



# River Currents

A PUBLICATION OF  
THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 26, NUMBER 3  
FALL 2017



Roy Moseman

## From the President

I hope each and every one of you is in good health and enjoying life. It was an honor for me to serve you as your Vice President for the past 15 years and to step up as President of the MRFA since Albert's retirement in June. I appreciate the support you have given me as your Vice President for many years and as your President for the past few months. I ask that you give our next President the same support that you have given me. I joined the MRFA right after the first reunion in Hickory, NC, and for me it's one of the best things that I have ever done. I cannot tell you how much it has enhanced my life. I have made many friends over the years both Navy and Army. I have reunited with many brothers from my unit in Vietnam and enjoyed lots of reunions, mini reunions, and planning meetings. I will still be around as a Board Member and hope to enjoy many more reunions with you.

Roy Moseman  
C Co. 4/47th 9th Infantry Division

## Origin of Octofoil

Ninth Infantry Division The Old Reliable January 31, 1968, Page 7

LONG THANH—The Octofoil, shoulder patch worn by 9th Division soldiers, dates from the 15 Century, when it was customary for each son in a family to have an individual mark of distinction. Under the rules of heraldry there are eight foils or positions. The Octofoil went to the ninth son, symbolic of his being surrounded by eight brothers. The red quatrefoil of the patch alludes to the artillery, while the blue one represents the infantry. ★

## Veterans Day 2017 Washington, DC

The MRFA and 9th Infantry Division will be placing wreaths at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, on Veterans Day, Saturday, November 11, 2017. We will be gathering at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial at 8:30 a.m. and proceed to The Wall at 9:00 a.m. on November 11.

We have blocked 40 rooms at the Arlington Court Suites, a Clarion Collection Hotel, in Arlington, Virginia, from November 8 to 11 (check out on 11/12). Room rates are \$122 (plus tax) per night.

For reservations, call 1-703-524-4000 ext. "0." Please state our group name "MRFA" and give your dates of arrival and departure. If you plan to attend,

you must make your reservations under our group code prior to the cutoff date of October 11, 2017.

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

The MRFA and 9th Infantry Division will have a hospitality room available November 8 to 11. Come join us as we honor our fallen Brothers on Veterans Day 2017. We look forward to seeing you in DC.

For more information, contact Board Member Bob (Doc) Pries, (513) 659-4974, [pries247@gmail.com](mailto:pries247@gmail.com). ★

## The Day My Life Changed

By Larry J. Koltz

I've been in-country for about 3 months attached to Task Force 117 River Division 91 Tango 91-10. It was a small squadron of 12 to 15 gun boats per division. Our objective was search and destroy missions. The gun boats were known as Tangos. Boats equipped with seven man crews consisting of boat captain Henry Cooper, coxswain Wiselee "Snuffy" Smith, radioman Duane "Red" Knolls, engineman Fred Pecor, and 20-mm cannon gunner Dennis Billings. Two 50-caliber machine gun turrets armed with honey bucket grenade launchers. I was on the left side and the gunner (his name I can't recall) was on the right side. We were also equipped with mine-sweeping gear—Operation objective search and destroy.

I was 19 years old when I arrived in Nam on July 24, 1967—Nam where hell began and life ended September 27, 1967.

I went straight to Tango Boat 91-10. The days were long and hot and longer on mission. Not a lot of contact with the Viet Cong until September 27, 1967, when our boat and another led the squadron into what seemed like a fairly safe operation.

We were in the mouth of a large river maybe 200 yards wide. It was the first time in months that I felt safe as most of our operations were in small canals maybe 15 yards wide. The two tango boats were dragging

mine-sweeping gear to detonate or detect any Viet Cong mines put in the river. We were cruising in Snoopy's Nose. I was up in the coxen flat approximately 6x5 feet with Smitty and Red.

We started talking about the war and I asked Smitty, "What we were doing here and why there had to be so much killing." He looked at Red and myself and said, "War is hell my friend." Those were his last words.

At that moment, we were hit with a series of B-40 rockets and RPG 7 rockets. The first one hit our bow. The second hit Smitty dead in the chest killing him instantly. Red was also hit and killed.

I was the lucky one and was blown back into my .50 caliber gun turret. We then received six or seven more rockets hitting our boat everywhere. I was hit again with more shrapnel from the rockets. Most of our guns were knocked out. We had six men wounded or killed from our seven-man crew. I quickly tried to fire my .50 but had been hit and it didn't work. So I shot out a belt of .40 m 79 grenades they did nothing.

I grabbed the coxen wheel. Boats were going crazy in circles. Boat captain Cooper is gone. 20-mm gunner and my best friend are shot and almost dead. His 20-mm cannon didn't work. Everyone is screaming and blood is everywhere. The other 50 caliber gunner and the assistant coxen took the helm and

started to head us back. More rockets came in—two or three. Someone thought it was Cooper trying to cut the minesweeping gear to make us go faster. It was total insanity. Then I heard a lot of screaming artillery coming in and helicopter strike on the rivershore. The radio was screaming, "Turn around, get back." There was a lot of friendly artillery support, but not before both lead boats were severely damaged and some brave men were crippled or killed. I was transferred to a medivac boat and flown by helicopter to the Long Binh Hospital. I was there a few weeks until I could go back to my boat and a new crew. I'm telling the true story of the horror to show my honor and respect to our true brothers of T-91-10.

Along with the other men who died or suffered so greatly in TF 117 Div. 91, please remember and honor Wiselee Smith, Duane Knolls, Henry Cooper, and Dennis Billings. To my fellow survivors our road home has been hard and rocky for most of us as I know. All I can say is Welcome Home!

Larry Koltz lives in South Lake Tahoe, CA.

09/27/67 Wiselee Smith, BM3, San Francisco, CA—ATC-91-10 (Kien Hoa)

09/27-67 David Du Wayne Knowles, SN, Eatonville, WA—ATC-91-10 (Kien Hoa)

09/27/67 Marc S. James, SN, Bronx, NY—ATC-91-3 (Kien Hoa) ★

## Where Are We?

By Richard L. Schmutte, GM3

I have no idea where we were as we traveled so many canals and tributaries of the Mekong Delta. I seldom had any knowledge of our exact location, as many of them are narrow enough that on a windy day you could spit from the bow and come close to hitting the banks.

I remember we were getting hit pretty hard on that operation and as we were fighting our way up the river, we came upon the grounded ASPB. I knew the guy on the back of the boat manning the .30 caliber because we were both from Indy. We went to grade school together and grew up about a block apart, small world, huh.

At any rate, under the direction from our boat captain, our coxswain Leroy Jennings, took the boat in to get the ASPB off the beach. We had already been hit once or twice on the side and as Leroy bought the boat around we took another hit in the bow just below my gun mount. It seemed to lift the whole bow out of the water, but we continued in. As we pulled alongside, our radioman David Tyson jumped on the deck to secure the bows together while we were still under heavy fire.

After what seemed an eternity, we got the ASPB off the beach and headed for a clear zone to medivac the wounded.

The ASPB I believe had to be destroyed. It was beyond repair. And we limped on to the repair ship *USS Askari* ARL-30, we took four or five hits that day and I burned up the barrel on my 40-mm gun.

The repair crew on the *Askari* worked all night on the boat. The boat crew cleaned and repaired, guns and refitted the boat and we were on our way back out within 24 hours.

David Tyson received the Silver Star for his action under fire and Bruce Hawkins along with others on the boat, received the Purple Heart. The photographer put a nice little note on me, and to my knowledge never set foot on the boat again.

In another unrelated incident, Engineman Bill Dargavel and Gunner's mate Bob Madden pulled three men from another Monitor's mm gun mount. Larue is the only name I can recall had taken the brunt of a B-40 rocket through the head. He was a well thought of a person from Etna Green, IN.

If I may, I would like to relate to Gravel and Madden that he survived. I ran into him at the VA Center in downtown Indy sometime in the early '70s. Needless to say, it was an incredible thing that he lived and had hopes of getting his driver's license someday. God Bless all you River Rats.

Richard Schmutte is a MRFA member and lives in Indianapolis. William "Bill" Dargavel is a MRFA member and lives in Verdell, UT. We have never been in contact with John Madden. Both Richard and Bill served on Monitor 91-2 (09/67-09/68). ★

## Member's Notes by River Currents Staff

### Rats and Raiders On The Move

*Howard Kirk:* As I recall we (Army guys) were always confident that the Navy's best would get us to where we had to go. The Navy "rats" were the best—especially in a firefight!

*James Henke Howard* (Nam Vet 67 A-Co 4th 47th): That is so true. They took a beating up on the deck all the time, and we down in the well of the Tango almost felt helpless. Bravo to our many river Rats.

*Al Gonyea:* They were bullet magnets

*Doug Prescott:* Nothing like a nice jungle cruise to wake you up in the morning.

*Jim Gridley:* Pucker factor ten

*Richard Freely Sr.:* Locked and loaded, just waiting for port or starboard. Thumb on the firing button.

*Charles Davis:* Thunder Ball RED!

*Ed Ruess:* Perfect picture, no place to exit . . . Navy preps with a few .30 rounds . . . occasional .50 . . . oh no 105s and .40s . . . oh shit no walk in the park today time to earn your pay!

*Walter Clark:* I'll never forget my first trip up a canal.

*Bill Frede:* They would scare the F\*\*\* out of you . . .

*Gordon Main Shire:* Always enjoyed the Mai-Tys with a dash of Ak 47 & mortar rounds.

*Randall Lee Rowley Sr.:* BROWN WATER NAVY USN 1969

*Jacques Montaufray:* Try going up those same canals with a well deck full of ammo and c rats to resupply the grunts. I had ulcers for many years and today I'm in group therapy for PTSD.

*Bill Frede:* We did on T-112-2 in 1967, two of us loaded up to resupply the divisions from a firefight earlier in the day, we had an escort in front and one in the back, a rocket hit the escort in front of us, we returned fire with our machine guns, and made it the rest of the way to where all the other boats. If that rocket had hit us rather than the front escort, we would have been a bright orange mushroom in the evening night.

*Jacques Montaufray:* Bill Frede oh shit yea.

*Charles Davis:* Made many, many trips up those canals. ★

### Army Comments Living onboard an APB-APL-LST in Vietnam

*Ronnie Johnson:* The food & sleeping was great . . . living on the Benewah was great! Recon 3/47, 9th Div, 1967

*Rocky Graves:* Can't complain about the hospitality with the Navy . . . good food, our laundry cleaned, occasional movie by you Navy guys . . . One I remember—Oh mom oh mom dad's hanging in the closet and I'm so sad. Crazy but as bad as my memory is I still know the title to this day. The beer on the pontoons although warm brought us together and made us sane even if it was for that moment. It was a little rough sometimes with the hoses spraying us down after we came in on the tangos full of mud but we always seemed to shrug it off and distribute our blood-sucking leeches as we progressed down to our quarters. We got along pretty good I would say under the circumstances. You provided us with one hell of firepower taking us up them rivers and canals and would like to thank you Navy guys for all you did to make us together one hell of a fighting force in such a nasty place to fight a war. And

Oh . . . I am sorry to the guy who always yelled over the speaker at me that I didn't salute the ship when boarding. A lot of memories you guys!

*Jim Eckles:* Some of the best food that I had in 20 years in the Navy.

*Philip T. Hall:* Best food I had in the whole time in the Army.

*Joe Foster:* Hunterdon County had an awesome cook.

*Dennis Noward:* Colleton APB-36 1969. Could deal with it all except the corned beef, sterilized milk, and lime-flavored bug juice.

*Lou Cragin:* Hey I was Army on the APL-30 and hats off to the Navy cooks.

*Al Gonyea:* We ate like kings when we came out of the field which wasn't often. It was not uncommon to see someone with two trays!

*Vincent Jimmy DelliPaoli:* You Navy guys sure know how to eat. What a pleasant surprise after eating c's for a week. ★

## Point Man

By Lawrence Blair C Co. 2nd Plt 3rd/47th

I was point man for C Co. 2nd Plt. 3rd/47th Inf. My story begins on March 17, 1968. We were on a search and destroy mission in Dinh Tuong Province. Walking point was a nerve racking experience to say the least, no one had walked point but me since the first day I arrived at my unit.

It was about 2 p.m. and we were crossing a rice paddy approaching a wood line, weird, mysterious things happen at times that we could not always explain. Ross, a member of our squad, for some reason got in front of me. His best buddy, another member of our squad, then got in front of me followed by another member of our squad, the only soldier from Bolivia. I was amazed at this—nothing like this has ever happen before. As we got to the wood line, there was a canal about 12 feet wide. We crossed and proceeded to cross a rice paddy that was about a 100 yards wide. There was another wood line in front of us. When Ross was 12 feet from the wood line, gun fire from a .50 caliber machine gun hit him at least twice in the chest. Peck and Doelger were also hit in the chest. All three were killed.

We were able to recover the bodies of Peck and Doelger, but not Ross because his body was too close to the machine gun nest. We were forced to retreat to the canal and exchanged fire with the enemy for about 2 hours. Helicopter gunships and airstrikes were called in. We were outnumbered and they had the advantage over us in fire power. Each time we would move in the rice paddy, they would see the rice move and direct their fire on us. There was mud being thrown up all around us. We were taken to Dong Tam by helicopters. Because the body of Ross was never recovered, he was listed as missing in action. I can only understand those three brothers getting in the front of me was the will of God.

Anyone who has this type of experience and does not know that there is a God has missed the boat.

Ross, Peck and Doelger may you rest in peace. Seems Ross's body was recovered thanks to Mike Harris for finding this info on the brave men. ★



# MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE SUMMARY

**ComRivFlotOne / ComRivSuppron - Seven  
Command History  
February 1967**

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

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

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

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

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

Day 4. Another exercise in the RSSZ with insertion and extraction, at various operation areas, and a return to the support ship. By February 5, five such cycles had been completed. Other elements of the squadron and division were undergoing training as observers aboard VN RAG boats at Can Tho and My Tho.

During the TET holidays from 9-12 February training operations were secured and the time was used for boat maintenance and repairs. On the 12th of February, RAS-9 and RivDiv 91 began working with the 3rd/47th 2nd Brigade 9th Infantry Division. In the first 4-day cycle "A" and "B" Companies participated. On February 16, 1967, "C" and "E" Companies were scheduled to start the same 4-day cycle. That "A" and "B" Companies had just completed. Increased enemy activity in the Long Tau channel of the RSSZ caused a change. ComNavForV on 16 February 1967 ordered RAS-9 and RAD-91 to support two companies of the 3rd Battalion in the Rung Sat Special Zone (RSSZ). This message marked the end of training and the beginning of combat operations for River Assault Flotilla One. At 0800 hours, units of RAD-91 landed "A" and "B" Companies of the 3rd/47th in the RSSZ, thus began Operation River Raider One, the First U.S. Riverine Assault operation since the Civil War. Also on the 16th of February, the arrival of the *USS Askari* (ARL-30) gave Commander River Assault Squadron SEVEN, a repair capability. The following morning at 0800, Army and Navy personnel gathered at the Command Post in the RSSZ for a brief on the already commenced operation. On the 18th of February, a Joint Tactical Operation Center (JTOC) was established on the *Whitfield County*. Search and destroy and ambush attempts by the Army failed to produce and significant contact with the enemy. However, positive evidence of his recent presence was ascertained.

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

Captain Wells arrived in Saigon on the 27th of February after participating in briefing at CinPacFlt Headquarters. RAD-92 arrived in Saigon on the 28th and was shuttled to Vung Tau and *USS Henrico* during the day. At 0801 (local time) on 28 February Riverine Assault Force (TF-117) was activated under the command of Captain Wells. Units assigned to TF-117 were River Assault Flotilla One/River Support Squadron Seven Staff/River Assault Squadron Nine Staff, River Assault Division Ninety-One and Ninety-Two and the *USS Askari* (ARL-30). Captain Wells flew to Vung Tau on the 28th and broke his pennant at 1010 (local Time) on the *USS Henrico*.

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

## Brothers In Arms

### On Facebook

Just looking at the pictures of all the young men and women who were in Vietnam, makes me feel so old. I think when I came home I felt like an old man. Most people will never see the things that we saw and did in their whole lives and we saw and went through that shit when we were just kids. I was 19 and felt 50 after coming home, we lost our youth over there, never had the luxury of a regular youth. I love looking at all the pictures; keep posting them. I would rather look at those than look in the mirror and wondering where my youth went, just a sign of getting old I guess. I know sometimes my posts don't seem to make sense but I try.

### Brothers in Arms

**Larry Kinser served in B Co. 4th/47th Inf  
(1968-1969) ★**



19 year old Larry Kinser

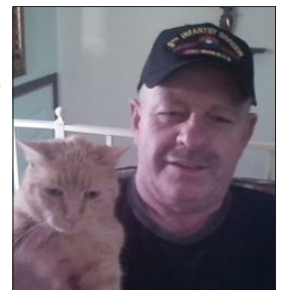
***Our lives and we should try to enjoy.***

Robert Hoelle

★★★★★

Your posts make sense Larry. Our brothers that paid the ultimate price, our combat skills, and the fact we were just lucky are the reasons we are still around. Most of us are in the last quarter of time we have left. The best to you and all of our brothers.

**Bob B Co. 4th/47th and HHC 1st Cav  
(airmobile) ★**



## VC Turn Widows' Village into Blazing Battlefield

**Ninth Infantry Division  
The Old Reliable •  
January 31, 1968,  
Page 1**

*(Some of the most vicious fighting during the recent TET Offensive raged in the village of Khu Gia Viem, across Highway 1 from Long Binh Post.)*

Long Binh—They called it the "Widows' Village." Its inhabitants, the families of deceased Vietnamese Army

soldiers, live peacefully on pensions and proceeds from washing U.S. laundry.

On Wednesday, Jan. 31, this placid community was turned into a blazing battleground when elements of the 88th North Vietnamese Army Regiment took over the village streets and opened fire on II Field Force, Vietnam Headquarters.

The approximately 60-man enemy force used new

AK-47 assault rifles and RPG-2 rocket launchers.

As the first rockets landed near one of the II FFV perimeter bunkers, attacks were also launched on the Bien Hoa Air Base and the Long Binh ammo dump.

A platoon of Company 2d Mech Battalion 47th infantry attached to II FFV headquarters attempted to counter the enemy fire, but was beaten back after losing one

Armored Personnel Carrier and three men.

The final enemy push began as the Recon Platoon of the 2nd/47th joined a platoon from Company B, 2nd/47th and rolled into the fight on Highway 1.

Sizable elements of the invading force were trapped along a small street as the APCs roared into the village, machineguns brattling. Enemy bodies soon littered

the streets and adjacent ditches.

At about 1:30 p.m. helicopter gunships began pounding the un-cleared area in preparation for a final sweep by the infantrymen.

The desperate enemy soldiers fired at the helicopters, thereby exposing their positions to the sweeping ground troops. Resistance was crushed within an hour with 50 enemy killed. ★



# Ben Tre Rescued 150 Enemy Killed

Ninth Infantry Division *The Old Reliable* February 14, 1968

Ben Tre—For three days, Vietnamese Government officials and U S advisors in the besieged Mekong Delta city had held out in a small building against bold enemy invaders.

The defenders were running low on ammunition and preparing to make a last stand when elements of the 9th Infantry Division came to the rescue.

With much of the Kien Hoa Province capital in ruins, the troops from the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 39th Infantry and the 2nd Battalion 60th Infantry brought more power to bear on the stunned insurgents.

More than 150 Viet Cong were mowed down in fighting ranging from sporadic to heavy Feb. 2-3, 1968.

U S forces lost at least 11 dead and 62 wounded by enemy small arms, automatic weapons and mortar fire.

Countless civilians were killed as the enemy spread his suicidal reign of terror in an unsuccessful attempt to seize control of the city, 43 miles southwest of Saigon.

The VC began withdrawing to the east, but were blocked by a company of the Old Reliables. When they tried to camouflage themselves with palm leaves and grass and fled through an open field, U.S. helicopter gunships poured fatal rockets and machinegun fire into their ranks.

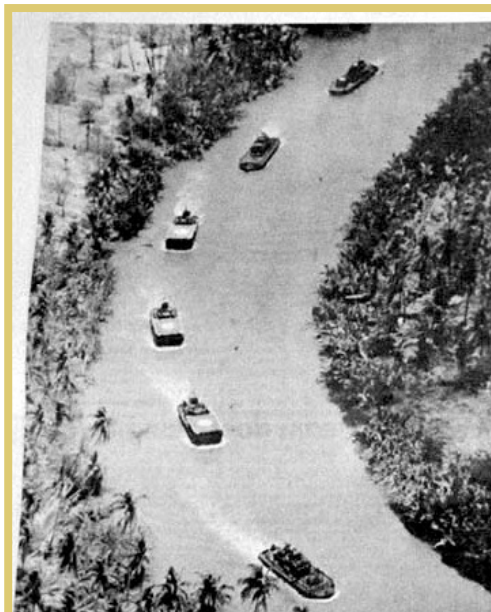
The survivors in a frenzy to escape the 9th Infantry Division onslaught, jumped into sampans and moved across a river south of town. At midstream the gunships blew them out of the water.

Sweeping through the city on Feb. 3, U.S. forces captured 11 RPG7 rounds, 19 ChiCom grenades, and one ammo box full of medical supplies, one bag of documents, one .45 cal sub-machine gun, one M-1 carbine, three mines, seven RPG charges, one AK-47 assault rifle, five cases of ChiCom grenades, one case of rifle grenades, five cases of .45 cal ammunition and ten .45 cal magazines.

Sporadic contact continued on Feb. 4. ★



**FIRST MEMBER**—Major General G. G. O'Connor, Division Commander, signs first membership card of newly formed Octofoil Association. The private organization, open to all Old Reliables, was created to foster closer ties between the men and their Division. Lifetime membership is available at the Bearcat PX or Division Information Office.



Navy assault craft weave through one of the Mekong Delta's many canals

Troops fight VC in last refuge

## Boats move Reliables through Delta



Tango boat, viewed from gun port of boat following, moves upriver



3-60 troops load onto Tango boat



Troops line flight deck of Tango boat



Navy assault craft head out on operation in Kien Hoa Province



LTC Ishmael Pack, 3-47 commander, keeps in touch with his units



Tango boats of Mobile Riverine Force plough the Delta's waterways

# Mekong Delta—June 19, 1967

At approximately 0800 hours, we scrambled off the Mike boats. The sky was clear and the air was getting thick. It was going to be a hot day, in more ways than one. At about 0900 "Crooner Six," the battalion commander, called us on the radio. I was CAPT Reeve's RTO on the battalion push that day.

"Alpha Six, this is Crooner Six, over."

"This is Alpha Six Oscar, go ahead." I answered.

"Put Six on, over."

When CAPT Reeve, company commander of A Co. 4th Bn., 47th Inf., got off the radio with COL Tutwiler, he instructed John Moxness, his other RTO to inform the company that Viet Cong had been sighted two clicks south of our position. We were to move south and make contact.

After sloshing through the rice paddies for an hour, we came to a canal about 10 meters wide. There was a gook there who very gleefully ferried us across the other side in his sampan. I wondered why he kept smiling? We were soon to find out.

The company was on line as we approached a tree line on our left flank, over near the river. The tree line didn't look right. There was nothing you could put your finger on, but it just didn't look right. The company commander was a new guy. This was probably his fourth time in the field and he had never been in combat. So I took the liberty of making a suggestion.

"Captain, that tree line doesn't look right. Why don't you request that they prep it with artillery?"

He called COL Tutwiler and asked for a recon by fire on the tree line.

"Negative. Keep moving south."

We continued south for about 200 meters more. There was an ominous looking tree line directly across our front and I said to CAPT Reeve, "That tree line looks way too quiet, sir. Why don't you request recon by fire?"

"Call it in," he said.

"Crooner Six, this is Alpha Six Oscar, over."

"This is Crooner Six, go ahead."

"This is Alpha Six Oscar. We think there are Viet Cong in the tree line to our front. Request recon by fire, over."

I'll never forget his reply.

"If you think Viet Cong are in there, go in and get 'em out."

We advanced another hundred meters, in wide open rice paddies. Then the tree line opened up on us. We had no cover so we had to try to advance forward to a small canal about 50 meters from the bunker line that was very accurately spitting lead all over us. Capt Reeve, Moxness and I were on the right flank when Charlie opened up. Somehow we scrambled through an intense hail of machine gunfire to a small stand of trees in front of the bunker line. That is where I came upon LT Bertolino and Doc Lee. Apparently Bertolino got hit and Doc Lee went to help him. That's when he was hit. The Lieutenant was dead and I patched up Doc. He lingered for about half hour. He had told me earlier that morning on the Mike boat, that it was his birthday. Happy Birthday Doc!

There was a .50 caliber machine gun in a concrete bunker to our front who hit almost everybody he shot at. I know he hit me once; just a grazing hit, but he got my attention. After I made it to cover, I looked back and saw Lundy. I think he was from North Carolina. He was crawling through the rice paddy toward my position. The

enemy fire was intense and was really making him nervous. I could see it in his eyes.

"Don't run, Lundy. Keep crawling," I yelled. He crawled a little farther. I yelled again, "Don't run!"

I guess the pressure got to be too much. He jumped up and started running. The .50 caliber hit in his leg and flipped him over three times in the air. He landed on his head and I think it broke his neck.

A couple of hours into the firefight, a Huey dropped in to pick up some wounded. The regular Dust-Off choppers wouldn't come in. I don't blame them. I wish I knew who was flying that

Slick because he sat there with bullets slamming into his helicopter until they had loaded up with wounded. He deserves the Silver Star. As 1st SGT Buckaloo pushed a wounded soldier onto the chopper that darn .50 caliber sounded off and SGT Buck grabbed his wrist. He

**Don't run, Lundy.  
Keep crawling."  
I yelled. He  
crawled a little  
farther. I yelled  
again, "Don't run!"**

got off kills before the artillery finally dumped on his bunker.

The CO had me direct artillery and air strikes on the enemy positions all day and all night. We even had 8-inch guns fired from some ship, miles away. It's amazing how accurate they were. Those rounds sounded like boxcars flying overhead. They say we killed 250 Viet Cong.

SGT Lethcoe was farther forward than anyone. He had the top of his helmet peeled back by a .50 caliber machine gun round. Later in the day he was buried briefly by mud being tossed around by our artillery. We all thought he had been killed, but he survived in real good shape.

A few dinks came out of their rat holes while we were pinned down and traded grenades with Apachito and Grambo. The dinks got the worst of it and those who could, crawled back into their holes. Apachito got hit pretty badly.

The 3rd Plt. commanded by LT Bob Aguado was over on the left flank. I didn't see it but I was told that "Buffalo Bob" was cut down by a .50 caliber machine gun while attempting to deliver a white phosphorous grenade on that position. I carried the radio for him many times and had a great deal of respect for him. He was a good man.

Charlie Company, 4th Bn., 47th Inf. moved in on the other side of the ambush and, with the help of Terry McBride on the machine gun, gave the Viet Cong a bloody nose and may have kept them from coming out into the paddies and finishing us off.

They say Charlie planned this ambush for a year. We sustained 94% casualties. Most of the casualties were in the initial contact but they kept us pinned down all night. After it got dark, we crawled out into the paddies to get the wounded we couldn't get to when it was light. We bandaged them up and floated them on air mattresses down this ditch over to the river to where they could be evacuated. I had just gotten back to the canal with Fieldon, who was mortally wounded, when our artillery started firing illumination rounds. That is when we took a lot more casualties. It was an accident but it sure made me angry. I called the brigade commander on the radio (I didn't expect to survive the night, so I had nothing to lose) and said, "Turn those

lights off; you're getting my people killed down here."

"Roger, out" was the reply.

The battalion commander and the brigade commander were both flying around in helicopters about 3,000 feet above the action. I always wondered why COL Tutwiler received the Silver Star for his action on that day. Maybe it was for bravely refusing to give us recon by fire.

During the night, what was left of the Viet Cong force slipped out to the northwest. There were many heroes and many casualties that day. A day that will remain burned in the members of many warriors, Army and Navy forever. This is the way I saw it.

CAPT Reeve was relieved of command and dutifully accepted the role of scapegoat. During the debriefing afterward, I asked if we could count on recon by fire from now on. Somebody yelled at me to sit down and shut up. That is when I lost my job as RTO and became the new point man.

And the smiling gook with the boat? The morning after the ambush I spotted him near the canal he so cheerfully helped us cross. He was probably 450 to 500 meters away.

"Hey John, there is that happy gook who showed us the way to this ambush. If he was a hundred meters closer, I'd drop him." I said to Moxness.

"I can hit him from here."

"No way, that's almost 500 meters."

"Ya gotta use Kentucky windage"

It took three shots, but old John hit that smiley rascal. That was a good ending to a very sorrowful 24 hours.

This is probably the most accurate account of what took place with Alpha Company on June 19, 1967. ★

## Mobile Riverine Force Association Membership Application Form

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Dates Served in Unit (mm/yr - mm/yr) \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

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## Nothing was Easy

By Kim Raseman

335th Radio Research Co.

Nothing about being in Vietnam was easy. There were those who had it better than some and those who had it a lot worse. I want to tell the story that has stayed with me as somehow indicative of who we were and what we were about.

It was our company's turn to pull guard duty at the airstrip at Dong Tam. It was my turn, in my company, to pull one of the shifts. The airstrip was right next to the berm that was already guarded by plenty of personnel with radios and machine guns. The airstrip consisted of a shack and some metal plates for the runway. I was to guard the shack; so far so good. I'd been told by others who'd done this tour that you brought a radio to listen to music, a book to read and a flashlight to read by. And oh hey, by the way, if things got dicey there was a top secret Air Force

bunker in which you could get protection just by banging on the bunker door. Duly noted!

Things went really peaceful for a while until all of a sudden automatic weapons fire started coming in with mortar fire. Fire was returned by our guys on the berm and flares went up signaling aground attack. Off went the radio and flashlight and I put on my steel pot. Weapon ready, I hunkered down to assess the situation when all of a sudden the mortars started walking in towards the shack I was guarding.

FLOOMPH . . . FLOOMPH . . . FLOOMP! They came right toward me and I thought "Air Force bunker" in a heartbeat. I belly crawled with my weapon crooked in my arm towards the bunker a few dozen yards away until, over the mortar rounds, I heard the unmistakable growl of a huge German Shepherd. He was chained up outside the bunker and his eyes were like demon beacons looking at me just above the whites of his bared teeth. When they cock their head slightly

and snarl you know there is no chance of trying an "Atta boy, good boy" so I did a 180 and headed back toward the shack . . . to die. I couldn't shoot anyone because I might hit our guys on the berm and the motors continued towards me. Then it stopped as suddenly as it had started; a couple of sporadic bursts from the berm then nothing. It was just a probe. I stayed wired for the rest of my shift and pretty much forgot the radio, book and flashlight. Not long after the attack, the OD came out to bring my relief. As we rode back together in the jeep he asked what I'd done during the attack and if I'd made it to the Air Force bunker. I told him that I'd tried but that a huge German Shepherd had blocked me from going in. The OD turned and looked at me like I was studying stupid as a religion and said, "Why didn't you just shoot the dog?" I couldn't answer. I didn't feel stupid. I just felt that I couldn't shoot the dog. I didn't have it in my heart. ★

## Bandido Charlie Company to the Utmost Extent of Our Power

Bandido Charlie Company arrived in III Corps Tactical Zone of Vietnam fully mechanized with the 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry in the 9th Division on December 20, 1966. The Division swept through Dinh Tuong Province that included the village of My Tho on January 8-May 31, 1967 in Operation Palm Beach. The Division spent February and March 1967 in the Long An Province that included the village of Tan An. In 1968 the 9th Infantry Division engaged in heavy fighting in the Saigon area. The history of Bandido Charlie, 5th Bn (mech) 60th Inf. is not a dry regurgitation of events of long ago. It is the story of men thrown together in a mechanized infantry company in the Mekong Delta Region of South Vietnam, December of 1966 to September of 1968. They found a means to distinguish themselves from other units by the use of the name Bandido Charlie, proudly displaying the skull and cross swords on their tracks, flags, and pocket patches. The 9th Infantry Division was the birth place of Bandido Charlie Company. In the 9th Infantry Division Bandido Charlie Company called home to several places in the Delta of South Vietnam. Dong Tam, the *USS Colleton* (Mobile Riverine Force), Binh Phuoc, many Fire Support Bases, and any place we parked our tracks for the night. After many bloody, deadly battles from inside Saigon to My Tho and beyond, Bandido Charlie Company left Binh Phuoc and the 9th Infantry Division on 14 September, 1968, when it was reassigned to the 1st Infantry Division. The history that Bandido Charlie Company bestowed upon the 9th Infantry Division is to be honored and remembered. ★

## 1975 Communists Surround Ban Me Thuot

This Day in History

The North Vietnamese surround and attack the city of Ban Me Thuot, as heavy fighting erupts in the Central Highlands. This action, initiated in late January 1975, just 2 years after a cease-fire was established by the Paris Peace Accords, which was part of what the North Vietnamese called Campaign 275. The battle for Ban Me Thuot began on March 4, when North Vietnamese encircled the city with five main force divisions and effectively cut it off from outside support. The South Vietnamese 23rd Division was vastly outnumbered and quickly succumbed to the communists.

As it became clear that the communists would take the city and probably the entire province, South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu decided to withdraw his forces in order to protect the more critical populous areas. Accordingly, he ordered his forces in the Central Highlands to pull back from their positions. Abandoning Pleiku and Kontum, the South Vietnamese forces began to move toward the sea, but what started out as an orderly withdrawal soon turned into panic and the South Vietnamese forces rapidly fell apart. The North Vietnamese were successful in both the Central Highlands and further north at Quang Tri, Hue, and Da Nang. The South Vietnamese soon collapsed as a cogent fighting force and the North Vietnamese continued the attack all the way to Saigon. South Vietnam surrendered unconditionally on April 30. ★

## Sniper Story

By Michael Kirby A Co. 6th/31st Infantry

It was 0630. My men and I awoke to a horrible 90 degrees and 90—yes 90% humidity. The two men on guard were drenched in their own sweat from the hot night. We received an order to secure a LZ (landing zone). My men and I came through the tree line to a field. We called in the coordinates to the Huey choppers enroute to pick us up. The pilots requested we pop smoke. We threw the smoke out and heard choppers in the distance. My RTO (radiotelephone operator) handed me the mic. I then asked the pilot to identify smoke. He came back with "I see yellow smoke." I let him know that was us. I heard a small sound almost like a mosquito. I turned and looked behind me and saw a small egg-shaped chopper called a Loch skimming the trees with its landing skids and armed with miniguns. Then my men said, "Here they come." Two Hueys were coming in to pick us up. They were coming in from the east and the Loch was coming from the west. Just before the Hueys landed, the Loch came under fire from the trees. Then from out of nowhere two thin-like gunships called

AH-1 Cobras come from the south skimming the trees; the gunships flew right over the tops of the Hueys firing their guns and rockets. As we loaded on our choppers, we could see the gunships unloading their firepower on the tree line. We lifted off and the gunships continued to provide us with cover until we were out of the area.

The choppers dropped us off with the rest of the platoon. Then the hot meal choppers (our CO always saw that we got one hot meal a day) came in and we ate in shifts those of us who were not eating were on guard. After the meal we rested, then went in the direction of the assigned area for our squads to patrol. We humped for over an hour and a half. I turned and surveyed the area and I saw some men walking in the direction of the fourth squad. It was so hard to believe how flat this land really is. We were humping through rice patties, jungles and swamps. One of my men asked me what we were doing today. I told him that we were checking IDs, because there's a report of NVA (North Vietnam Army) in the area collecting taxes. We spent the rest of the day searching sampans, hootches, and people.

It was about dusk and we came upon a village that had NVA guards so we dug in. (Note: In

the delta we didn't dig in. It was too muddy. So I guess you could say we got out of sight.) Where we were was a Free Fire Zone and we were to enforce a 22:00 curfew. We ate chow and around 23:30 the sniper called me over and told me to look through the starlight scope at a man walking. The man was walking around carrying a rifle and swinging a lantern back and forth as he walked from hooch to hooch. The sniper asked me what I thought we should do. I then told him the man was out after curfew, and "you know what to do." The sniper then told me to watch the man. My eye trained on the man through the starlight scope. He was out about 800 yards. Then I heard a faint pop, just as the man swung the lantern out in front of him and right before he swung it back, the light went out and the shattering glass looked as if someone threw glitter in the air. The man took off running like no tomorrow for the tree line. The sniper began to laugh and as I was laying there in awe, I too began to laugh. The guy didn't know what hit him. The day after, we arrested two NA sympathizers and one NVA paymaster with the rank of major. But that's another story. ★





Annapolis BOQ/BEQ, every sailor's first stop in Saigon after arrival at Tan Son Nhut Air Base. Photo courtesy of Kent Hawley

## Arrival in Vietnam

By Don Blankenship

A gung ho class of 37 sailors arrives in Vietnam on February 14, 1969. Only 364 and a wake up to go. On the way over on the plane, the class broke out in song to cut the ice of flying into the unknown. The song was "Proud Mary" by Credence Clearwater Revival. The "Rolling on the River" lyric made it an appropriate theme song.

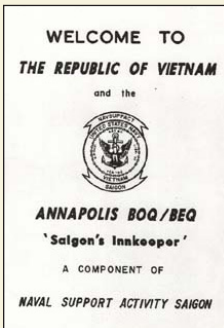


Photo courtesy of Doug Lindsey, YRBM-17 (March 1967)

Occasionally, while in Saigon there was the visit to the Cholon Exchange. I think many a Sansui, Pioneer, or other brand music systems, cameras, etc., were purchased here at great prices and forwarded home.

On July 10, 1969, the Annapolis Hotel survived a bombing attempt. Below are some pictures (courtesy of Joe Rosner) of that bombing. If you recognize yourself in the pictures or remember



Navy portion of Dong Tam is near the bay and closest to the river. Photo courtesy of Howard Kramer.

the incident, please email me (db13@rivervet.com).

A night or so in Saigon and we're transported by helicopter to Dong Tam, about 5 miles west of My Tho along the north bank of the My Tho River.

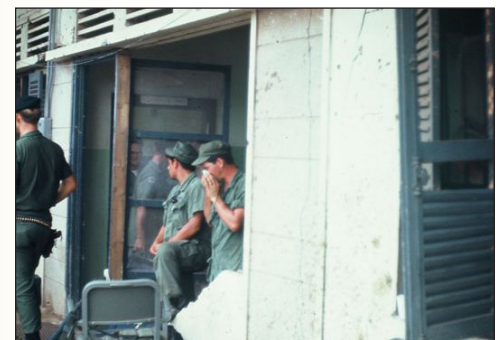
The balance and larger portion of the base, the area to the right of the bay, was occupied by the Army's 9th Infantry. Most of the ground on which the base was built was dredged from a small bay adjacent to the river. Several dredges were sunk in getting this base constructed. Note the ships in the river—that's the MRB (mobile riverine base), made up of a number of support ships.

The map (above, right) shows the area for our transit route up the Cho Gao Canal to the Vam Co River and to our rendezvous with our first boat (A-111-3) alongside the LST Harnett County just south of the village of Ben Luc along the right arm of a fork of the Vam Co called the Song Vam Co Dong River. This right fork along with the left fork, the Song Vam Co Tay River, formed the



image of a slingshot, hence the name, Operation Giant Slingshot, our first in which we participated in Vietnam.

During the transit up the Cho Gao Canal, we were introduced to the war in short order. Our first firefight commenced as the convoy was ambushed while passing the village of Cho Gao. As I recall, the site of the old church was where most of the fire was coming. After returning fire for only a short time, we moved on. It generally wasn't our policy to shoot up (mostly) friendly villages. Five were wounded in the firefight and dusted off (taken away by helicopter). We became quickly indoctrinated into the war of No Fire and Free Fire Zones; only the enemy wasn't always playing with the same rules. One thing we learned quickly was that someone was definitely trying to kill us. When we obtained our Black Berets, we were now able to adhere to the tradition of cutting the tale ribbon loop since we now had been involved in our first firefight. ★





# The U.S. Navy in the Vietnam War

Source: *Naval History & Heritage Cmd*

**U.S. Navy performed a wide array of missions in the Vietnam War.** In the air, it was a key partner with the U.S. Air Force during the Rolling Thunder and Linebacker air campaigns against North Vietnam, and in other air operations in Laos and Cambodia. On the coast, it developed a highly effective blockade to prevent the resupply of enemy forces by sea, engaged in naval gunfire support missions against enemy targets in the littoral areas of Vietnam, and provided amphibious transport for Marines operating in I Corps. On the rivers, it stood up several task forces designed to protect commercial traffic, assist allied ground forces in pacifying these areas, and interdict enemy troops and supplies moving on these inland waterways. The U.S. Navy also supported the war effort with a massive sea and riverine logistics operation, built and managed shore facilities throughout South Vietnam, and provided extensive medical support for the allied military operation.

**U.S. Navy advisors first arrived in South Vietnam in the fall of 1950** and by 1969 numbered 564. These advisors assisted the Republic of Vietnam in developing the Vietnam Navy (VNN) that grew from 5,000 sailors and 122 vessels in 1959 to over 42,000 men and 1,500 vessels in 1972, making it the fifth largest Navy in the world. Naval advisors worked throughout the war to train this indigenous Navy

and experienced many hardships and much danger serving on VNN ships and craft.

**U.S. response to the North Vietnamese attack on USS Maddox (DD 731) in the Gulf of Tonkin** in August 1964 marked the beginning of the Navy's air and surface bombardment against North Vietnam. During the course of the war, Seventh Fleet aircraft carriers supported allied air campaigns by bombing fuel and supply facilities, power plants, bridges, and railroads in Laos and North Vietnam, and after 1970, in Cambodia. Navy surface vessels steamed up and

down the coasts of both North and South Vietnam, raining down shells on a variety of targets. Rolling Thunder air and naval gunfire attacks, however, did not prove decisive. The 1965–68 interdiction campaign neither resulted in a peace treaty nor altered significantly the ground situation in the South. Linebacker attacks in 1972, by comparison, were more effective, especially

in blunting the Communist Easter Offensive. During Linebacker I, the Navy flew an average of 4,000 sorties a month, which represented 60% of the air effort; Navy surface ships fired over 111,000 rounds at targets on the North Vietnamese coast. Navy aircraft also closed North Vietnam's major ports in a highly successful mining operation, code-named Pocket Money. In December 1972, peace negotiations with North Vietnam stalled, compelling President Nixon to resume the air offensive. Linebacker II was a

Total number of U.S. soldiers/  
personnel deployed to  
South Vietnam **2,594,000**

Total number of U.S. casualties in  
the Vietnam War **58,220**

Total number of U.S. soldiers  
wounded in the Vietnam War **303,644**



maximum effort air campaign, focusing heavily on strategic military targets in Hanoi and Haiphong. Air Force B-52s performed the brunt of the bombing missions during the operation, but Navy aircraft played a vital role in air defense suppression missions and also reseeded North Vietnam's major ports with mines.

**The discovery of a 100-ton enemy trawler in Vung Ro Bay** in February 1965 led to the establishment of a U.S. Navy and Coast Guard patrol force to complement the existing VNN anti-infiltration program along the 1,200-mile coast of South Vietnam. The purpose of this deployment, which became Operation Market Time (Task Force 115), was to halt the seaborne infiltration of supplies to Communist troops. Market Time represented the Navy's most successful interdiction program during the war, all but eliminating infiltration by North Vietnamese

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

## USS Benewah APB-35 Vietnam Service

NavSource Online and Wikipedia

Recommissioned 28 January 1967

Decommissioned: 26 Feb 1971

Struck: 1 September 1973

*Benewah* earned 14 battle stars during the Vietnam conflict.

In July 1966, *Benewah* entered the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard for conversion and modernization preparatory to her return to active service. She was recommissioned on 28 January 1967.

Following a week of training at the Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, VA, the ship put to sea for the Far East. After stops at Rodman in the Canal Zone and at Pearl Harbor, *Benewah* reached Vietnam on 22 April. Upon arrival, she became flagship for the Commander, Task Force (TF) 117, the Mobile Riverine Force operating in the Mekong Delta. Except for an occasional trip to Japan for repairs, *Benewah* spent the next 44 months at various locations in the Mekong Delta. In addition to serving as headquarters, she provided barracks space, medical facilities, stores issue, and a myriad of other services to the sailors and soldiers operating with the Mobile Riverine Force and with the similar formations that succeeded that organization when it was disestablished late in August of 1969. The barracks ship frequently suffered enemy fire, and her guns went into action on numerous occasions.

In May and early June of 1970, *Benewah* participated in the incursion into Cambodian territory to support forces interdicting the Viet Cong supply lines running through that country.

On 26 November 1970, the ship departed Vietnam and headed for the Philippines. After a visit to



Singapore between 28 November and 5 December, she arrived at Subic Bay on 11 December. There, *Benewah* underwent an inspection by a board of inspection and survey. That board determined that she was unfit for further active naval service.

She was decommissioned there on 26 February 1971 and was turned over to the Naval Station, Subic Bay, to serve as station ship. Though decommissioned, *Benewah* remained on the active list in an in-service status.

She was also predesignated a *Miscellaneous Auxiliary*, IX-311, 2 days after her decommissioning on 28 February 1971. She served at Subic Bay until 1 September 1973 on which day her name was struck from the Naval Vessel Register. In May 1974, she was transferred to the Republic of the Philippines.

### APB-35 General Specifications

Class: *Benewah*

Named for: Benewah County, Idaho

Complement: 141 Officers and Enlisted

Displacement: 4,080 tons

Length: 328 feet

Beam: 50 feet

Flank Speed: 12 knots

Final Disposition: Transferred to Republic of the Philippines Now an artificial reef off the Philippine Islands ★



### Vietnam War Campaigns & Dates

Vietnamese Counteroffensive - Phase II 21 April to 31 May 1967
Vietnamese Counteroffensive - Phase III 1 June 1967 to 29 January 1968
Tet Counteroffensive 30 January to 1 April 1968
Vietnamese Counteroffensive - Phase IV 2 April to 30 June 1968
Vietnamese Counteroffensive - Phase V 1 July to 1 November 1968
Vietnamese Counteroffensive - Phase VI 2 November 1968 to 22 February 1969
Tet 69/Counteroffensive 23 February to 4 March 1969 7 May to 8 June 1969
Vietnam Summer-Fall 1969 9 June to 31 October 1969
Vietnam Winter-Spring 1970 1 November 1969 to 30 April 1970
Sanctuary Counteroffensive 1 May to 30 June 1970
Vietnamese Counteroffensive - Phase VII 1 July to 26 November 1970





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H002 9th Inf Div Vietnam



H003 RAF TF-117

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4th/39th 9th Inf Div)



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(covers 2nd/47th, 3rd/47th, and  
4th/47th 9th Inf Div)



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SVC Ribbon



H016 MRF CAR Vietnam



H020 Combat Medic Vietnam



H021 U.S. Navy Corpsman Vietnam



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mesh back black hat



H023 Bronze Star  
w/black 6"x3" patch on mesh back  
black hat

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2. Make your check or money order payable to the MRFA. The MRFA does not take credit cards.
3. Mail Gear Order Form and check to Products Chairman, Chet Stanley Jr., 205 Carolina Ave., Easley, SC 29640-1409; 864-306-8400; gunnerstan@aol.com.

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Total items ordered _____			
Grand Total			\$

NOTES:



## From the Membership

From: Edward Fast [mailto:oneyeddie@yahoo.com]

Sent: Saturday, June 17, 2017 12:31 PM

To: ALBERT MOORE <mrfa35@outlook.com>

Subject: MRFA

Albert,

Over the years it has been a great honor to know you. Years ago I helped a little to get names of what *Colleton* crew I could find at that time. It was an honor when you ask me to do that.

You have truly put your life into the MRFA and there are many sailors, soldiers who are members, wives, children and those who happen onto the web site who are all in awe of what you have started and accomplished.

When the MRFA first started as a very small organization, who could have imagined it would turn out to be the great one it is now. From where I stand as a *Colleton* crew member and the small turn out that came forth from our ranks, I have been amazed over the years at what you have accomplished.

Those first years to me are unfathomable to me as to the work you and of course your wife must have put into it and over the years also.

Albert, the MRFA is one of the best. You have taken this organization from an E-1 and turned it into a Fleet Admiral. Your organizational skills are superseded by none.

Look what you have done with the *River Currents*!!!!!!!

The reunions were outstanding. The speakers that have been brought in were phenomenal. The opportunity to meet them and shake the hands of those we once knew onboard and meet those not known before, making new friends is beyond words. The trip I won to go to Vietnam was something I will never forget, thanks to you.

Thank you for all you have done for all of us.

I hope to make it to the reunion this year and see you there. I will never forget you.

God bless my friend.

**With love and fair winds,  
Eddie Fast**

★★★★★

Dwayne Peterson:

I would like to thank Al Moore for his dedication to service as President of the MRFA over the years. I know all Members have a lot of Respect for his Service to this Organization.

This site has been a place we can all go to keep in touch and keep the Memory alive, remembering our Brothers and Sisters who made the ultimate sacrifice, and pass on our experiences and knowledge of the Vietnam War.

Thank You Albert Moore for your Outstanding Service!



**Folks the Association has a Facebook page. It is called *The Mobile Riverine Force and 9th Infantry Division Vietnam Page*. After you send a request to join the group, Bob Pries will approve your request to join the group.**

## NAVY

Continued from page 8

steel-hulled freighters and significantly reducing North Vietnamese resupply by sea.

**In December 1965, the U.S. Navy initiated Operation Game Warden** to patrol the major rivers and canals in the Mekong Delta and Rung Sat Special Zone. Consisting of a fleet of 31-foot patrol boats augmented by attack helicopters and SEAL units, this naval inshore force (Task Force 116) imposed a curfew in the region, interdicted enemy troop and supply movements, curbed Communist taxation of peasants, and hindered large-scale Viet Cong operations. Minesweeping forces and harbor defense units kept the vital waterways to Saigon and Hue and South Vietnam's major ports open for allied use. In performing these varied functions, Game Warden helped secure the major rivers in the area for commerce and extended government control to the "breadbasket" of South Vietnam, home to over six million people.

**The Mobile Riverine Force** was a joint Army-Navy river assault force designed to search out and destroy Viet Cong units operating in the Mekong Delta. In 1967, elements of the U.S. Army's 9th Infantry Division operating from a flotilla of armored Navy riverine craft (Task Force 117) launched a series of daring amphibious assaults in the region, achieving a 15 to 1 kill ratio against the Viet Cong. During the Tet Offensive, the Mobile Riverine

Force, assisted by Task Force 116, saved the Mekong Delta by helping South Vietnamese troops defeat Viet Cong attacks on provincial capitals and other major towns in the Delta. Other riverine units based in I Corps (Task Force Clearwater) proved instrumental in keeping the Perfume and Cua Viet rivers open for supply traffic during the Tet Offensive.

**Southeast Asia Lake, Ocean, River, and Delta Strategy (SEALORDS)** combined elements of Task Forces 115, 116, and 117 with the VNN to halt the infiltration of enemy troops and supplies into South Vietnam from Cambodia. Beginning in late 1968, riverine forces established new patrol barriers near the border of Cambodia and established a military and South Vietnamese government presence deep in the heart of the Mekong Delta. This campaign reduced overall Viet Cong activity in the Mekong Delta and deterred the enemy from launching a major offensive in the area during the 1972 Easter Offensive.

**The merchant ships of the Military Sea Transportation Service** delivered 95% of the military equipment and supplies consumed by allied forces in Vietnam. Navy Seabee construction units built enormous support bases at Danang and Saigon to supply all Navy and Marine Corps forces in the field as well as some Air Force and Army units. Naval Support Activity Sailors administered these logistical hubs and operated a fleet of supply craft and barges that plied the waters

of the Mekong Delta and beyond. The Navy also operated two hospitals at Danang and Saigon and two hospital ships, *Sanctuary* (AH 17) and *Repose* (AH 16), staffed by Navy doctors, corpsmen, and 425 female members of the Nurse Corps.

**Amphibious readiness** was a unique capability shared by the Navy and Marine Corps team in Vietnam. The Marine Corps took advantage of the fleet's amphibious assault ships to launch large and small assaults along the coast of South Vietnam. In Operation Starlight of August 1965, U.S. and South Vietnamese units wiped out the 1st Viet Cong Regiment. Subsequently, Viet Cong units generally shied away from combat with amphibious forces, ceding control of much of the coastline to allied forces. The naval command also utilized the amphibious forces as a floating reserve that could rapidly transport reinforcements to any hot spot on the coast. This was especially valuable during several set-piece battles near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) of the 1967-68 period.

A total of 1,842 million sailors served in Southeast Asia. The Navy provided the allied effort with many unique capabilities, the most significant being the projection of U.S. combat power ashore and control of the seas to support a land war in Asia far from the United States. Overall, the Navy suffered the loss of 1,631 men killed and 4,178 wounded during the course of the war. ★

## TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One



**Ortega**

Member **John Jerry Ortega Sr.** father and proud, decorated Navy Veteran, who served our country during the Vietnam War passed away February 10, 2017. John served on T-112-2 (1968-69). You may contact the daughter Carol Ortega Schlottman at 4795 Ridge Rd., Williamston, NY 14589-9388,

edschlottman@aol.com. *He was very proud of his service and I am sure he was proud to be a member with his fellow brothers. May our Brother rest in Peace.*



**Lee**

Member **Jerry Robert Lee** passed away August 17, 2016. Jerry served on the USS Sphinx ARL-24 (08/68-08/69). You may contact

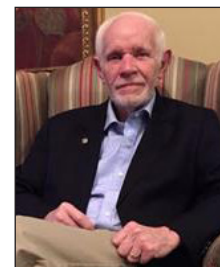
the family c/o Greg Lee, 1530 Bunch Ln., Greenville, NC 27834, 252-752-7976, g1s80@aol.com.



**Rockow**

Member **Greg Rockow** passed away January 27, 2017. Greg served onboard the USS Harnett County LST-821 (1968-69). You may contact the family in c/o Lila Rockow, 510 W Sheppard St.,

Dows, IA 50071-2005, 515-852-4186.



**Jackson**

**Dr. Harry Reed Jackson** passed away July 1, 2017. Harry served with C Battery 1st/84th Artillery (07/67-07/68). You may contact the family in c/o Lawanda Jackson, 1778 Chadwick Ct, Hixson, TN 37343-2371,

**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**

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



## TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One

BonnyOaks44@comcast.net. He was a counselor at the Chattanooga Vet Center. His Vietnam "Buddies" will certainly miss him. Allen Ray Moore



### Pisacreta

Member **Richard "Rip" Pisacreta** passed away June 9, 2017. Richard served on the USS White River LSMR-536 (12/66-12/68). You may contact the family c/o Laraine Pisacreta, 4100 Coit Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525-2128, 616-361-9346, 616-361-9346. *Without a doubt one of the most interesting and funniest people I have had the great pleasure of knowing and an absolutely incredible storyteller. He will be missed.* Brother Bill Brennan.

Member **LCDR Albert Benge** USN (Ret.) passed away May 27, 2017. Lcdr Albert served in ComRivDiv 92 in 1967. You may contact the family c/o Kathryn Benge, 523 N Key Blvd, Midwest City, OK 73110-5825, 405-707-0655, katylee1936@gmail.com.



### Vetter

Member **John R. Vetter** passed away April 8, 2017. While in Vietnam, he served as an Electrician's Mate at the Naval Support Activity, Da-nang, from November 1966 to September 1968. You may contact the family in c/o Susan M. Vetter, 386 Camellia Ct., Freeport, FL 32439-6678.



### Marten

Member **Monte Fred Marten** passed away June 11, 2017. Monte served in the 9th Infantry Division B. Co. 2nd/39th (04/68-04/69). You may contact the family c/o Kaye Marten, 5203 W Sherwood Rd, Norfolk, NE 68701-1323, 402-371-7579.



### Luoma

Member **Erick C. Luoma** US Navy (Ret.) passed away July 30, 2017. Erick served on the White River LSMR-536 (10/65-1968). You may contact the family c/o Janet Luoma, 1913 Gambels Way, Santa Rosa, CA 95403-8952, 707-576-1256.



### Nielsen

Member **John Edward Nielsen** passed away July 17, 2017. John served in B. Co. 2nd/39th Inf (04/68-04/70). You may contact the family c/o Becky Stull (daughter), 368 Garrison Cemetery Lane, Cookeville, TN 38501.



### Kinsman

Washington State at age 72.

Kinsman was born March 4, 1945, and grew up in the Seattle suburb of Renton, Washington, a statement from the society said. He enlisted in the Army as a Private First Class in 1967 and was deployed to Vietnam by October of that year. He served as a rifleman with Company B, 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division.

On February 6, 1968, Company B came under intense fire during a reconnaissance-in-force mission near the city of Vinh Long in southern Vietnam, the statement said. During the attack, Kinsman and seven other soldiers became separated from their main company due to the limited visibility caused by both the Vietnamese jungle as well as the intensity of the fire fight.

### Medal of Honor Recipient Thomas Kinsman Dies at 72

*Stars and Stripes*, 19 May 2017, by Kat Bouza

Thomas Kinsman, an Army veteran who received the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Vietnam War, died Monday in

As the group attempted to reconnect with their fellow soldiers, a grenade was launched in the direction of Kinsman and his group. Kinsman immediately threw himself upon the grenade, shielding the members of his company from the blast. He received severe head and chest wounds as a result of the explosion.

He was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Richard Nixon on May 17, 1969. In his official citation, Kinsman was praised for "his indomitable courage, complete disregard for his personal safety and profound concern for his fellow soldiers" which "averted loss of life and injury to the other [seven] men of his element."



**Kinsman was discharged from the Army and returned to Washington, where he returned to work felling trees for a local logging company.**

## 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.

Wendell Affield for Buddha Ed Thomas, Boat Captain Tango 112-11 (02/68-02/69)  
William Blausier for Thomas Gaudet, David Land, and Jose Campos our 151 Division brothers that were KIAs  
Maj General 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)  
Donald P. Brosnan for Col George E. Bland, CO 2nd Bde (06/68-01/69), WIA January 1969, Evacuated to Convs, Died 12/20/03  
Brothers of the 2nd/47th Inf for all Army and Navy KIAs  
Bill Buffle in memory of Lyle Parin USS Floyd County LST-762 (Vietnam)  
Craig "Doc" Champion in memory of KIAs 3rd Pft D Co. 3rd/47th (1968)  
John and Doris Chrzanowski in memory of SP/4 Humberto Ruiz Santiago Jr. Grenadier A Co. 4th Bn 47th Inf. Rgt 9th Inf. Div. Died of wounds 06/27/69, Kien Hoa, South Vietnam (DC Wall Panel 21W Ln 025)  
Mike Clark in memory of Larry Welk and Lydes Gardner 4th/39th 9th Inf Div (1967)  
Janice Dahlke for son Cpl. Randy R. Mueller D Co. 2nd/47th KIA 03/03/69  
Orville Daley for my good buddy Merle Haggard, one of the greatest names in country music, 1937-2016  
Fran Divelbiss for Cdr. Dave Divelbiss, Supply Officer on Staff COMRIVFLOT ONE, USS Benewah APB-35 (1966-68)  
Ron Easterday for Marco Serrano Jr. HHC 2nd/47th Inf and LTC William Cronin HQ 2nd/47th Inf (Mech) KIA 04/27/67  
Dennis Erlandson in memory of Fran Convery C & D Cos. 3rd/47th (1968)  
Ted Fetting for Eloy "Stevie" LeBlanc, Roy Phillips, and Fred Janosius B Co. 2nd/60th KIA 02/02/68  
Sgt Robert Flaige for SP4 Robert "Bob" Jenks E Co. 3rd/60th KIA 03/03/68  
From your Brothers B Co. 2nd 39th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division in memory of Monte Marten B Co. 2nd/39th (04/68-04/69)  
From your Brothers B Co. 2nd 39th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division in memory for John Nielsen B Co. 2nd/39th (04/68-04/70)  
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  
Leo Haynes for my fellow plank owner and buddy Don Griener GM2 USS Benewah. He died in a car crash in 2003  
James Henke and Dave Nelson for James Callan, Sgt Tony Spradling, Sgt Gerald Thurman, Spec James B. Johnson, and all our Brothers lost on June 19, 1967, from A Co. 4th/47th 9th in AP BAC, Long An Province  
Gordon Hillesland for Pat Lawson NSA Dong Tam (1967-68)  
Joe Hilliard for Joe Benack from Florida and Donald Hartzell from Pennsylvania  
Bruce Jensen in memory of Frederic Peers Webb A-111-4 KIA 12/21/67  
J. R. Johnson Recon 3rd/47th (01/67-01/68) for Walker, Paredes, Gotch, Hayes, Nelson, and Howard  
Dave Justin for Robert "Bobby" Scharpnick A Co 2nd Platoon 3rd/60th and Dennis McDougal A Co 3rd/60th  
Allen Kawabata for Adrian Howell T-111-8 KIA 12/04/67  
Bob Land, Rich Lierman, Jim Zervos, and Pete Oakander for Frank Dettmers, our boat captain on CCB-131-1 (May 69-May 70). We do this in his honor and remembrance.  
Richard MacCullagh for John (Doc) Phillips, HMC, USN (Ret) RivRon 15  
Richard MacCullagh for Chaplain Rene L. Petit, LT, CHC, RC, RivRon 13 and 15  
Stella Gayle Malone for Timothy Neary USS Jamestown AGTR-3 (01/69-12/69)  
H. Bruce McIver for HM1 Zeph Lane who was severely wounded 03/31/69 and unfortunately killed in a private plane crash 05/20/85  
Adam Metts for Donald L. Bruckart T-111-2 KIA 03/31/69  
A. R. "Monti" Montillo for William "Bulldog" McLaughlin B Co 3rd/60th KIA 10/03/68 and Barry "Butch" Copp B Co 3rd/60th KIA 10/28/68  
Albert Moore for Ralph Tresser CS3 USS Benewah APB-35 (1966-67)  
Albert Moore for Tom Bityk CS3 IUWG-1 VC-Hill/Ha Tien (1969-70)  
Albert and Sarah Moore for Capt Gerald Saucier CO USS Benewah APB-35 (09/66-02/68)  
Victoria Mortensen in memory of G. Thomas "Morty" Mortensen RivDiv 92 A-92-8 (01/68-11/69)  
VP Roy Moseman for Oscar Santiago C-2 4th/47th (10/67-10/68)  
Herman Murphy EN2 for USS Benewah shipmates: John Long EN2, Craig Bronish MR3, and George Schnieder MR2  
William Nesmith for Thomas E. Huffines B Co. 3rd/60th Inf (03/69-07/69) and D Co. 2nd/60th (08/69-02/70)  
Maj J. D. Nichols III CMDR C Co. 3rd/60th Inf (12/66-11/67) for Alfred Cornejo, Anthony Galeno, Richard Lasher, Rudolph Melendez, Sigfredo Pinto-Pinto, and Darrell Reid KIA 08/20/67  
Jasper Northcutt for SSGT Henry T. Aragon B-2 2nd/47th KIA 08/23/67, SGT James E. Boorman B-2 2nd/47th KIA 08/27/67, SP4 James D. Bronakoski B-2 2nd/47th KIA 04/27/67, SP4 Michael G. Hartnett B-2 2nd/47th KIA 04/27/67, SGT William D. Mize B-2 2nd/47th and 5th/60th KIA 10/28/67, CPL Harold K. Southwick B-2 2nd/47th Inf KIA 03/02/67 (first KIA in B Co. 2nd/47th in Vietnam), and PFC Robert C. Voltz B-1 2nd/47th Inf (Mech) KIA 03/11/67 (first KIA 1st Platoon B Co. 2nd/47th in Vietnam)  
Luis Peraza for SSG Michael K. Lewis KIA 06/13/69, SGT Harold H. Hunter KIA 01/27/69, and brothers of D Co 3rd/60th KIA during 1968-69  
Claire Siebert for GMG3 Richard Siebert IUWG-1 Unit 3, Qui Nhon (03/67-01/69)  
John Smith for Paul D. Jose B Co. 3/60th KIA Westy 11/01/68  
Thomas E. Smith for Joseph P. Blee C Co. 2nd/ Bn. 39th Infantry (1967-68), a boyfriend of mine  
Aaron R. Spurway for Chief Ray  
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  
Okey Toothman in memory of Sgt Dick Arnold A Co. 3rd/47th, Max Delacruz and G. P. Jones C Co. 3rd/47th  
Okey Toothman in memory of Judy Wallace  
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  
Wm. "Whit" Whitworth for CPT Franklin D. Bryan D Trp 3/5 Cav 9th Inf Div KIA 02/25/69  
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 Airborne KIA 08/23/69





## Mobile Riverine Force Association

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Christopher Olsen T-131-8 (05/68-05/69)  
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LCDR Leonard Previto CTF-117 (08/67-08/68)  
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Paul Ray M-151-5 (06/69-07/70)  
CAPT William Renton USS Askari ARL-30 (10/68-09/69)  
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Norman Saunders B Co. 3rd/39th Inf (01/69-08/69)  
Duane Schinn Z-111-7 and M-111-2 (12/67-06/68)  
Robert "Bob" Schrader D Co. 9th Med BN (07/68-07/69)  
F. George Schuster LTJG USS Indra ARL-37 (1968-69)  
Thomas D. Scott USS Colleton APB-36 (12/66-04/68)  
Bob Shawen Friend of the Ardingers  
Jerry Shearer C Co. 3rd/60th 9th Inf (04/67-04/68)  
Joseph W. Shedlock A-152-4 (10/68-07/69)  
Jim Silva D Co. 3rd Platoon 4th/39th Inf (Vietnam)  
Richard Simpson C Co. 3rd/47th Inf 9th Div (05/67-05/68)  
Thomas Slater USS Hampshire County LST- 819 (1967-69)  
John Smith B Co. 3/60th (05/68-06/69) for all Riverines  
Thomas E. Smith 9th S and T Battalion (03/67-06/68)  
Marc Spilberg 4th/47th Inf (01-68-01/69)  
Aaron R. Spurway USS Vernon County LST-1161 (1966-68)  
Chet "Gunner" Stanley C-111-1 and M-111-3 (1966-68)  
Thomas Stuart USS Benewah APB-35 (1966-67)  
John Sturtz T-151-9 (06/68-06/69)  
John Swart T-132-1 (04/68-04/69)  
Bryan Swisher B Co. 3rd/47th Inf (12/68-06/69)  
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)  
Tip of the hat to Albert  
Jim Towey Co. B 2nd/60th Infantry (10/68-08/69)  
USS Terrell County LST-1157  
Roger Valentine USS Askari ARL-30 (07/67-05/68)  
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)  
Bill Weidman T-111-12 (02/67-02/68)  
Gary Weisz A-91-4 (10/67-07/68)  
David Welch NavSupAct Saigon (06/65-06/66)  
James Leroy Welch SFM2 USS Carronade IFS-1 (10/65-08/67)  
David H. White USN (Ret) USS Satyr ARL-23 (08/69-08/70)  
Wm. "Whit" Whitworth Lighthouse 5 D Trp 3/5  
Cav 9th Inf Div (03/68-03/69)  
BMCM Donald Witta USN (Ret) T-111-13 (03/67-02/68)  
Norm Wilkinson B Co. 4th/47th Inf (03/67-03/68)  
Rhett Wise A Co. 3rd/47th Inf (03/67-04/68)  
Jeffrey L. Withers RivRon 11 A-112-8 and M-112-12 (06/68-06/69)  
William H. Ziebarth 9th Signal, 34 Arty (1966-68)  
James Zieminski EN2 Boat Captain RivDiv 153 ASPB 6854 (04/69-04/70)  
Robert Zimmer XO USS Mercer APB-39 (02/68-07/69)  
Admiral Elmo Zumwalt ComNavForV