

# RIVER CURRENTS



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THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

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## Life in the Mechanized Infantry

**2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment,  
9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
Republic of Viet Nam, 2/69 – 3/70**

**Stephen M. Ferragamo, Co. B, 2/47, 9<sup>th</sup> Div.**

Life in the Mechanized Infantry had its ups & downs. I always felt it was better than being in a straight leg outfit but not as good as the Riverines. The Stars & Stripes always seemed to have stories about the 1<sup>st</sup> Cav getting chopped-up; that was not appealing. An MOS of 11B1A was about as good as it got. After AIT at Ft. Polk, I was treated to 3 weeks of APC, Armored Personnel Carrier ("track") training at Ft. Knox. The Army taught me some of the finer points of Armour warfare & maintenance in Western Europe. All that training really came in handy when Charley sent a formation of Soviet made T-34's through the rice paddies and also on all those days when the mercury plunged to -10 in Long An Province, RVN.

When I hit country in mid-February, 1969, a tiny effort toward a second Tet Offensive was under way, but I guess Charley had shot his wad on the first Tet in '68 and couldn't get it up for another big show this time around. When I reached my unit, Co. B, 2/47, they were dug into a dry rice paddy on the south side of the Tan An Bridge. They had been there for some time and the place looked a bit messy (what a surprise). It was dry season. Sand bags and hunks of adobe-like, rice patty dirt was piled up around the drive wheels & treads of each track to protect it from something. Every night, tracks would take turns guarding each end of the bridge. This was a really static position, and it was pretty easy duty. Every morning, at least one platoon (4 tracks) would pull out and "road march" (drive somewhere), through rice paddies, mud, reeds, sometime even on roads to some location, where everyone but the driver & 50 (.50 caliber machine gunner) would dismount. A sweep would be conducted until somebody tripped a booby trap. The wounded would be dusted off and we would either return to the tracks or have them come pick us up. Some days we would pile into some slicks for an air assault, all of those were always bad. A couple times we went into Tan An to hook-up with the Riverines and load into some landing craft for an all out assault onto the mud that bordered every river & stream. All that changed with

the changing of brigade commanders.

One day we got orders to break camp and head for our battalion HQ at Binh Phuoc. I had only been to Binh Phuoc once, to report to my new company. Now our daily routine changed; didn't get any better, just changed. Whenever a line company (A, B or C) was in base camp for stand-down, two tracks would go each morning out at 0600. With ordinance disposal techs walking out front with mine detectors, these tracks would provide security while Thunder Road (sometimes called Kentucky Derby) was sweep north from Binh Phuoc to the southern edge of Tan An where a similar column coming the other way would be met. Dozens of civilian vehicles would be waiting to follow the tracks slowly up the 4 mile stretch with chickens, ducks, pigs, eggs, fish, vegetables, and people in and on every type of 1950's vintage car, bus, truck, motorcycle, rickshaw, and bicycle. We had to keep this vital dirt road open for the heavy commerce that fueled the mighty RVN war machine.

After completing the sweep, the tracks would return to base camp to visit the P.O.L. point (gas station), replace tread links, check nuts & bolts for tightness, and get ammo or other supplies. The rest of the day was usually free time for reading

& writing letters, playing cards, flipping through a magazine, volley ball, even church services (when available). Next day we would get ready for another 2-3 day operation in the field.

One became a driver, if qualified, through attrition. I humped the M-60 and the PRC25, until I got wounded, visited some of our fine medical



facilities, and returned 3 months later as a somewhat senior member of Bravo Company. Three months in-country will do that. After a few weeks, a driver position opened up and I took it. The tracks themselves were set-up to allow us to operate in the field for a couple days without resupply. Each driver and his 50 was responsible for keeping the track clean, maintained, and most importantly, ready to take care of the guys when

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## From the Galley

**ALBERT MOORE, NATIONAL PRESIDENT**

Hi Folks,

A couple of things I need to bring up about the 2003 reunion which I am sure you'll find interesting. If you attended the West Coast reunion you saw and visited the Unit Memorial Wall that MRFA Board Member Ralph Fries has put together, which shows all the Navy KIA's and 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division KIA's. It gives the dates and places for each individual who was KIA. From now on we hope to have the memorial with us at each reunion. We plan on having it with us in Ft. Mitchell in 2003. Ralph is working hard to make some needed changes on a few dates and names. The memorial will be called the U.S. Navy & 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division

Memorial Wall. Also we will have a mini museum set up in one of the rooms at the hotel. If you have anything you would like to display or donate to the museum please see the mini museum article in this newsletter.

**REUNION 2004:** We have had at least one reunion, and in some cases two, in one year since 1992. A much needed break is required, these affairs take intense planning and loads of work. The Officers and Board members have decided to forgo a National reunion in 2004. We will still be in Washington, DC over Veterans Day weekend in 2004. And a group always meets at Ft. Snelling National Cemetery to place wreaths at the 9<sup>th</sup> and MRFA Memorials. Everyone is always welcome to attend either of these functions.

That's it for now. As always, thanks for your continuing support.

## NEW REUNION DATES FOR 2003

Starting at the 2003 Reunion at the Drawbridge Villager Premier, in Ft. Mitchell, KY the main MRFA reunions will be held over Labor Day weekend. It seems the last weekend in June has run it's course and the Monday following that weekend is not always a holiday. Labor day is always recognized as a National Holiday.

You can start making reservations at the Drawbridge any time after September 1, 2002 by calling 1-800-354-9793.

Reunion Dates:

Wednesday, Aug. 27 - Sunday, Aug. 31, 2003

Room Rates are good three days prior to the reunion and three days following the reunion. Room rates are as follows: Main Bldg: \$77.00 Single, Double, Triple or Quad Occupancy; Garrison Bldg: \$67.00 Single, Double, Triple or Quad Occupancy. When making reservations be sure to mention you're making reservations under the MRFA and give the dates. To assist the Association with name tags, please give the name or names of your guest(s) when making reservations. When sending in your registration fee please add the name of your guest(s). If you have

any questions about the Drawbridge please feel free to call Jennifer Hesse, Convention Coordinator, at 800-426-3841. The Drawbridge

is fully handicap accessible, and has plenty of free parking. There are RV hook-ups, but they are limited and there is a charge. You can find out the cost by calling the 800-354-9793. Pets are allowed (under a certain size) and a deposit is required.

Some members have asked about proof of paid registration. All you need is a copy of your returned check. If you want a copy from us, please note this with your payment. Please send to:

MRFA Reunion

106 Bellevue Dr. • Conover, NC. 28613

If you have e-mail, we can e-mail you upon receiving your registration. When sending e-mail addresses please send in a manner we can read it and make sure it's not an old e-mail address. We're having problems with members changing e-mails and not letting us know.

## Back-up Hotel

We have booked an extra hotel (just in case) for the 2003 reunion. It is the Holiday Inn at 2100 Dixie Highway in Ft. Mitchell.

Room rates are \$77.00 a night. Free transportation to and from the Drawbridge at the top and bottom of each hour. The Holiday Inn is handicap accessible. If you have any question concerning the Holiday Inn contact Peggy Schmitt, 859-331-1500 x505 or email pschmitt@lodgian.com.

## Veteran's Day

**2002 Veterans Day Wreath Laying  
Monday, November 11, 2002**

The MRFA and 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division will be placing wreaths at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC on Veterans Day, Monday, November 11, 2002. We will be gathering at the steps of Lincoln Memorial at 8:30AM on the 11<sup>th</sup>, and proceed to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at 9:00AM.

We have limited number of rooms available at the Quality Hotel in Arlington, VA for November 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> at \$109.00 per night. This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and hotel room availability is very limited. For reservations call 1-703-525-4000 and be sure to mention you're making your reservations under the Mobile Riverine Force Association. If this is your first trip to Washington we suggest comfortable shoes because there lots of sights to see by walking.

For more information you may contact Board Member Bob (Doc) Pries at: 9702 Friar Tuck Drive, West Chester, OH. 45069; phone (513) 755-1223; or Email: rpries@cinci.rr.com.

## Vets Day Gathering November 7-10 Bloomington, MN

The Association will be using the Days Inn By the Airport, 1901 Killebrew Drive, Bloomington, MN for the gathering this November. We will be placing wreaths at the 9<sup>th</sup> Division Memorial and the Mobile Riverine Force Association Memorial at 1 pm on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November at Fort Snelling National Cemetery. There will be speakers, memorial services, and an honor guard (we hope to have the bag pipers back). We will have a hospitality room for the event, as well as the poolside area, as we did during our last visit which worked out great. Beverages and snacks will be available.

Room rates are as follows: \$69.00 per night for a room with queen size bed; \$79.00 a night for a room with 2 double beds. Make Reservations by calling 1-952-854-5924. When making reservations, be sure to mention you're doing so under the Mobile Riverine Force Association and give the above dates.

## Mini Museum in Fort Mitchell - 2003

As some of you may know, we have tried for the last several years to find a permanent and suitable location to display Mobile Riverine Force and 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division memorabilia. Although we have looked at several locations we have been unable to find a place that we find is suitable and that would take proper care of the items on display there. At our 2003 reunion we would like to have our own mini museum in the hotel. We will provide a room for anyone that would like to display items related to the Mobile Riverine Force and 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. These items can be documents, uniforms, weapons, flags, photos, etc. Items can be loaned to the MRFA for the 2003 reunion only or be donated for, hopefully, a permanent location in the future. Although we cannot be responsible for loss or theft, we will provide security during the day and the room will be secured at night. Items will be displayed on a first come basis until we no longer have space. We may alternate items on a day by day basis if we have more than can be displayed at one time. Please be thinking about this and let us know what you think. We will provide more information in upcoming issues of "River Currents". Some of the items we will have on display are the Photography works of Dan Dodd, Navy Photographer, some which have never been seen by the membership. These are excellent photos of the Army and the Navy in the Delta. We'll also have boat models on display: Ship models, APB's, APL's, ARL's, LST's, YRBM's. If you have models of any kind relating to Vietnam please feel free to put them on display.

Roy Moseman, VP MRFA

180 Riverview Rd., Athens, GA 30606

Phone 706-549-0749 • rmoseman@aol.com

The Days Inn is located directly across from the Mall of America, the closest hotel to the world-famous shopping and entertainment complex! It's also just minutes from the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport with complementary shuttle service to both the Airport and the Mall of America, as well as ample free parking.

For more information please feel free to contact Charlie or Georgie Ardinger at 1-563-735-5924, or e-mail georgie@rconnect.com. Mike Clark will be in charge of the honor guard. Mike and his staff do an excellent job. Mike served with A/CO/4<sup>th</sup>/39<sup>th</sup>.

MRFA Membership Chairman & Treasurer,  
Charlie Ardinger

## Field Artillery Quotes

**"Where a goat can go,  
a man can go, where a  
man can go, he can  
drag a gun."**

- Col. William Phillips 1777



## In Memory of

**This section is for the members who wish to sponsor the MRFA by placing a notice in memory of one their fallen comrades. In some cases the name of the sponsor will precede the name of the person who was KIA, or has passed on since Vietnam.**

Jack Benedick for C Co., 4<sup>th</sup>/47<sup>th</sup> 66-68 C Co., 3<sup>rd</sup>/60<sup>th</sup> 69  
Robert Stumpf for Joseph Reese E Co., 3<sup>rd</sup>/60<sup>th</sup> Inf KIA 4-7-68  
James J. Byrnes for members of the Junk Force, Dung Island  
James Roselli for Mark Schoenberger B Co., 3<sup>rd</sup>/39<sup>th</sup> Inf.  
Capt. Peveril Blundell, USN Ret. For Paul Wolfgang, RivAstSqd-13  
Harley G. Timmerman, For Jerry Sessions RivRon-13 T-132-10  
MS. Neal A. Now For Captain John G. Now USN Ret. ComRivFlot-One  
Paul De Nicola B Co., 3/60 for Alex Radisa PCFs 55-19  
Lt/JG Robert B. Conaty XO RivDiv-131 69-69 For Paul Wolfgang RivAstSqd-13,  
Sara & Al Moore For John Isaac Associate Member  
Roy Moseman For Oscar Santiago C Co., 4<sup>th</sup>/47<sup>th</sup> Wendell Affield For Edward (Budda Thomas BMC (MDV) USN Ret. Tango-112-11  
Marlene Levis For Husband Michael E. Levis (HHC) S/3 3<sup>rd</sup>/47<sup>th</sup> 12/67/1268  
David R. Lynn For Howard Burns (QM2) Robert Bouchet (SM2) Herman Miller (GM3)  
IUWG - 1- Unit 3  
Bob Sutton For Lt/Jg James F. Rost KIA 11/17/1969  
Frank T. Buck SKCS Ret For Son ENFN Frank H. Buck KIA-12/28/67, T-92-10  
James Lyde for Son Ronald Lyde USS Benewah APB-35  
Lanny Snyder For David "Doc" Hearne T-92-6

## A Soldier Died Today

(Author Unknown)

He was getting old and paunchy,  
And his hair was falling fast,  
And he sat around the Legion,  
Telling stories of his past.

Of a war that he once fought in,  
And the deeds that he had done,  
In his exploits with his buddies;  
They were heroes, every one.

And 'tho sometimes to his neighbors  
His tales became a joke,  
All his buddies listened quietly  
For they knew where of he spoke.

But we'll hear of his tales no longer,

For ol' Bob has passed away,  
And the world's a little poorer,  
For a Soldier died today.

He won't be mourned by many,  
Just his children and his wife.  
For he lived an ordinary,  
very quiet sort of life.

He held a job and raised a family,  
Going quietly on his way;  
And the world won't note his passing,  
'Tho a Soldier died today.

When politicians leave this earth,  
Their bodies lie in state,

While thousands note their passing,  
And proclaim that they were great.

Papers tell of their life stories  
From the time that were young.  
But the passing of a soldier goes  
Unnoticed, and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution  
To the welfare of our land,  
Some jerk who breaks his promise,  
And cons his fellow man??

Or the ordinary fellow  
Who in time of war and strife,  
Serves his Country  
And offers up his life??

The politician's stipend  
And the style in which he lives,  
Are often disproportionate,  
To the service that he gives.

While the ordinary Soldier,  
Who offered up his all,  
Is paid with a medal  
And perhaps a pension, small.

It's so easy to forget them,  
For many times it's so,  
That our Bobs and Jims and Johnnys,  
Went to battle, but we know,

It is not the politicians  
With their compromise and ploys,  
Who won for us the freedom  
That our country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in Danger,  
With your enemies at hand,  
Would you really want some copout,  
With his ever waffling stand??

Or would you want a Soldier—  
His home, his country, his kin,  
Just a common Soldier,  
Who would fight to the end.

He was just a common Soldier,  
And his ranks are growing thin,  
But his presence should remind us  
We may need his like again.

For when countries are in conflict,  
We find the Soldier's part  
Is to clean up all the troubles  
That the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honor  
While he's here to hear the praise,  
Then at least let's give him homage  
At the ending of his days.

Perhaps just a simple headline  
In the paper that might say:  
OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING,  
A SOLDIER DIED TODAY."

## TAPS... Those Gone, But Not Forgotten

**Vickie H. Camp**, wife of member Jerry Camp passed away July 28, 2002. Jerry and Vickie had been married 36 years. Vickie was 56 years old. And a very nice lady. She attended last years reunion Kentucky and had a wonderful time. Jerry served on the USS Mercer APB-39, 1968-69. You may contact Jerry c/o 11000 Shadow Wood Cir., Whitehouse, TX 75791; phone 903-839-6160; or email [jcamp11@juno.com](mailto:jcamp11@juno.com).

**Raymond Maters** 5415 Mariper St., STE-#205, Tampa, FL 33609. No other info available.

Member **David Hearne** passed away from cancer on August 5, 2002. David was one of the original plankowner members of the Association. David was a quiet and humble man who really enjoyed helping his fellow Veterans. David was very active in the restoration of CCB-18. He and his twin brother Dutch traveled great distances to be a part of the CCB-18 restoration work party. David worked many hours on the boat even before it arrived in San Diego while the boat was moored in the Sacramento river delta area. His sacrifices will largely go untold. He felt very deeply about trying to build a great memorial to the dead soldiers and sailors of the brown water war in Vietnam. He now joins his brothers beyond the wall. However, he leaves behind many brothers in the CCB-18 working party and the MRFA.

Who will miss him greatly.... None more than his brother, Dutch, who will continue to work with us to build the memorial and restore CCB-18.

*"To live on in the hearts of others is not to die," We will remember you David!!*

Don Blankenship

David served on Tango-92-6 1967-68... You may contact the family c/o Dutch Hearne at P.O. Box 800598, Santa Clarita, CA 91380; phone 661-298-4655; or e-mail [dhearne@sunvair.net](mailto:dhearne@sunvair.net).

**BMC USN Ret. Benjamin F. Shively** passed away March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2002 from lung cancer. Ben was boat captain on CCB-111-1 1967-68. Boats was buried with full military honors in Hertford, NC. You may contact the family c/o Ocia Shively at 1375 Center Hill Hwy., Hertford, NC 27944; phone 252-426-7027. Boats was also a plankowner member of the MRFA.

**CDR Jim Williams USN (Ret.)** passed away in June of 2002. Cdr Williams served on the staff of ComRivFlot-One 9/1966 & 1/1968. Cdr Williams was very instrumental in putting the MRF TF-117 together. You may contact the family c/o Rosemarie C. Williams at 852 Cullumber St., Gilbert, AZ 85234; phone 480-892-2222.

**Walter Jeske** A Co., 3rd/47th Inf. (10/67-3/68) passed away due to lung cancer on August 17, 2002. You may contact the family c/o Jamison Jeske (son) at 1371 Silverstone Trail, DePere, WI 54115; phone 920-336-0319; or e-mail [mailjami1371@msn.com](mailto:mailjami1371@msn.com). The family would like to hear from anyone who served with their dad.



Thelma & Louise - MRFA Raffle Queens!

### Dedicated to our friend

Honest men esteem and value nothing so much in this world as a real friend. Such a one is as it were another self, to whom we import our most secret thoughts. Who partake of our joy, and comforts us in affliction; add to this, that his company is an everlasting pleasure to us. Dedicated to our friend, George Guthy. *God's finger touched him and he slept.*

— Bob Stumpf

## Conex Box Op

Our river assault boats were in Dong Tam for a routine overhaul. It meant rearming, repairs, painting and other assorted duties. Our boat had a wobble in her starboard shaft so the enginemen had lifted her out of the water onto a pontoon and were replacing it. It was nice to be off the rivers for a while. A little stand down from the combat.

The sun was lingering over the palm fronds as we headed to the Navy enlisted club after a long days work. The thought of a few cool beers was inviting. Maybe the Viet Cong would give us a break by not sending in their rockets and mortars.

The Navy club was unique. You could arrive pretty early, like 9 AM, for a few breakfast beers. Just when you got a good buzz going they would close down around 12 noon so everyone would have to go eat lunch or take a nap. Then you could return after they reopened in the afternoon and drink to your hearts content providing you didn't get too rowdy.

The club was not a very big place. I would guess maybe 40' x 30'. As you walked in the bar was on your right. The toilet was on the left. We only needed one since there were no round-eyed women in that area. Then the far end of the bar opened up into a larger area that housed a couple of pool tables and a jukebox. Our Commander in Chief, President LBJ, was there hanging behind the bar along with some River Assault Squadron patches and a Naval Support Activity, Det. Dong Tam logo painted on a piece of plywood.

A few weeks earlier Bob and I had been in the club for a few beers when a group of River Assault Squadron 9 sailors showed up. You'd think that we had our hands full fighting the enemy right? Evidently not. Toss in a couple of different squadrons, some alcohol and you have a volatile situation. On that night an argument broke out around the pool table between some RAS 9 and RAS 15 sailors. One thing led to another and all of a sudden pool sticks were swinging, cue balls were flying and people were jumping around everywhere. Bob and I grabbed our cold ones and backed up to the nearest wall to watch the action. It afforded an excellent opportunity to grab a couple of deserted beers from a nearby table as well. After about 20 minutes the Shore Patrol arrived and stopped the melee just when it was going good. Adrenaline and hormones were spewing everywhere. The next morning several sailors had some explaining to do.

When we arrived the after lunch crowd had things hopping. The jukebox was cranked and we got right into the mood. The bartender made it clear that he didn't want to see any "crap" and we all agreed. I walked away thinking, "How the heck does an enlisted person get a job like this?"

As the night wore on we loosened up nicely. Our choice of beer was Carling Black Label, Falstaff, Budweiser and Schlitz. I think. This was around the time the pop tops came out, but none of the beer in Vietnam had them. We used Church Keys, Kabars, P-38's or anything that would get

them open without causing a big fizz. After a few months in the constant humidity our consumption rate increased immensely. The more you drank the more you sweated so you had to drink to not dehydrate. At least that one of our excuses.

Earlier in the day I had passed by a man as he unlocked a Conex Box. These were metal boxes about 8' wide by 8' deep and 7' high. One side had double doors that latched in the middle with a big iron rod and hasp. They were used to ship equipment and other goods into Vietnam. Also to stop smaller pieces of shrapnel. I glanced over his shoulder and noted that the entire box was full of BEER...! There must have been a hundred cases in there. I sauntered on like I hadn't noticed anything. A plan began to develop right away. Emergency resources were always good to have whether they were yours or someone else's.

By the time the club closed we were all very sloshed. I had been telling Bob and Pete about my plan. They liked it. What could they do to us if caught? Send us to Vietnam? It couldn't get any worse than it was.

When outside we huddled around a bunker refining tactics. There was a huge well lit warehouse with a sentry. He was packin heat to the tune of an M-16. Small weaponry for we river sailors. I knew where a forklift was. Being the perpetrator, I took charge. Bob was to distract the sentry on the other side of the warehouse so he could not witness our clandestine operation being pulled off. Joe became the replacement sentry so that he could keep an eye on everything and sound the alarm if any one wandered into our area of operation. I was the forklift driver. What we hadn't thought of was where we were going to take the Conex Box.

Joe and I watched Bob's lanky figure disappear behind the warehouse. Being a jovial guy, Bob would have no problem with the sentry. Soon the sentry rode around the other direction on his bicycle. We waited a few minutes and then Joe ran over to the opposite corner of the warehouse to his position. I jumped on the forklift.

Now I'd driven farm machinery while bucking hay so I figured I knew what I was doing. I didn't take into account how inebriated I was. After climbing up onto the seat of the forklift I located the key and starter button. She cranked over nicely as I pumped on the pedal. No ignition. I checked a couple more things and then began cranking once again. The noise was awesome as she fired up. Varoom....varoom.....!!! I had a grin on my face as I began grinding gears. I'm sure that no one in the adjacent barracks even knew what was happening.

While continuing to grind gears I heard a faint sound to my left. The vibration of the machine had me bouncing around. Finally I looked in that direction and couldn't believe it. There stood a Shore Patrol yelling at me...! I hollered, "What??" He began giving me the slicing hand across his throat. I shut the girl down. She lurched and coughed before becoming silent. The SP was still screaming. Then he lowered his voice a notch or two and said, "Get the hell down here..." I stumbled to the ground with great confidence. I was sure that he would understand.

Much to my surprise, he didn't understand me at all. I tried to tell him that a tablet wasn't necessary, but he kept writing anyway. He was asking questions

like... "What your name?"... "What unit are you with?" etc. As he was writing I'll be darned if Bob didn't ride by behind him on the sentry's bicycle. It had a piece of metal welded on it with a number cut into it. I did my best to keep from laughing, but failed. Bob made a second pass waving both hands in the air and I busted a gut. This made the SP madder than hell. He kept asking me what I was laughing about as he didn't even know that Bob was behind him. I saw Joe standing at the corner of a barracks doubled over.

Falling off to sleep was not much of a problem that night. Uh...morning. Waking up later that morning with a vague memory of the night before was a little more difficult. As I swung my feet to the floor I noticed a "chit" lying on top of my jungle fatigues. A closer look alerted me to the fact that I had to be at Chief so and so's office at 8:30 AM. The sun was already baking the tin roof and it was 8:15. My first mission was "water". Cotton mouth had taken over my entire oral cavity.

As I walked into the Chief's office wearing my best tattered greens I was met by a young clerk who told me to be seated. I made sure that I wore my beret with my unit patch hoping that the man would understand. It could go either way as he was not a river assault boat sailor.

Finally I heard him bark, "Get in here Petty Officer Harris..!" I staggered in trying not to appear hung over. He looked as gruff as his voice. "What the hell did you think you were doing last night sailor?" I said, "Truth?" He answered with, "Your damned right." I proceeded to tell him about the plan. The need for more beer after the club closed. Of course he did not understand my side or have any compassion. After giving me a few choice words he said, "Did you just come off the rivers?" I said, "Yes". He then said, "Get the hell out of my office and if I ever see your face in here again your ass will be in big trouble..." My legs almost buckled as I turned and walked for the screen door. A smile crossed my face as I passed the surprised clerk. After the screen door slammed behind me I pumped my fist in the air and headed for my 9 AM breakfast at the club. It was going to be another fine day in the Mekong Delta.

—Michael A. Harris

RAS 15 - RAD 152 - T-152-1 - 7/68 - 7/69

## From Vice President Roy Moseman...

I just want to let the members know that one of our founding members and the Associations first elected Vice President is suffering from kidney failure. **John Iannucci** was with B company 3/60<sup>th</sup> and was one of the first Army personnel to contact Albert Moore ten years ago when the association was being formed. John lives in Asheville, NC where he is owner of Iannucci's Italian restaurant. John's kidneys have been failing for sometime but have now regressed to a point where something must be done. He is going through the process of getting on the list for a kidney transplant but this could take years. His other option will be to go on dialysis. John is a fine person and we would like to wish him the very best. If you would like you can send cards or letters to John at 122 Overlooking Rd. Asheville, NC 28803.



December 31, 1966

As best as I can remember

In the 9th Infantry Division Book Gary Armitstead mentions the misdirected 81 mm Motor round fired on New Years Eve 1966. I was the Platoon Leader of that Motor Platoon and this is how I remember it.

We got "In Country" December 23, 1966 - Merry Christmas. The first week was spent getting climatized and used to other living conditions in

the Nam. As I remember, we didn't "Go Out" that week.

December 31 was our first night with Berm security. And were we green, I know I thought the Red Chinese Army was in the brush just waiting to send "Human Waves" at us. We took our positions some time in the afternoon and before dark I went to the PX with about 10 guys in a three-quarter ton truck. We got back right at dark - in retrospect it seemed like there was no dusk - like someone threw a switch and it went light to dark. Almost immediately everyone in the Rifle

Platoons had VC movement to their front - and wanted flares. Of course, the Company 81's were ready. Getting approval to fire was, as you can imagine, an effort. Captain Walla (the Company CO) called Battalion, they called, etc., etc. I was in the Company CP with Capt. Walla, Lt. Morris (the XO), and some other guys; communicating with my Fire Direction Center and the 81 mm Guns via Radio. Just as the Company CP got the OK to Fire - we heard "the gun fire." I can't really remember the reason they gave me for firing without approval but only the guys in the Company CP knew that had happened. After the initial "ass chewing" I was told it was a good round, given an adjustment, and told to fire another.

I passed this information on and we waited, and waited, and waited; but no second round. Finally, I took off in the dark to the Gun position to find out what was the delay. When I got there I was told they were ready. As I turned to go back, I realized two things - the Squad Leader was on the gun not the Gunner and more importantly the Gun was facing in toward the camp not out toward the "Berm". The round was dropped and sparks followed it right over my head and back into the camp.

I remember hearing later that the Artillery Company Commander attributed this to the wind blowing the Flair. I also remember having my "Heals Locked". And in Bearcat on December 31, 1966 - of course there were no VC.

What actually happened to cause the gun to be adjusted back into camp? There was a practice of putting a second firing azimuth on the Firing Board. The adjustment we got for the second round caused the Fire Direction Center to use the other azimuth in error. This accounted for the misdirected round and also why it took so long to get the gun ready to fire that second round.

— David Justin

1248 W. Albion Av., Chicago, IL 60626  
e-mail ALPHA49er@aol.com

Check us out on  
the web at  
www.mrfa.org

MRFA Get Well  
Wishes To...

Member **Joe T. Mattie** is undergoing radiation treatment for cancer; we hope the best for Joe and his family. Joe served on Monitor-112-2 1968-69 with Edward "Budda" Thomas (Deceased). If you would like to contact Joe please do so c/o 829 Banneker Dr., San Diego, CA 92114; phone 619-698-1740; or e-mail [jtmattie@cox.net](mailto:jtmattie@cox.net).

Life in the Mechanized Infantry...

(continued from page 1)

they returned from a hard day in the bush; something like a wife or mother back home, but without the hugs & kisses. We had coolers on board and a good driver would make every effort to get ice to keep beer & soda cold. When c-rations were distributed, the driver would break open the boxes, separate the cans into categories, and store them on the side storage compartments like a pantry. Cigarettes, candy, toilet paper, and all that stuff were also stashed for easy access for the guys.

The interior of an APC is designed to seat a squad of hard fighting, machine gun bunker charging, fully combat loaded GI Joes. In real life, it was a lightly armed, track driven supply vehicle on top of which GI's rode. We never rode inside the tracks. If a track hit a mine, even a small one, the concussion inside would either blow your eyes out of their sockets or your brains out your ears. The savvy Mech (mechanized soldier) would not accept a can of beer or soda that had been salvaged from a track that had hit a mine. The steel cans (no aluminum yet) would develop a slight rim bulge just under the top, as soon as a church key (no pop-tops yet, either) punctured the lid, the seam would rupture out. If you were lucky, you got all wet; less lucky, you got a cut hand.

I saw a track hit a big mine; it was an awesome sight. The earth blossomed up like the foil cover on Jiffy Time Pop-Corn; the 10 ton track rode the hump up about 10 - 12 feet with wheels and pieces of track flying everywhere. Guys & gear started falling off as the track slowly flipped in the air. About now I heard & felt the explosion. Finally the track dove right back down into the hole the mine had just created. It was a long 3-5 seconds. Although all of the men on that track were hurt, some badly, all were alive when the choppers came to dust them off. We never saw any of them again. It was Good Friday, 1969.

Since the driver and the 50 stayed with the track, they actually had "beds" inside. My bed was a wooden box built around a stack of 27 cans of 50 ammo, 18 cans of M-60 ammo, 3 cases of c-rations and 3 cases of can beverages. On top of all this was a roll-up cotton mattress. This bed was as wide as the engine compartment, about 32" and ran from the engine compartment to about a foot short of the rear. My 50 had a similar, but more narrow bed, with the wooden box built around a smaller amount of the same stuff. The cooler sat between the "beds" on two or three cases of can beverages. Small wall shelves were used as storage for grenades, claymore mines, flares, M-16 clips & ammo, M-72 LAW's, M-40 shells, pens, paper, envelopes, all kinds of things. P-38 can openers hung everywhere.

Each man stored his personal effects in a mini-gun ammo can scavenged from the Tan An air strip. These cans were securely strapped to the top and served as seats when riding on the track. The driver's seat had two positions, high & low. Usually, the driver used the high position so he would just be ejected out the hatch if he hit a mine. The track commander sat on top of the track, above & directly behind the driver on the underside of the latched back driver's hatch cover.

My "commander's chair" was the bare frame and springs a seat scavenged from a burned-out jeep. It was upholstered with flak jackets for comfort. Firmly attached to the hatch cover, it was best seat on the track. The 50 gunner sat on a board laid across his hatch opening, with the latched open hatch serving as a back rest (again, with a flak jacket used as padding). Everyone else just sat on the ammo box lockers.

Every track had a trim vane. This trim vane was a 4 X 6 piece of plywood attached to the front of the track. Its job was to push water to force the front of the track up to keep it afloat. A lever was pushed to lock open the vane when the track was going "amphibious." This worked at Ft. Knox with a stripped track, but I doubt a combat loaded track would actually float. Stretchers were sometimes neatly strapped to the sides. More often, they were just thrown into the cradle created when the trim vane was put down. These stretchers were often used for beds at night. If it were raining, they would prop one end of the stretcher up against the track so the water would run off.

If we were going to sit still for any period of time, we would lower the rear ramp. If a rice paddy dike were nearby, we would back up to the dike and lower the ramp onto the dike to keep it somewhat level & out of the water. It was something like a steel deck off the back of the house. When we set-up for the night, it was like the Old West. We circled the tracks with all the fronts pointing out in different directions (north, east, south, west). We set out claymores and trip flares; at dusk, a small patrol might go out to set-up an ambush or serve as a listening post. The rest of the guys just spread out in-between the tracks, checked their fields of fire, and settled down for the night. Each track would post a night watch, with each man taking his turn for an hour or so sitting awake in the 50 copula, scanning his field of fire, glancing through the starlight scope, monitoring the radio, and watching for Charlie sneaking up on us.

Some mornings, trucks or choppers would bring us hot breakfast, maybe even mail. Other mornings, we just heated up c-rats with hunks of C-4. If the rice paddy dike where we had set-up happened to be a major footpath, civilians on their way to the markets would hurry past us balancing their panniers loaded with eggs, ducks, chickens, fruit, rice, etc. Sometimes we would buy some of the produce and cook it up. If we got near a market early in the day, we could buy loaves of warm French bread, pineapples, even Tiger Beer.

After chow, it was back to the same old routine, drive somewhere, dismount, sweep an area and continue to "win the hearts and minds" of the people while conducting either a "reconnaissance in force" or a "search & destroy" mission. If it was dry season, the dust would choke us, wet season the mud had its own little delights. If we were lucky, we would draw road security duty. The tracks would set-up about 1 click apart, face the bush, and make sure Charley didn't cross the road. If we were less lucky, we humped a few clicks, checked out a few things, tripped a few booby traps, and once in a while got ambushed. Usually we just walked where no human was

supposed to walk, many times in thick mud, sometimes through small villages, across small filthy little streams, sometimes through dry rice paddies, sometimes wet.

In the occasional fire fight, that 50 could really do some barking. Next morning you could see where trees had been chopped down by those half-inch bullets. We always feared RPG's (rocket propelled grenades.) We were careful to keep 200 yards or more from the wood line. Only the front of the track was armored; the rest was a ¾" thick aluminum alloy. Didn't take much to breach the side of an APC.

In the true spirit of Yankee ingenuity, many tracks sported weaponry for which they had not been designed. There was a mini-gun, lifted from a crashed chopper, mounted on one track. It worked, but we couldn't keep it fed at its cyclic rate of fire, 6,600 rounds per minute. I recall seeing a track with a 106 recoilless rifle mounted. Yet another had a Honeywell belt fed grenade launcher; used the same round as the M-79. It too was scavenged off a downed chopper. Someone designed a crank handle to operate it like an old Gatling Gun. Several tracks had mounts that turned the M-60 from a light machine gun to a heavy machine gun. I think this was an armored cavalry set-up of some kind. I found an old 60 MM mortar w/o the base plate, got some rounds for it and tried to fire it hand held. The tube must have been bent a little, the first round hung. I gently took it to the armorer and left it there.

One thing I can say about Mechanized Infantry, we went where we wanted, whenever we wanted, stayed as long as we wanted, and left when we wanted. We didn't wait for the tide, we didn't wait for choppers, and we didn't wait for darkness. About the only thing we feared was the damned mosquitoes.

CCB 18 Update

Charles Campbell and Everett Jones are still working on the CCB. Just because the dedication and reunion is over with, doesn't mean there isn't still plenty of work to be done. They have been busy scraping and sanding and priming the ammo area under the Forward Gun Mount which was in bad shape. They have also been sealing around the Forward Mount so future rain doesn't leak in. And there is still other work to be done. I commend Charles and Everett on their continuing work efforts on the CCB. They have put in many, many working hours on the boat. Thanks to you both. —Albert

Working Party Update

If you live in the San Diego area and would like to assist in the restoration of CCB-18 by being an MRFA volunteer (Working Party), Army or Navy, please contact Charles Campbell at 677 G St. SP#1, Chula Vista, CA 91910; phone 619-427-6835; or email [cccecc@aol.com](mailto:cccecc@aol.com).

MRFA Catalog Products

New shirt designs feature fully embroidered logos. All shirts are \$22.50 each (includes S/H) Please indicate quantity and size in space provided.

☐ Combat Action Ribbon (Tan) (Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ / Sz: \_\_\_\_\_) ☐ MRF Vietnam (Ash) (Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ / Sz: \_\_\_\_\_)  
☐ 9th Inf. Div. Vietnam (Dk. Blue) (Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ / Sz: \_\_\_\_\_) ☐ River Assault Force (Ash) (Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ / Sz: \_\_\_\_\_)  
☐ Combat Infantry Badge (Ash) (Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ / Sz: \_\_\_\_\_) ☐ MRFA Army & Navy (Ash) (Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ / Sz: \_\_\_\_\_)  
☐ Boats ☐ ASPB ☐ Tango ☐ Monitor (Ash) (Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ / Sz: \_\_\_\_\_)

(# of Shirts: \_\_\_\_\_)

x \$22.50 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_



New hat designs feature fully embroidered logos. All hats are \$21.50 each (includes S/H) Please indicate quantity in the space provided.

☐ MRFA (Dark Blue) (Qty: \_\_\_\_\_) Purple Heart Hats (White) ☐ 9th Div. (Qty: \_\_\_\_\_) ☐ MRFA (Qty: \_\_\_\_\_)  
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☐ 9th Inf Div. (Dark Blue) (Qty: \_\_\_\_\_)

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Specify: ☐ River Rat (Qty: \_\_\_\_\_) (Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$4.00 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_)

MRFA Bumper Sticker Full Color Vinyl Decal (Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$4.00 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_)

Hat Pin ☐ MRFA ☐ 9th Infantry Pin (# of Pins: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$3.00 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_)

MRFA Video "Force Afloat" (Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$27.50 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_)

"Ambush" Limited edition print by Bill McGrath. (Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$150.00 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_)

Personalized MRFA Coffee Mug Specify items of your choice  
MRFA Member's Name (maximum of 16 characters/spaces) Rank (max. 4 characters/spaces)

Command in Vietnam (maximum 20 characters)

Specify insignia for reverse side of the mug: ☐ Army ☐ Navy ☐ USMC ☐ USCG ☐ Purple Heart  
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MRFA or 9th Infantry Division SATIN OR DENIM Jackets All Jackets Are Embroidered with MRFA or 9th Infantry Division Logo. Satin Jackets are available in: Black, Silver, Royal Blue or White.

Available combinations: Black jacket w/white or gold collar/cuffs. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Denim Jackets do not receive color choice, and tend to run larger than other styles!

Make check or money order out to the MRFA. Send to: MRFA, 2906 Starlite Dr., Topeka, KS 66605. You can contact products Chairman Bob VanDruff by calling 1-785-267-1526 or email [bvdmrfa@networksplus.net](mailto:bvdmrfa@networksplus.net).

Note: Due to the increase in postage over the last few years we have had to go up on our S/H there has also been an increase in cost from our product suppliers so we have had to go up on the products as well. This is the first increase of any kind the MRFA has had since our beginning in 1992. Albert Moore, MRFA President



# SEEKING VETERANS OF NAM

**Editor's Note:** If you would like to see a reunion notice posted in River Currents, forward your written request to: Albert Moore, 106 Bellevue Dr., Conover, NC 28613. Deadlines are: Feb. 1st, May 1st, Aug. 1st, and Nov. 1st.

## PHILLIP DOWSETT M-112-1

Is seeking anyone he served with 1967-68. You may contact Phillip at 39225 Myers Pl., Scio, OR 97374; 503-394-4277, or E-mail Sagebrush777@yahoo.com.

## GLORIA R. CHRISTIAN

Is seeking anyone who knew or served with her uncle BM3 Billy D. Roy, who served on A-112-3, 1968. KIA 8/18/68. You can contact Gloria c/o 12205 Beard Rd., Northport, AL 35473; phone 205-330-1431; or E-mail tuliproses@aol.com.

## RIP PISACRETA USS WHITE RIVER LSMR-536

Is seeking Brian Kessler (EM2) AKA (Suds) served on the White River 66-68. Contact Rip at 4100 Coitt Av., Grand Rapids, MI 49525; phone 616-361-9346; or email RACEDON4100@aol.com.

## DON'T FORGET!!!

Your **MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE** is printed on the front of each issue of River Currents.

## Advertising in River Currents

We've begun to receive many requests from the membership regarding advertising in River Currents. Requests for everything: Books, Medals, Patches, Watches, Boat Models, etc. And everyone wants a photo of their product posted. We're sorry but, we're unable to do this for space reasons. From now on the only thing that will be published is the name of the product and contact information. This will be provided at no additional cost. If you, the member, received this service in any other publication there would be a cost involved.

- **MILITARY PATCHES:**  
208-476-775 • [macpatch@clearwater.net](mailto:macpatch@clearwater.net)
- **SHIPS HISTORIES** 1-800 732-9333
- **INDOCHINA & VIETNAM TOURS**  
360-570-2096 • [indochinatours@olyva.net](mailto:indochinatours@olyva.net)
- **MILITARY WATCHES**  
MRFA & 9th Infantry 541-863-3144
- **BOAT MODELS:** All Brown Water Boat Models.  
George & Sharon Johnson, 2222 Ash Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89101; e-mail [sharonjohnson@aol.com](mailto:sharonjohnson@aol.com).
- **Books:** [www.mrfa.org](http://www.mrfa.org)

The only products to be shown in River Currents will be MRFA products. The MRFA products help and assist with keeping the MRFA up and running. There is a patch and book, tour info on the web site [www.mrfa.org](http://www.mrfa.org). You may contact Don Blankenship if you want a book or etc. posted on the site. Don makes the final decision on what's to be posted on the web site; e-mail him at [don@brcres.com](mailto:don@brcres.com).

—Albert [mrfa@charter.net](mailto:mrfa@charter.net) 828-464-7228

The following notices have been posted to assist veterans who served in Vietnam. For more information about any of the notices, please call or write to the point of contact listed for that particular event.

## UDT-SEAL ASSOCIATION MUSEUM

Located State Rd. A1A, Ft. Pierce, FL. POC: Jim Barnes 3216 Yale St North. St Pete FL. 33713. Or call 1-727-894-2848.

## ATTACK BOAT SAILORS ASSOCIATION

WW-II-Korea-Vietnam, POC: Ed Brisbosi at P.O. Box 3328, Ft. Pierce, FL 34948.

## USS MONTROSE (APA-212)

Seeking past crew members for all time periods, excellent group of White Hats. Contact Russ McDonald at 10072 Bonser Ave. Garden Grove, CA 92840; phone 1-714-636-6267; or E-Mail [gatornavy1@prodigy.net](mailto:gatornavy1@prodigy.net).

## VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM WAR

570-603-9740. E-mail [vvwnvna1@epix.net](mailto:vvwnvna1@epix.net) Web Site <http://www.vvwnvna.org>



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**NOTE NEW ADDRESS!** Charlie Ardinger  
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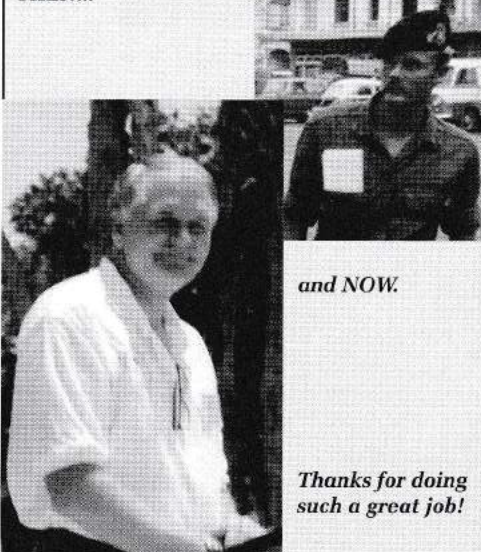
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To become a member, mail your check or money order (payable to MRFA) to: **Charlie Ardinger, MRFA Membership Chairman**, 1857 CO Rd. A14, Decorah, IA 52101-7448.

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

The MRFAs Web Guru, Don Blankenship, THEN...



## 2003 Reunion Registration Form

Drawbridge Estates Inn  
August 27-31, 2003 in Ft. Mitchell, KY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit in Vietnam: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) wife & family/guest(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

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Be sure to enclose your check or money order with this form. Send to address below.

### Registration fee

(Member only, cost includes family and 1 guest)

Total \_\_\_\_\_ x \$35.00 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Total \_\_\_\_\_ x \$50.00 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Saturday Afternoon Buffet (All)

Total \_\_\_\_\_ x \$10.00 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Grand Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Non-member is defined as a person who is eligible to be a member of the MRFA by having served in the MRF: TF-117, TF-116, TF-115, the 9th Infantry Division or any Army/Navy supporting unit who has not joined the MRFA. (A membership application can be found elsewhere in this newsletter). The registration fee covers the member and/or guest girlfriend, etc. Please send your check or money order (payable to MRFA) and the top portion of this form before August 21, 2003 to:

### MRFA Reunion

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BILL MCCOLLUM T-111-2

BRUCE MCIVER TANGO-131-7 RAID 72

PHIL F. MCCLAUGHLIN, USS BLANCO CTY., LST-344, LST-836

WALTER G. MEYER USS BENEWAH APB-35

GERALD & LINDA MILLER, USS VERNON CTY. (LST-1161)

JOHN & LINDA MILLER ENC (DV) USN RET. A-91-3 (67)

WILLIAM M. MILLER, M-92-1 (67-68)

EDWARD MINDLIN, USS SATYR (ARL-23) 1943-46

ALBERT & SARA MOORE

RUSSELL & ALICE MOORE

ROY & LYNN MOSEMAN

CW3 JAMES T. NATIVIDAD, USA (RET.) HQ-3RD/60TH

RICHARD (DOC) NELSON RIVRON-15

STELLA NELSON (ASSOCIATE)

MAJ. JOSEPH NICHOLS, USA, RET. C CO., 3RD/60TH

JAMES L. NOYES LTC USA RET. 3<sup>rd</sup>/34<sup>th</sup> ARTY

GEORGE R. O'CONNELL USS TERRELL CTY. LST-1157

ROSS FRANCIS O'DOWD T-92-7 / T-131-4

JOHN OXLEY RECON/E CO/3RD/47TH 1967

CAPT. JERRY PAPE, USN (RET.), COMRIVFLOT ONE

TOM PAQUETTE TANGO-111-8

TERRY R. PETERS USS WHITE RIVER LSMR-536

COL. PETE PETERSEN, USA (RET.) CDR. 3RD/60TH

CHUNG C. PHAM (SVN) ARL-23

KEITH PHILLIPS, A-132-1

WILLIAM F. POSEY BM1 USN RET. CRAFTMASTER YT-785, 67-68/70-71

KENNETH S. RAY GMCM, USN (RET.) USS

VERNON CTY. (LST-1161)

CAPT. WALTER RIEDEMANN USN RET, TOM GREEN CTY 1159

DON & MARIJO ROBBINS USS BENEWAH APB-35

LAWRENCE ROSE (CRIP) 9TH INF DIV

TOM SANBORN A/CO/4<sup>th</sup>/47<sup>th</sup> INFANTRY

THOMAS J. DOC SANKO HMCS USN RET USS

BENEWAH APB-35

NORMAN SAUNDERS, B CO., 3RD/39TH INF

JERRY (DOC) SCHUEBEL B/CO/3<sup>rd</sup>/60<sup>th</sup>

JERRY J. SHEARER 2NB/PLT C/CO/3<sup>rd</sup>/60<sup>th</sup>

JOE SHEDLOCK, ALPHA-152-4

DONALD J. SHELTON, LSMR-536

WILLIAM E. SINCLAIR, USS WHITE RIVER (LSMR-536)

GLENN I. SMITH B/3 4<sup>th</sup>/39<sup>th</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> INF/DIV

WALTER SNOW, CCB-151-1

LANNY R. SNYDER TANGO-92-6

FRANK & MABEL SPRINGER

FRANK SPRINGER TANGO-131-9

JIM STEFFES, COSDIV 12-13

ALAN STRICKLAND, A CO., 2ND/47TH INF

JOHN P. STURGIL, USS COLLETON (APB-36)

BOB SUTTON M-92-2 / Z-92-11 / R-92-1 RIVRON-13

STAFF

W.E. TAMBOER USN RET. RIVRON-15 STAFF

COL. CLYDE J. TATE, USA (RET.) S-3, 2ND BDE.

VICE ADMIRAL EMMETT H. TIDD COMNAVFORV (COS)

ROBERT P. TILLANDER USS SPHINX ARL-24 (68-69)