of further delays, the brigade commander, Colonel Fulton, was having doubts about undertaking the assault so late in the day. Colonel Chamberlain had to forcefully argue his case for continuing, and Colonel Fulton agreed. Bandido Charlie charged across the final 1,000 yards of open rice paddy right into the enemy positions, with A Co. 3/60 assaulting on their right flank east through the tree line along the north side of the stream. Fierce hand-to-hand combat ensued, and the VC broke and tried to escape to the east. Many were killed by the blocking forces. Our casualties from the assault were surprisingly few. Two soldiers from A Co. 3/60 subsequently received the Congressional Medal of Honor for their courage. The commander of the 7th ARVN Division later estimated that the VC 514 had

been so mauled that it was no longer a viable fighting force.

I didn't write much about Ap Bac at the time, but in a letter dated 25 September '67, I wrote the following about a recent action: "The VC sneaked out at night and took their dead and wounded with them. That seems to be the outcome of all our battles. We will run into a bunch of VC, try to surround them at a safe distance, and call in artillery and air strikes on them. Then in the evening the companies go into a defensive perimeter, hoping that they have the VC penned in well enough. In the morning, the companies will sweep the area where the VC are supposed to be, but they have usually gone during the night. At the battle of Ap Bac in May when Colonel Chamberlain was still our commander, the companies assaulted a bunker complex of VC and a total of 186 VC were killed, and we had very few casualties. And I mean very few. But even then the Colonel had to argue with the Brigade commander to let him assault the bunkers. If he hadn't the same old story would have occurred: Withdraw to a defensive position for the night hoping you have the VC surrounded, only to find out in the morning they are gone."

Colonel Chamberlain was a fine officer, and through his efforts helped Bandido Charlie to excel.

Follow Up on Bandido Charlie

Hi Albert,

Lt Larry Garner was, as I said, the CO of Bandido Charlie during the first half of 1967. He was unfortunately killed in July 1967. He was the one who wore the red bandana around his neck and was known as the Red Baron. He was relentless against the VC, and so feared by them that they put a price on his head.

I worked in the battalion TOC and was on the radios the night he was killed. He had sustained some casualties and called in a dust off chopper, which was shot at and crash landed upon its departure. Since the mud was so bad, Larry had to leave the tracks behind and hike with a small party to the chopper to secure it and have another one come in for the casualties. During the night, he had sporadic contact with the VC and would call in sit-reps, and at one point called the TOC on the radio for an artillery strike. I went off duty at midnight and only learned the next morning that he had been killed by a sniper around 0200 (1LT Larry Arthur Gardner, Mulkeytown, IL, C Co. 5th Bn 60th Inf Dinh Tuong Province). I just stuffed that down in my memory and thought "I just have to go on with my job and I can't deal with that now."

After the 9/11 attack, I began to have flashbacks about all of this, which were very disconcerting. Through the Bandido Charlie web site, I eventually got in contact and received a letter from a fellow who had been at the chopper that night with Larry, and thus I learned the truth of what happened. It turned out that my flashbacks were correct, and what little conscious memory I had was wrong. It is interesting what tricks one's mind can play, sometimes for self-protection.

I keep thinking that I need to get that letter scanned into my computer so I can send it to the Bandido Charlie Association and you, if you think you might be interested in publishing that.

In 1968, Bandido Charlie was detached from the 3/60 and sent northwest to the 1st Infantry Division that operated on terrain more suitable for tracks. The 1st Division had a reunion in St. Louis, MO, about 2004 or '05 which I was

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Mortars

by Tom Lively 3rd/34th Arty

Albert, Nothing works real fast around here, especially me!! I do have some stories if you're really hard up for something for the newsletter, but I'm always reluctant to put anything about my experiences out in front of the guys who really did the job for us in RVN. We saw duty like everyone who was there and we did what was necessary to finally come home. With that said, one disclaimer only... my memory is failing and sometimes I'm not always sure what happened and what didn't. This is the way I remember it tho.

Seems like we got mortared so often we actually got used to it and we even learned what to do and what not to do. Charlie liked to harass us and keep us on our toes and awake at night and this was the way to do just that. Same way with sniper fire, you just never knew when to expect it so you expected it all the time and you were not disappointed—live and learn. I can remember 'incoming' mortars at every location I was at in Vietnam. Charlie would normally only have time to send six mortars our way at the Fire Base (KLaw). So if the first round didn't get you, you'd look for the second one to see how far apart they were and which direction they were walking them. That would tell you where to go or what options you had—if the first one didn't get you! So one afternoon I'm standing outside FDC (where everything good and bad starts) talking to our 1st. Sgt. when the first mortar comes in maybe 60 yards to our south and inside our wire perimeter. And the call went down, the guns immediately ... incoming! incoming!! The 1st Sgt. and I both went down and watched for the second one and sure enough it was 20 yards



Tom Lively 3rd/34th Arty



Unknown Artilleryman

closer and coming straight at us. Now, he's the one with all the experience, so I'm watching him pretty close, and he just stays there. So I did the same and we watched them come in one at a time and each one closer than the last. The sixth and thankfully last impacts 15-20 yards away and behind our mess area (lots of holes in lots of pots and pans). The 1st. Sgt. jumps into the crater, looks at me and hollers "Fire Mission"! I get on the mic immediately getting our guns up and swung around and calling battalion for clearance to fire. We just did what we were trained to do and battalion denied clearance because we couldn't see the little buggers. The guy with all the experience could look at the impact crater and actually come pretty close estimating range and FDC could do the rest. But it didn't work out that time!

When it was all over, I went back out and climbed into the crater and dug out the mortar fin-Chinese made with a shotgun shell for a blasting cap. It's registered with the Army and one of two war souvenirs I brought home. It's in my box in the closet with the rest of Vietnam. Ask and I'll show it to you. My call sign was Charlie 2-9. ★

BANDIDO

Continued from previous page

privileged to attend. There I met Larry's wife Harriet, (since remarried), his brother Jon, who had been a marine, and his son Michael, and daughter Alexandra (I think that is her name). I was able to give them a copy of that letter I mentioned, which they greatly appreciated. Unfortunately, I know nothing more about Colonel Chamberlain except that he died sometime in the 1990s. At one point in the early 2000s, I was able to get in touch with and talk with Captain Bledsoe (I'm not sure what rank he retired with) who had been recommended to OCS by Colonel Chamberlain, and who ended up back under his command as our S-4 supply CO! I think I got in touch with him from seeing his name in an email address among all the email addresses you send info too. Maybe he is still alive but I am not sure. The battle of Ap Bac was May 2, 1967. We didn't have many casualties and I don't remember any names. The Division newspaper had a short article about it at the time, but without the details I have recounted. I think the names of the two A Co soldiers who were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor are somewhere on the 9th Division web site.

Hope all of this is helpful. Best Wishes, Lucien

★

UNCONVENTIONAL

Continued from page 2

Nelson than when they used the tapes provided.

Unconventional Life Style

Living on the boats in remote areas did give rise to some inventive thinking. We towed a fuel barge around with us and somehow liberated a stainless steel PBR fuel tank that we placed on the fuel barge and filled with fresh water when we got alongside a ship or YRBM. There were no shower facilities at most of the sites so we were able to rig the 671 engine water-cooling system to discharge into a shower head on deck. Revving the engine produced a reasonable facsimile of a shower

that was surprisingly warm. The single problem in the small canals was that while showering, it was prudent to watch the intake to make sure that large pieces of contamination were not entering it. In Vinh Gia, our "base" was just downstream for the town privy. I can remember showering with soap in my eyes and never losing sight of the intake.

Boats in the far reaches of the Delta were at the very tag-end of the Navy supply system. It was difficult to establish just exactly who was responsible for our support. We were eligible at times for a "five finger discount" on certain military and repair items. We traded with the Army for uniforms and 105 Willie Peter and beehive ammunition that the Navy never seemed to have. We

were able to order submarine deck shoes (Keds) and got them. They filled an order in triplicate giving us a wonderful trading cache. Probably one of the most shameful practices that occurred was when a boat was at the YRBM when a supply ship showed up, the crew would dress in dungarees

and join the working party and walk right through the YRBM and deposit desirable food items on their boat. Even Navy canned hot dogs and dried Lyonnais potatoes were a break from C-rats and LRPs. This unique supply source ended when one of our groups filched a box destined for the ship's store that contained closely controlled items. The boat didn't get halfway home before it was recalled and the hospitality of the YRBM was severely curtailed. The ceramic installed toilets in the boats rarely worked and "portapotties" (buckets with a toilet seat) were devised. On deck, they were often blown over the side or lost so visits to our support ships served as an opportunity to replace the toilet seats. One ship had been raided so often that they stationed guards in the heads to prevent pilferage.

The difficulties and dangers of the assignments and the courage and inventiveness of the boat crews and their support personnel were the fibers that produced a stellar combat record and knitted the proud brotherhood that we have today. In Lynchburg, Virginia, there is a monument stairway that honors the veterans of all wars. An inscription there reads:

*"I stood up, I showed up.
I stepped forward,
I raised my right hand.
I stood in the gap,
I walked in the fire.
I did not dodge,
I did not evade.
Consequently,
I have nothing to prove,
No one to convince.
Those who matter already know.
Those who don't, never will."*

Author unknown ★



Riverine Infantry working off Tango Boats

RIVER OF DEATH

Continued from page 5

of enemy bullets pierced the armor of the boats. On the other hand, few of the American rounds were able to penetrate the enemy's bunkers. The Navy's 81-mm mortar shells and 40-mm high explosive rounds would knock out enemy bunkers only when they passed through firing slits. Yet however ineffective in killing the foe, each side maintained a steady fire, for one side to lessen the volume was to give the other side an opportunity to aim more precisely and bring all weapons to bear. So close were some of the enemy's positions to the waterline that some of the Navy's guns were unable to depress low enough to hit them. Only when the men on the boats were able to catch the VC popping up from their spider holes or from behind mounds of earth could they deal with them effectively.

Within 5 to 10 minutes after the ambush was sprung, the forward motion of the convoy ceased, but individual boats darted back and forth, continually passing each other, some keeping to midstream, others making passes toward the bank before veering off, their machine guns and heavy weapons in action all the while. One boat sped past the momentarily crippled Monitor 113-3, possibly trying to protect it. Just beyond the monitor, the boat shuddered under the blows of four or five rockets, but its fire never stopped. Another monitor, temporarily out of control, brushed the east bank but moments later swung back into midstream and back into the fight.

Col. Doty was still convinced that his troops could break through the ambush and land according to plan. He saw that the channel was filled with twisting, weaving boats, was laced with fire and was far too narrow to pass the 3/47 through while the fight was on. Then as Doty watched, a single boat broke out of the killing

zone and headed toward the White Beaches. Encouraged by this breakthrough, he ordered his S-3 to send in the troops. As B Company 3/60 made its dash for the beach, Col. Doty decided to make the run with him.

At this point the boat took a rocket hit on the Boston Whaler lashed to its deck. The little skiff shattered, but its outboard motor soared high in the air, and, as Doty followed its course, plummeted into the river, where it landed with a mighty splash. By the time S-3 acknowledged the call and relayed the order to the lead company commander, B Co. commander Capt. Davis could reply "Roger, I have element ashore now, waiting for the rest." For all the intensity of enemy fire B Co. 3/60 command group and one platoon had broken through. The rest of the boats, nevertheless, remained embroiled in the fight. At 0745, Monitor 111-3 took an RPG2 round on its port side that burned a hole completely through the armor and wounded one man. At about the same time, Tango 111-6 reeled under the impact of two anti-tank rounds but no one was hurt and the boat's fire continued unabated. A third round hit the 0.50 caliber mount a minute later, killing a Navy crewman and wounding five more. At this point Cmdr. Rhodes decided that the fire was too heavy and the danger of mines (now that the minesweepers were partially disabled) was just too great to justify continuing to run the gauntlet. In fact, Navy Riverine standard operating procedure required that troop carriers, be preceded by minesweepers. Moreover, he urgently needed replacement crews. At 0750, 20 minutes after the battle began, Rhodes therefore ordered all boats to turn back. They were to assemble downstream in the vicinity on the Red Beaches on the south side of the bend.

The withdrawal, under intense fire, began immediately. All the while artillery rained on the enemy and

the boats continued their fire as long as they remained in range. Four Air Force A-37s, earlier scheduled to strike the White Beaches under the original plan, roared in to put bombs and napalm on the VC positions. The enemy also continued to fire; in one case two rockets came so close to the RC-292 antennas on the command and communications boat that the rocket fins severed the lead-in wires. One by one, the boats broke out of the killing zone and headed for Beach Red Two. There the aid boat became a magnet as all boat commanders concentrated on getting help for their wounded.

Until the Navy task group commander ordered the withdrawal, Col. Doty and his S-3 had continued to urge the remainder of Company B to pass through the ambush and join Capt. Davis and his single platoon at Beach White One. At 0802, when Doty heard of the withdrawal order, he had no choice but to comply. He ordered Davis and his little band on the beach to re-embark and run the gauntlet in reverse. Engaged by the enemy on the beach, Captain Davis and the platoon began to withdraw a few yards at a time. Putting up heavy fire to the front, they ran in twos and threes back to Tango 111-6. When all were safely on board, Davis called the battalion S-3 and reported laconically, "We're coming back now." Raising the ramp, the boat captain backed into the stream, brought the bow around slowly, and, gunning the engines to full speed, called out to Davis. "I will get you through Captain." Riding with the current, the craft began to run the gauntlet, a lone boat with about 30 men, proceeding again through the fire of the Viet Cong. Rockets and bullets rained on the boat, but only one struck a telling blow. The craft was halfway through when a rocket hit the port 0.50 cal. mount. One sailor fell, killed instantly, and four of his comrades were wounded. But from that point the troop carrier made it

safely back to the Red Beach assembly area. At Red Beach, Capt. James Bledsoe, the battalions S-4, who rode with the command group, was organizing re-supply and medical evacuation for the wounded. An occasional sniper round whizzed through the area, although without effect, as boat after boat made its way to transfer the few dead and many wounded to the aid boat. There the battalion chaplain, Capt. James Johnson, and the surgeon, Capt. Charles Hughes, ministered to the wounded. Minor fires burned on two boats, one in a box of equipment, the other in a Boston Whaler. As the crews fought the fires, other boats came alongside to assist. Thanks to Bledsoe's efforts, by 0844 medical evacuation helicopters began to land on the deck of the aid boat to take the seriously wounded back to the base hospital at Dong Tam. Of the scores wounded, only 24 required evacuation.

Boats carrying platoons of the same company began to gather together. Platoon leaders scrambled into the company headquarters boats to brief their commanders, while the men worked to redistribute ammunition, replace damaged machine gun barrels, and radio back to the Mobile Riverine base for re-supply by helicopter. Calling back to Navy headquarters, Cmdr. Rhodes requested two minesweepers and a monitor from the force transporting the 3/47 (now halted a few thousand meters downstream) to replace his three most badly damaged boats. Every one of his and minesweepers, Rhodes reported had been hit.

His troops out of the ambush and reorganized smoothly, Doty directed his helicopter to a nearby fire support base to refuel. While on the ground, he conferred with Brig. Gen. William Fulton, one of the assistant 9th infantry division commanders. Getting ashore on the White Beaches, Fulton said, was the most critical element of the plan. Col. Doty was confident that the boats with his men aboard could get past the VC and go ashore. Returning to the air, Doty radioed the brigade commander, recommended that the battalion try again to get through. Col. David agreed and ordered Doty to try it as soon as the Navy group was ready.

Re-supply of boats and men meanwhile proceeded swiftly. At 0900, two replacement minesweepers and a replacement monitor had arrived among the boats transporting the 3/47 infantry. The boats also brought replacements for many of the Navy wounded, so that the Navy crews were close to full strength.

Backtracking In Brown Water

Book Review by M. B. Connolly Captain USN (Ret.)

Rolly Kidder, a PBR sailor, has just published a marvelous book in which he revisits Vietnam and then interviews the families of three friends who were lost in Vietnam in 1969. The three include a Chief Petty Officer from River Division 535, Eldon Tozer, an Army Captain, Robert Olson and a Lieutenant (j.g.) from River Assault Division 132, Jim Rost. This book is a must read for anybody who was on the rivers in any capacity or who wants to know more about what we really did.

Rolly draws from his journal that he kept while in-country and

recreates the frustrations, the fear, the pride, and the lighter moments of SERE training, the rivers and the whole Vietnam experience. His PBR division was assigned with the River Assault boats at Vinh Gia and in conversations with me has nothing but compliments about the "rag boats."

The following is part of my review of the book which is on the back cover:

Rolly Kidder has delivered a brilliant chronicle of the Vietnam conflict in the Mekong Delta with which many may not be familiar. Forty years later, he revisited

Vietnam and began to track down the families of three men who had been killed, and evaluate the impact of the loss on those families. . . Kidder's recounting of his visits with the families of the three servicemen is a poignant reminder of the continuing grief, as well as pride, extant amongst many and is a fitting memorial to the Army and Riverine heroes and an honor to those who mourn them.

The book is *Backtracking in Brown Water* by Rolland Kidder and is available at Amazon.com in hardcover, paperback and ebook editions.

RIVER OF DEATH
WILL BE CONTINUED IN THE
NEXT EDITION OF
RIVER CURRENTS

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

From the Membership

Aloha Albert, I did not know hardly any of the men on the ship as I was only with you from June 1968 through January 1969 as the Bde. Commo. Chf. I don't know if anyone remembers the goodies for the Chiefs and Officers Mess. I received from the 9th Div. S&T. I got two of the Tango Boats to haul it back to the ship. Our Commo. Shack was the small building on the stern of the Barge that was attached to the Benewah. There was an incident when a Chaplain took off on a Chopper that somehow fell out of the chopper in the river. Hardly knew anyone of the Navy guys onboard, but it was an experience I will always remember. The Beer Flag was a welcome sight onboard the Pontoon.

Also remember the Navy Club on the dock in Dong Tam where you don't want to wear your hat upon entering, which was the same here in Naval Weapons Station, Concord, CA, which is closed now.

I requested for retirement in 1967, was cancelled from DA for assignment to Nam after serving 22 years. So decided to stay in another 5 years which was OK because I was assigned to Germany, which was good for my family. At least I had the opportunity to see Europe before retiring.

Aloha Harry Kawamura MSGT USA (Ret.)



**Son Terry Teruo
Kawamura Medal of
Honor Recipient**

*The President of the United States
in the name of The Congress
takes pleasure in presenting the
Medal of Honor to*



KAWAMURA, TERRY TERUO

Rank and organization: Corporal, U.S. Army, 173d Engineer Company, 173d Airborne Brigade, Republic of Vietnam. Place and date: Camp Radcliff, Republic of Vietnam, 20 March 1969. Entered service at: Oahu, Hawaii. Born: 10 December 1949, Wahiawa, Oahu, Hawaii.

Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Cpl. Kawamura distinguished himself by heroic action while serving as a member of the 173d Engineer Company. An enemy demolition team infiltrated the unit quarters area and opened fire with automatic weapons. Disregarding the intense fire, Cpl. Kawamura ran for his weapon. At that moment, a violent explosion tore a hole in the roof and stunned the occupants of the room. Cpl. Kawamura jumped to his feet secured his weapon and, as he ran toward the door to return the enemy fire, he observed that another explosive charge had been thrown through the hole in the roof to the floor. He immediately realized that two stunned fellow soldiers were in great peril and shouted a warning. Although in a position to escape, Cpl. Kawamura unhesitatingly wheeled around and threw himself on the charge. In completely disregarding his safety, Cpl. Kawamura prevented serious injury or death to several members of his unit. The extraordinary courage and selflessness displayed by Cpl. Kawamura are in the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.

To Men and Women of the 9th Inf Div and Our Navy Brothers in Arms

I was with A Btry 1/84 Arty 155 towed. We were the first 155 Btry to try the boats as you know it was too much fire power so we followed you on lend. We did a lot of damage up and down the Delta. We were overrun October 31, 1967, was wounded, and left for dead. Charlie took my dog tags thinking I was dead. I thank whoever it was that took me to get patched up. To this day I say it was an angel who cared for me in the field; best feeling I ever had. May God bless all who served. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

P.S. If anyone could tell me the outcome of the battle, I would like to hear from you as I was airlifted back home. *Thanks*

John L. Jones

US Army forever

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Charlie,
Thank you for your note.

I wanted to give a little extra so you would know how much I appreciate your (and others) work on behalf of the association.

I will rely on your good judgment to determine the allocation. If sponsor will guilt a few others into a contribution, that would be good.

If the paint is for a Tango boat, that would be good. The ones I was on needed all the help they could get.

I was Army Infantry. I had such incredible respect for the Navy who carted us around. When we were on their boats they seemed to take our

safety as their sole mission. The Navy personnel I met were real gentlemen and an honor to know.

My wife and I plan to visit Vesterheim soon. I just renewed my membership.

Have a good day.

JOS (James Saboe, C Co. 3rd/47th Inf [02/69-07/69], josaboosesq@aol.com)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Charlie

Please find enclosed an extra check of \$75 (\$25 for quarterly newsletter sponsorship and \$50 to go towards maintenance, travel, etc. for the mobile trailer).

I was so happy to learn from my two brothers that the trailer was in my small hometown of Ryan, Iowa. The feedback was great and only a few people knew about the MR Force let alone that someone from Ryan had been involved.

I have been gone from the area since before my Navy days, but have always supported the Ryan Legion. Thanks again. I always read every word in the newsletters.

Best regards, Bill Duggan, RAS 13 M-131-2 bduggan@rrdc.com

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I'm a retired Yak rancher. I'm donating \$100 for paint for the CCB. The donation is in memory of BM1 Bruce "Fred" Brechlin and GM3 Richard "Bogie" Bluebaugh. Fred was my Boat Captain on Tango 43 and Bogie a fellow boatsmate on Tango 43 who passed this June along with his wife in a car accident.

John Hooper RivRon 15 T-43

How Many Vietnam Veterans Are Still Alive?

Week of April 01, 2013 - The approximate percentage of Vietnam-era veterans who are still alive in 2013 is 75; <<http://www.leatherneck.com/forums/showthread.php?90736-How-many-Nam-Vets-die-per-day-is-what>> some online estimates from websites suggest that the number is much lower. In reality, the death rate for Vietnam-era veterans in recent years has been comparable to or lower than that of other men in their age group, <<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/veterans/default1a.htm>> according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Of the men with the age distribution of Vietnam-era veterans who were alive in 2000, about 12% had died by 2010, with about 1.5% of the survivors projected to die each year since then.

For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control website at <<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/veterans/default1a.htm>> www.cdc.gov/nceh/veterans/default1a.htm.

"According to the US Census Bureau, of the 2.8 million Vietnam veterans who served in-country Vietnam, there are 1,027,000 alive as of the 2000 census."

It is interesting to note that another 15 million claim to be Vietnam veterans.

Geez, if we would have had an extra 15 million troops we could have mopped-up the insurgency in South Vietnam, invaded North Vietnam and unified the country before the commies did it! Amazing how popular fighting a war becomes after it's over.

George Duke Marthenze

Mobile Riverine Force Association Membership Application Form

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

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47th Inf



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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.

Tom Bogner for Jim Stone Echo Co 2nd/39th (02/68-02/69)

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 KIAs

Orville Daley for Merrill Davis USS Askari ARL-30 (1952-1953)

Ted Fetting for Eloy "Stevie" LeBlanc, Roy Phillips, and Fred Jansoniuss B Co. 2nd/60th and 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)

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

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

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. Petit, LT, CC, RC, RivRon 13 and 15 Men of C Co. 4th/47th 1967 for our Brothers KIA 03/19/67 Benito Alaniz;

MIA 04/09/67 Ronald P. Schworer; KIA 04/13/67 Charles "Duffy" Black;

KIA 05/15/67 Donald M. Peterson; KIA 06/19/67 Robert J. Cara, Robert

J. Jindra, Timothy A. Johnson, Forrest L. Ramos, Cameron A. Rice, David

A. Robin, Sheldon B. Schulman, Hubert J. Fink, Kenneth D. Frakes, William

M. Geier, John L. Winters; KIA 07/11/67 Marion "Butch" Eakins, Elmer F.

Kenney, Harold W. King, Philip A. Ferro, George E. Smith; KIA 07/29/67

Cecil B. Bridges; KIA 09/29/67 James M. Sunday; KIA 10/06/67 Gale A.

Alldridge, Danny D. Burkhead, Charles W. Davis; KIA 11/10/67 Charles W.

Grizzle; and KIA 05/06/68 John T. Hoskins

Adam Metts for Donald L. Bruckart T-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)

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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 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

Steven Totcoff for my brother CPL Dennis S. Totcoff B Co 3rd/47th 9th Inf Div KIA 5/2/68

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

Member **Frank T. Griffin** passed away October 24, 2012. Frank served on the USS Tutuila ARG-4 (06/66-03/67).

You may contact his widow Sherry, 19129 Cheyenne St, Clinton Township, MI 48036-2129, 586-468-2467.

Member SSgt **Luis Almodovar** passed away November 15, 2013, from complications due to Agent Orange exposure. Luis served with the HHC 4th/47th 9th Inf Div Mobile Riverine Force (11/67-11/68). You may contact his widow Sue, 4232 Jones Mill Rd, Carrollton, GA 30116-8026, 770-832-1266, almodovar1266@bellsouth.net. May our Brother forever rest in peace and in God's Hands.

Bruce Anthony "Fred" Brechlin of Manhattan Beach, California, recently of Norway, Michigan, passed away December 7, 2013, after a battle with colon cancer at his sister's home. He served in RivRon 15 on Tango 43 (12/69).

Fred was my Boat Captain on Tango 43. We were deployed July of 1969. I was on the boat for 6 months and Fred remained on for a few months later at least. He was a very good boat captain and I enjoyed working under him. He joined me in San Diego 2 years ago for the MRFA reunion. I was in Indianapolis in August and introduced myself and thanked you (Albert) for all you have done for the MRFA. I visited Fred 2½ weeks before his death. Although Fred's given name was Bruce, I only knew him as Fred.

John Hooper, BM3, Cold Spring, Minnesota

Member **George Carlstrom Jr.** passed away January 22, 2014. George served with A Btry 3rd/34th Arty BN (01/67-02/68). You may

contact his widow Sylvia, 1 Valleyview Cir, Bentonville AR 72712-7517, 479-464-8188

Member **Keith Harshfield Jr.** passed away February 1, 2014. Keith was a gunner on T-151-10 (06/68-06/69). You may contact his widow Susan, 4408 Stevens Chapel Rd, Smithfield, NC 27577-8407, 919-209-5241.

Richard Eugene Pettit passed away January 23, 2014. Richard was stationed on the USS Satyr ARL-23 (1969-70). You may contact his widow Kathi Pettit, 6241 Helena St, Denver, CO 80239, kapettit1@comcast.com.



Irvine

David Dale Irvine of Science Hill, Kentucky, passed away January 12, 2014. David served in B Co 4th/47th 9th Inf (1968-69). You may contact his widow Debbie Irvine, 2579 Rock Lick Creek Rd, Science Hill, KY 42553.



Broom

Member **Jerry "Buffalo" Broom** passed away July 16, 2013. Jerry served on the USS White River (LSMR-536) and USS Tom Green County (LST-1159) (1965-67). You may contact his daughter Carrie Cole, 106 Three Greens Dr, Huntersville, NC 28078, 704-491-6382, gc10@msn.com.

Member and Plankowner **David L. Anderson** passed away September 26, 2013. David served in HQ 4th/47th Infantry (06/67-02/68). You may contact his widow Sandra Anderson, PO Box 253, Becker MN 55308-0253.



Spears

Member **Gerald Dwain Spears** passed away January 16, 2014. Dwain served on the USS Colleton (APB-36) MRF TF-117 (04/67-07/68). You may contact his widow Ruth Spears, PO Box 1240, Sallisaw, OK 74955-1240, 918-776-7117, dwainspears@sbcglobal.net. May our Brother rest in peace and in God's hands.



Hayes

Member LTC **Daniel P. Hayes** USA (Ret.) passed away November 22, 2013. Daniel served in HQ 3rd/34th Artillery (06/67-01/68). He was a proud Plankowner since 1993. You may contact his widow Mrs. Elizabeth M. Hayes, 6540 SW 51st CT, Ocala, FL 34474.



Voll

Member **Frank J. Voll Jr.** passed away

November 2, 2013. Frank served in the 5th/60th Inf (05/66-05/68). You may contact his widow Christine Voll, 58 Skyline Dr, Akron NY 14001-1526, 716-542-4130.



Perrault

Lois Elaine E. Perrault passed away after 11 years of fighting a very courageous battle with cancer on February 19, 2014, at her home in Saline, Michigan, with her loving family by her side. As a dedicated and courageous Navy wife of over 20 years, Lois held the toughest job in the world "A Navy Wife." Lois was married to member George Perrault SKC USN (Ret.). George served on the USS Tioga County LST-1158 (1966-67). You may contact George at geolois@umich.edu. May our sister rest in peace and in God's hands. Albert



Meyer

Donald "Cal" Meyer Jr. passed away February 18, 2014. Cal was in C Co. 2nd/39th Inf (1966-67). Cal created a website, with the faithful help of his cousin Margy Davis, to honor his fellow 39th Infantry Regiment "Fighting Falcons" soldiers (http://www.39thinfantryregiment.org/Home_Page.html). You may contact his sister, Holly Meyer Velez, 1710 N. Wayne St., Arlington VA 22201.



Mobile Riverine Force Association

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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

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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)
Jerry "Hollywood" Kaweck B Co. 3rd/47th 9th Inf (07/68-12/68)
Harry & Judy Kawamura
Dane Keller RivDiv 532 PBR 121 (05/69-05/70)
LTC Nick Laiacina 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)
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Corrado Lutz PCF-23 (03/68-03/69)
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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)
MillSpec Tours Inc
Nicholas P. Miller COS RAD 152 (7/68-6/69)
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 II, 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 COMRIVFLT
ONE (01/68-12/68)
Dwayne Parsons M-111-1 (Zippo 1) (11/67-11/68)
Robert Pawlicki T-111-11 (03/67-12/67)
Luis F. Peraza D Co. 3rd/60th Inf (11/68-08/69)
John "Ron" Perry T-132-11 (06/68-09/69)
Col Pete Petersen USA (Ret.) Cdr 3rd/60th Inf (11/68-08/69)
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)
Kevin Rafferty Honorary Member
Paul Ray M-151-5 (06/69-07/70)
Capt William Renton USS Askari ARL-30 (10/68-09/69)
Donald and Marjorie Robbins USS Benewah (APB-35)

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 Schladweiler 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)
Bob Shawen Friend of the Ardingers
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)
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)
Harley Timmerman T-132-10 (06/68-06/69)
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
Bob and Nancy VanDruff T-91-5 and T-92-4
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)
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)
Robert P. Williams 1097th TC (MB) (01/68-01/69)
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 Whitfield County
LST-1169 (02/65-12/66)
James Zieminski EN2 Boat Captain RivDiv
153 ASPB 6854 (04/69-04/70)
Admiral Elmo Zumwalt ComNavForV