



River Currents

Brown Water Huey

Med Evac

A PUBLICATION OF
THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 26, NUMBER 2
SUMMER 2017

From the Galley

I hope this finds each and every one of you okay and doing well and enjoying the beginning of summer. Folks, this is a very hard message from me. I never thought it would come to this but they say, "All good things eventually will come to an end." As most of you know I have had a number of health issues the last few years. It has come to the point I see no relief in sight. So after thinking long and hard, I have decided it was time for me to step down as President of the Association as of June 1, 2017. It has been a high honor and privilege to have served as the President of the MRFA, which would not have been possible without your support and backing. It has been greatly appreciated. I have had and still do have a great bunch of Officers and Board Members to work with over the years, but it still comes down to you the members you have all been great.



Al Moore

By our Bylaws when the President steps down, the Vice President takes over until the Board can meet and appoint a New President. Roy Moseman, who has been our VP for years, will take over from me as your President on June 1, 2017. Roy has been a great VP. He also served in C Co. 4th/47th (1967-68).

As for myself, I'll still be around if help is needed. There are so many people I would and need to thank, but that would take up the whole newsletter. So I will say farewell to the greatest bunch of men and their spouses I have ever had the honor and privilege to have known and to have been associated with to those who served with and supported the MRF and 9th Infantry Division. You were the best then and still the best now. Keep Marching.... In Brotherhood.

Albert

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. ★



MRFA Reunion at the Indianapolis Marriott East Aug. 31 to Sept. 2, 2017

Start planning for the 2017 MRFA reunion. The dates are August 31 through September 2, 2017. We will be at the Marriott East in Indianapolis again. The hotel and staff treated us fantastic and I know it will be even better this time. The hotels we want to fill up first are listed below with room charges. Make sure to reference the MRFA when making your reservation so you get the MRFA rate. These rooms went very quickly last reunion, so make your reservations early.

Indianapolis Marriott East: All the rooms available are filled up

Florence Garden (formerly *La Quinta*) \$69.00/night, 1-317-359-1021 (Pets allowed with \$50 deposit)

Fairfield Inn & Suites \$74.00/night, 1-317-322-0101 (No pets allowed)

Service dogs are allowed at all three hotels.

Hospitality rooms are available for \$125 per day. Contact Kellie Quinn at kquinn@indymarriotteast.com or 1-317-322-3716, ext. 1113. These rooms are to be contracted by each individual group.

Frank Jones (popsaroni@sbcglobal.net)

MRFA Secretary/Reunion Coordinator

Cell: 1-314-303-2730

Reunion Book Sales

All book sales will be restricted to Liberty Hall (main Hospitality Room). There will be no book sales in the hallways or Atrium areas. There will be another group using the Grand Ballroom from Wednesday until Friday while we are there. No exceptions to this rule!!

Thanks.

Frank Jones, MRFA Secretary/Reunion Coordinator

Plan of the Day

Note: Volunteers are appreciated. See Frank Jones

Thursday, August 31, 2017

7:00 a.m. Liberty Hall Hospitality Room opens

9:30 a.m. Registration hosted by George Duke Marthenze and his staff (setup outside Liberty Hall)

9:30 a.m. Product sales hosted by Chet Gunner Stanley and his staff

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Raffle tickets available from Mable Springer (Raffle Queen) and her staff

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. MRF and 9th Inf Division Museum Room hosted by Bob Pries and his staff (Salons A and B)

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. MRFA Memorial and Museum Trailer will be open for display hosted by Bruce Graff (contact person and driver) and Charlie Ardinger

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Luncheon on the patio (If it rains, will serve inside)

Note: Members and guest pay for their own meals.

Beer will be supplied on patio at no cost.

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MRFA Mobile Memorial/Museum Schedule

Thursday, June 15-17, 2017 -

Cherokee County Fairgrounds, Cherokee, IA

Saturday, August 5, 2017 Buffalo Days, Lanesboro, MN

Saturday, August 12, 2017 - Western Days, Chatfield, MN

MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Reunion Registration Form

August 31–September 2, 2017

Name _____

Unit in Vietnam _____ Dates _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ or Cell _____

E-mail _____

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

Send my
registration
form by email?☐ Yes ☐ No☐ No guests☐ First ReunionRegistration fee • Cost includes member and spouse/girlfriend **\$70.00**
(Does not cover lodging, food, bus trips, or shuttles)

Total number of other guest(s) (____ x \$25.00 each) _____

Guests under 16 are free.

Registration fee for Nonmember (\$80.00) _____

Late registration fee (\$75.00) _____

Grand total enclosed \$ _____ 2

Please send this form with your check or money order (payable to the MRFA or Mobile Riverine Force Association) to MRFA 2017 Reunion, 1857 County Road A14, Decorah, IA 52101 before August 16, 2017. Returned checks and cancellations prior to the reunion will be charged a \$25 processing fee.

When filling out the form, please use one unit and one date, even if you have served in more than one unit. To provide the complimentary transportation to and from the airport on a prearranged scheduled basis, fill out the 2017 MRFA Reunion Flight Information Form and send to Kellie Quinn as indicated on the form.

If you do not send the form to Kellie, you will have to find your own transportation to the hotel.

Note: You will still have to check in at the registration desk to receive your name tag.

If you wait and pay your registration fee at the reunion, the late registration fee will be \$75. Register early and help the MRFA as we use your fees to purchase food, beverages, and other items.

2017 MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Reunion Flight Information August 31 to September 2, 2017

Name(s): _____

Home Address: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

If you are bringing wheelchairs or scooters, you need to designate which and how many on this form. Also need to specify if riders are ambulatory or not. This will let the hotel know so they can get the right style of shuttle.

| Arrival Date | Airline | Flight Number INTO Indy Airport | Arrival time INTO Indy Airport | # of People Needing Ride | # of Non-Ambulatory People | Are you traveling w/ wheelchair/ scooter, etc. |
|----------------|---------|---|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| Departure Date | Airline | Flight Number FROM Indy Airport | Departure Time FROM Indy Airport | # of People Needing Ride | # of Non-Ambulatory People | Are you traveling w/ wheelchair/ scooter, etc. |
| | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |

NOTE: Flight info due no later than August 14, 2017 to get on the hotel shuttle. **No exceptions to this rule.** If you do not sign up, you will have to find your own transportation to the hotel. Send this completed form back to Kellie Quinn by e-mail kquinn@indymarriott.com; or fax to Kellie Quinn at 1-317-352-9775; or mail to Kellie Quinn, Event Coordinator, Indianapolis Marriott East, 7202 E 21st St, Indianapolis, IN 46219, ATTN: 2017 MRFA Reunion Flight Info.

If you e-mail this form, you will receive a confirmation e-mail back within 3 days of arrival as to what your pick-up times will be. If flights are delayed, call 1-317-322-3716, Ext 1113, when you get into the Indianapolis airport and they will get you on the next shuttle. **Guests may be responsible for their own airport transportation if the hotel is given incorrect flight information or if flight changes and hotel was not notified.**

REUNION SCHEDULE

Continued from previous page

Cheeseburger \$5.00, Chicken Sandwich \$5.00, Bratwurst w/kraut \$5.00, Hot Dog \$4.00, Bag of chips \$1.00, Soft drink \$2.00. Condiment bar to include ketchup, mustard, lettuce, tomato, buns, and watermelon slices

10:00 p.m. Liberty Hall Hospitality Room closes

Friday, September 1, 2017

7:00 a.m. Liberty Hall Hospitality Room opens

9:30 a.m. Registration

9:30 a.m. Product sales

10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Shopping at Castleton Mall. Sign up at front desk for shuttle. First come, first serve basis.

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Raffle tickets available from Mable Springer (Raffle Queen) and her staff

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. MRF and 9th Inf Division Museum Room

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. MRFA Memorial and Museum Trailer will be open for display

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Luncheon on the patio (If it rains, will serve inside)

Note: Members and guest pay for their own meals.

Beer will be supplied on patio at no cost. Cheeseburger \$5.00, Chicken Sandwich \$5.00, Bratwurst w/kraut \$5.00, Hot Dog \$4.00, Bag of chips \$1.00, Soft drink \$2.00.

7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Delta to DMZ dance with a DJ playing your favorites of the '60s and '70s music held in the Grand Ballroom. Board Member Frank Jones and wife Linda will be hosting the dance. No dress code.

10:00 p.m. Liberty Hall Hospitality Room closes

Saturday, September 2, 2017

7:00 a.m. Liberty Hall Hospitality Room opens

9:30 a.m. **MRFA Reunion Program**

Master of Ceremonies (Gunnery Chet Stanley RivDiv 11 C-111-1 and Don Blankenship A-111-3 and A-152-21)

Pledge of Allegiance (John Richardson A Co. 3rd/47th Inf)

Recognitions

Harry Hahn RivRon 13 M-131-1

Restroom break for 15 minutes

Memorial Service

• Church Call (Charlie Ardinger T-151-11)

• Invocation (Reverend Larry Lyons RivDiv 112 C-112-1)

• Flag and certificate ceremony (Gunner Chet Stanley will present flags and certificates to widows, sons, or daughters of our fallen Brothers from Vietnam and those who have passed on since who attend the reunion)

• Missing Man Ceremony (Harry Hahn)

• Reading of names of those who have passed away since the last reunion (Don Blankenship and Roy Moseman Co. 4th/47th Inf)

• Memorial Prayers for our Departed Brothers and Sisters and Eulogy (Reverend Larry Lyons)

• Memorial Two Bell Ringing Ceremony (C. Ardinger)

US Army

• Taps (Roy Moseman)

• Last Minute Announcements (Chet Stanley)

Noon to 1:30 p.m. Luncheon on the patio (If it rains, will serve inside)

Note: Members and guest pay for their own meals.

Beer will be supplied on patio at no cost. Cheeseburger \$5.00, Chicken Sandwich \$5.00, Bratwurst w/kraut \$5.00, Hot Dog \$4.00, Bag of chips \$1.00, Soft drink \$2.00

Noon to 2:00 p.m. Product sales

2:00 p.m. Raffle drawings

Gun raffle to be held after the raffle drawings

2:30 to ? Visiting with shipmates, family, and friends

10:00 p.m. Liberty Hall Hospitality Room closes

Sunday, September 3, 2017

Check out

MRFA Hospitality Rooms for 2017

Bill Cunningham 3rd/60th (Salon E)

Douglas Rill RivRon 9 1967 (Salon D)

Randy Peat RivRon 13 T-132-12, Harry Hahn RivRon 13

M-131-1, and Frank Jones RivDiv 152 T-48 Heavy Boats

—Alpha, CCB, Monitor, Tango Zippo (Veterans 1)

Family Tribute To Our Cousin, Our Hero Remembering Donnie T-111-12

By Susie Bruckart Gran, first cousin; with contributions from Adam Metts, the engineman on Donald's boat; and Donald's cousins, Robert Bruckart, Bill Bruckart, Vicki Bruckart Hoekstra and Sarah Gregory

As cousins growing up in Redlands, we shared a carefree childhood of hide-and-seek in the orange groves, joy rides in his Model A Ford rumble seat and mountains of whipped cream on legendary pumpkin pie served by his mother every Thanksgiving until he died.

Donald Lee Bruckart, one of 11 Redlands men killed in action in South Vietnam, was "Donnie" to us, a big brother who joined the Navy, the only one among us to serve in the Armed Forces, the one missing from our reunions where we now share our grief and our memories.

Donald served on an Armored Troop Carrier or Tango boat in River Assault Squadron 11 River Assault Division 111. His boat number was T-111-2. Sailors on Donnie's river boat described him "as a very easy person to work with and always helpful," said Adam Metts, the Engineman who survived the March 31, 1969 mid-night attack on the Mekong Ma-rauders patrol force.

"I was on the boat the night he died. We were on our way back from patrol up the river when Charlie ambushed us," Metts said. "Don died instantly. He never knew what hit him."

Three other sailors were seriously wounded in the ambush. "It was our third time on river patrol and we would fire into the jungle to keep Charlie from free access," Metts said. "We were on our way back when we were hit by two rockets."

The sailors of the Mobile Riverine Force Task Force 117 defended the Mekong Delta in several Provinces, which included Kien Tuong Province where Donald was KIA. The IV Corps combat zone was the southernmost military region in South Vietnam.

According to the Mobile Riverine Force Association (MRFA), 22 sailors from Donald's River Assault Division 111 were killed on river patrol from 1967 to 1969. When combining the four squadrons, there were 118 men who died while serving with the Mobile Riverine Force during the war. In all there were 2,558 Navy deaths among the 58,000+ US casualties.

The Tango was a 17-foot wide by 56-foot long boat that weighed approximately 60 tons with a top speed of 8-12 mph, depending on the tide and rate of flow. "Life on the boat was usually slow and dull. Our operations were from a day to over a

week long. Sometimes we just carried cargo from point A to B," Metts said.

"Don's job was gunner's mate and his primary weapon was a .50-caliber machine gun."

The Tango's 7-man crew "was not a really tight group, probably because of the fact we were from all over the country and the fact that the next fire fight might send you home stopped the building of friendships," Metts said. "For the most part, nobody talked about home. It was too hard to think about."

Still, the sailors appreciated "Don's quiet nature—he wasn't outspoken and didn't talk much about his family," Metts said. "We called him 'Whitey' because he had the lightest hair and skin that didn't tan too well."

Metts, a Granby, Texas resident, has a Texas license plate TANGO 111-2 with a Purple Heart "to honor Don and the mission in which he died." Metts attends the MRFA Biannual reunions dedicated to preserving the memories and sacrifices of the assault missions. "Win the Delta come Hell or low water" was their motto.

Donnie received the Purple Heart Medal as well as several other medals and ribbons, but his family has been unable to locate them. Personnel from the MRFA are assisting with this matter. The flag that was draped on his casket is the only item in the family's possession.

Memories of Donnie are still vivid among his cousins who contacted Adam Metts for his contribution to this tribute.

"Donnie was always a big brother to me," said cousin Bob "Robbie" Bruckart of San Diego. "Aunt Elizabeth (Donnie's mom) would always come get me and I'd spend the day with them running through the groves, building forts, riding bikes and everything else young boys did in those days."

"I learned a lot about building things, grading and the way water flows in ditches that I believe led me to becoming a civil engineer . . . as we got older, there was always work in the groves spraying weeds, digging ditches, hoeing weeds. Donnie taught me to work hard and save your money, except for a few beers."

Donnie went to San Bernardino Valley College and then San Jose State, majoring in engineering

until he got a draft notice and joined the Naval Reserves. He was moved to active duty status in 1968.

"I saw him a few days before he shipped out to Nam," said cousin Bob. "He was quite confident that he would be returning safe... He was always one to work hard and not look for the easy way out. I believe he volunteered for the river boats."

Donnie wrote to Bob a few times, "but he never mentioned the danger of his assignments."

"For many years after his death, I would dream he was still around," Bob said. "I missed him a ton. I often thought about how we would open a partnership in engineering someday."

Cousin Bill "Billy" Bruckart of San Jose was only about 12-years old when Donnie, then 21, shipped out but they had a special bond. "Donnie loved to ride horses . . . he would come to the house once or twice a week and we would saddle up and ride the hills east of Panorama Drive prior to sunset."

"Little did I imagine the thoughts that must have been going through his mind...contemplating the war and his responsibilities as a young man on the edge of being drafted," Bill said.

Donnie was serious about keeping in touch with his cousins, so much so that he drove 500 miles to visit Susie Bruckart Gran in Reno where she was attending college. That visit was their last. "I treasure that memory. His death was such a shock to our family. We just weren't prepared, but maybe he was, although we didn't talk about what could happen."

Although she was away at college, Susie said her family had assured her Donnie's enlistment in the Navy was the safest course at the time the ground war was raging. "So we sent Donnie off with guarded confidence that he'd be back."

He was buried with full military honors at Hillside Memorial Park in Redlands.

Second-cousin Sarah "Sally" Gregory of Missoula, Montana, said the impact of his death is difficult to describe. "I have a rubbing of Donnie's name from the Vietnam Wall and it always gives me spine tingles when I hold it. In our own ways, we still hold Donnie's memory in heart, in our bodies."

Donnie spent a summer at Sugar Pine Lodge, the Gregory cabin at Twin Peaks, California, working with cousins Tom Gregory, Bill, Bob and their uncles thinning trees. "I do remember Donnie's laugh and the fact that he was always kind to me," Sarah said. "My mother, Simmie, always said Donnie took after his sweet and gentle mother, Aunt Elizabeth." I agree.

Cousin Vicki Bruckart Hoekstra of San Juan Capistrano was impressed that Donnie didn't ignore his younger cousins. "We were just the little kids but he would pick us up and give us rides in his Model A rumble seat. That was so cool."

Vickie said the grief and sadness over Donnie's death consumed his parents. "It took a large chunk of their hearts. Uncle John and Aunt Elizabeth were never the same," she said. "Donnie was the pride of their life." ★



Don Bruckart 1968-1969

3-39 Company Kills 3, Finds Cache Enroute To Ambush

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

RACH KIEN—While proceeding into an ambush site 20 miles southeast of Saigon, Company C of the 3rd/39th Infantry scored an impressive haul killing three Viet Cong and unearthing a large cache of medical supplies, VC packs, AK-47 magazines and ammunition and enemy documents.

First contact with the enemy came as the 2nd

Platoon was moving to its predesigned ambush site. As the lead element of the platoon passed a nearby village, two Viet Cong darted out of a hut. The platoon opened fire, killing both VC and then recovering their carbine rifles.

Immediately after the brief skirmish, 15 to 20 VC fired on the platoon with small arms, automatic weapons, M-79s and B-40 rockets.

As the unit returned fire, the VC broke contact.

Nearly 3 hours later, contact was made once more with the elusive enemy element. When fire was returned, contact again was broken.

As a reinforcement platoon from the 3rd/39th moved to the besieged company, they too, engaged an

estimated 10 VC downing one of them.

Another company was assigned to serve as a blocking force, while artillery, gunships and airstrikes were called in to conclude the daylong engagement.

A sweep of the area produced the Viet Cong equipment. Friendly casualties during the action were reported as "light." ★

More Than 115 VC Killed in Street Fights at My Tho

Ninth Infantry Division The Old Reliable February 14, 1968, Page 1

My Tho—2 days of heavy house-to-house street fighting reminiscent of World War II action in European cities, produced more than 115 Viet Cong bodies February 2-3 in this embattled Capital of Dinh Tuong Province.

Three Main Force VC Battalions—the 261st, 263d and 514th—were routed from the beleaguered city, 5 miles east of Dong Tam, by infantrymen of the 9th Division's 2d Brigade, together with 7th ARVN Division.

Nine US soldiers were killed and 86 wounded in the deadly showdown for control of the city.

Contact erupted when members of the 3rd Battalion 47th Infantry and the 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry assaulted the enemy-held town on the afternoon of Feb. 1. The forward elements encountered heavy opposition as they entered the western section of the city.

The shattered remains of burned-out homes provided near-perfect concealment for guerrilla sniper squads.

Moving through the street, the 2nd Brigade soldiers were constantly under fire from VC small arms, automatic weapons and grenades. But each time the enemy tried to pin the Reliables down in a crossfire, the 9th Division troops countered with heavy volumes of rockets, grenades and machine gun fire, gaining fire superiority and uprooting the insurgents from their hide-outs.

The action boiled over as US and VC forces contested each house and street, with the Communists slowly losing ground.

At one point during the seething clash, a squad from the 3rd/47th was trapped by overwhelming sniper fire and suffering casualties. The rest of the company was only one street behind, but could not reach their comrades through the battered houses.

In a frantic attempt to rescue the wounded men, a platoon leader sprinted through a hail of bullets and jumped into an civilian automobile parked on the street.

With the engine roaring and bullets riddling the car, he sent it hurtling toward the row of buildings separating him from the wounded men.

Smashing through the walls to the opposite side while VC machine gunners kept firing at the vehicle, he pulled up to the wounded men, loaded them aboard and sped back through the holocaust.

US artillery plastered the enemy positions, inflicting death and burning away his cover.

At dawn the Old Reliables stormed into the center of the city and overpowered the remaining pockets of enemy resistance.

By noon the last elements of the three VC battalions had been evicted from My Tho. ★

Three Stranded Soldiers Survive Terror-Filled Night Amid Bombs, Miniguns, Rockets And Enemy Battalion

**By SGT Dewey Noble, Staff Writer
Ninth Infantry Division
The Old Reliable
July 3, 1968, Page 3**

"We Felt Like We Didn't Have A Chance!"

BINH CHANH—Isolated from their company amid a VC battalion, three 9th Division soldiers survived a night of terror in which they were shot at, bombed and strafed by miniguns and rockets.

The men are Private First Class Edwin S. Carpenter, 22, of Sag Harbor, NY, PFC Mauricio Guerra, 22, of Lubbock, TX, and PFC Clifford Byers, 25, of Texarkana, AR.

They were with the 5th Mechanized Battalion, 60th Infantry, May 13 when it became embroiled in vicious fighting with a VC battalion about 5 miles south of Saigon. The enemy unit was one of many trying to storm the capital city.

As fighting waned during the early afternoon, Carpenter said he and five other men volunteered for a small patrol to search a wood line for a dead buddy.

"We found the man and a machine gunner set up security for us nearby," Carpenter recalled. "We were just starting to bring him back when bullets began thudding all around us. One of our men was wounded in the left thigh and the five of us jumped into a ditch for cover."

Other company elements began returning fire and a heavy battle was soon in full fury. Enemy fire increased as they brought in more men and the 5th/60th regrouped.

"The wounded guy had been bleeding for about 45 minutes and we tried everything to stop it," Carpenter said. "We had to get him out of there so Byers put him on his back. Guerra took point and I covered the rear. We just got out of the ditch when the ground exploded with bullets and rockets all around us. We had to fall back. There was no chance."

Soon it was dark and the men tried to comfort their wounded companion, telling him that a track would soon be there to pick them up. A few minutes later they heard a track start and then another.

"When we heard the rest of the company start up, we were hit with a dreaded thought—they were pulling out," Carpenter said.

"The three of us realized that we had to work together as a

team," he said. "It was our responsibility to get the wounded man medical attention and to get ourselves out of the middle of all those VC. Flares were all over the sky and we hoped something would happen soon."

And it did. Two silhouettes appeared against the flare-lit sky and the three men realized the VC were looking for them. The men lay on their backs, protect-

“ We didn’t
want to accept
the fact that he
was dead
so we tried
everything we
could think of
to revive him ”

ing their unconscious wounded friend and keeping their weapons pointed toward the figures.

"I guess they were looking for their own dead and wounded," Carpenter recalled. "I was about ready to shoot them when they suddenly turned and walked away."

He said the three then decided to get out despite the enemy presence and were picking up the wounded man when they realized he was dead.

"We didn't want to accept the fact that he was dead so we tried everything we could think of to revive him," Carpenter said. "But all failed. We had to face the truth."

He said the men took off all equipment and emptied their pockets of everything that rattled. Then, carrying only their sling less rifles and a few magazines, they crawled up the dike and started for the edge of the woodline. When they reached the woodline, flares began popping all over the area.

"Then the Air Force began bombing and strafing the area," Carpenter recalled. "We realized we had been moving toward the impact area, toward the enemy. Luckily there was a huge indentation in the ground and we crawled into it to escape all the debris and fragments that were hitting all around us."

After 15 minutes of air strikes, the jets finally left but the men

stayed in the 15-foot deep hole listening for enemy movement.

"We decided that everything was quiet and had just started climbing out of the hole when two helicopter gunships dove in and started ripping the area," Carpenter said. We changed our position to the opposite side of the hole. This proved to be a lifesaving move because we had no sooner shifted than miniguns stitched a deadly pattern across the place we had been sitting. At times rockets passed only 15 to 20 feet over our heads, smashing directly behind us. By this time we felt like we didn't have a chance. We knew how the VC must feel when we rain hell on them."

But the siege wasn't over even after the gunships left. Artillery and mortars began pounding the area. The barrage continued for what Carpenter said seemed like hours until it finally tapered off about 3 a.m.

"After it had been quiet for an hour, we pulled out," Carpenter recalled.

Carpenter said they had been walking for about 15 minutes when they found tracks left in the mud by the APCs. They studied the ground and began following the trail.

"We had walked about 400 meters when, all of a sudden, we saw the silhouettes of APC antennae outlined against the sky," Carpenter said excitedly. "But we didn't know whether we should walk toward them in the dark. We could be mistaken for VC and shot."

"Maybe it was a foolish idea but we decided to go in. We made ourselves as conspicuous as possible, walking right down the middle of that rice paddy standing tall and as proud as we could be."

The daring stunt worked. The three were immediately spotted but their "standing tall and proud" identified them as American soldiers. The no-fire order was given and the three relieved men walked into the perimeter.

"We felt like we were on the winning team in the World Series," Carpenter smiled. "We jumped up and down and hugged each other. It was out of this world, a really fabulous moment. The first sergeant and the company commander came down. It was like a miracle and no one could believe we had made it." ★

Ha Tien!!! Advance Tactical Support Base

Ha Tien was an advance Brown Water Navy Base at the end of the Vinh Te Canal on the west coast of Vietnam. It is adjacent to Cambodia and about as West as you can get on the mainland of Vietnam. Like the Seafloat area and the Vinh Te canal it is known for trouble.



Ha Tien. Photo courtesy of Tom Lefavour



Bay at Ha Tien. Photo 1 courtesy of Tom Lefavour



Bay at Ha Tien. Photo 2 courtesy of Tom Lefavour



A Sea Wolf Huey performs medivac duties at Ha Tien. Photo courtesy of Tom Lefavour



The small advance tactical support base of Ha Tien. Photo courtesy of Tom Lefavour



Ha Tien tactical support base (ATSB) after an attack in 1970. Photo 1 courtesy of Kenneth Bucho



Ha Tien tactical support base (ATSB) after an attack in 1970. Photo 2 courtesy of Kenneth Bucho



Ha Tien tactical support base (ATSB) after an attack in 1970. Photo 3 courtesy of Kenneth Bucho



Ha Tien tactical support base (ATSB) after an attack in 1970. Photo 4 courtesy of Kenneth Bucho

VC Snipers Felled From Trees At Vinh Long Airfield

By SP4 Tom Farley, Staff Writer

Ninth Infantry Division *The Old Reliable* March 13, 1968, Page 3

VINH LONG—The moon shining dimly through an overcast night sky, illuminated the cratered battlefield.

Two dark figures stealthily picked their way through rolls of concertina wire and along dried out streams beds that wound across the landscape.

Armed with a starlight scope and a rifle with telescopic sight, the two 9th Division soldiers from Company D 34rd/47th Infantry, edged silently toward an abandoned tower

overlooking a Viet Cong-held tree line.

Earlier on Feb 6, as Company D was setting up night defensive positions around the Vinh Long airfield, sniper rounds cracked and rifle grenades exploded from the wood line.

Sgt Allen Little 19 of Taylorsville, NC, and Sgt Joaquin DeLeon 21 of Chesapeake, VA, downed their C-ration supper and moved out to get the sniper.

Later, as the rest of the company waited in firing position, the two

Sgts scrambled up a rotted ladder and into the partly destroyed tower.

"While Little scanned the tree line with the scope, I shoved a magazine full of tracers into my rifle," said DeLeon. "I not only wanted to hit the sniper but also mark his position so the men on the perimeter could blast the area."

Little observing in, around and behind every tree in the woodline, soon caught a flicker of movement in one of the biggest trees.

"I was staring at a spot and seeing nothing," Little recalled.

"Suddenly there was movement and I spotted him. He was there all the time."

More movement caught Little's eye and where there was only one, three figures were silhouetted in the green haze of the starlight scope.

"I lined the crosshairs of the telescopic sight up on the point where we spotted the first snipers." DeLeon recalled.

Squeezing the trigger, DeLeon sent a stream of glowing tracers into the tree. There was a dull thud as the first sniper fell.

With the target marked, the entire company opened up with grenade launchers and machineguns.

The holocaust lasted only moments then silence returned. ★

Does this place still stink?

**By Edward G. Sanicki SGT
E-51st Platoon, Delta Co
2nd/60th Inf (03/69-01/70)**

Strangely enough, one of the choicest details a sergeant in my unit could pull was escorting GIs, who were trying for a "Section 8" discharge, to Saigon for their mental examinations.

Occasionally, the battalion would produce a soldier who wanted out of the infantry so badly as to claim they were becoming mentally unbalanced (Picture M*A*S*Hs Klinger, but without the wardrobe). In setting up their case, the GIs unfailingly had to break at least a few military rules. The patient was therefore a prisoner and the Sergeant, armed with a .45 caliber pistol, a guard. Whether the soldier had any real hope of being relieved, the trip was generally considered to be a vacation by both the prisoner and his keeper. And, since as likely as not, they had fought side-by-side during their early months in-country, not many formalities were kept—the prisoner knew the guard was enjoying his time away from base camp and the guard knew the prisoner had no place to go.

On the one occasion when I pulled this escort duty, no transport from the battalion was headed into the city, so I had to improvise. I picked up my prisoner at dawn and went down to the base camp's main gate. I knew that each morning two jeeps followed the mine-sweeping crews that checked for any explosives set by the VC the night before on the dirt road between our compound and the main highway. Banking in on the fraternity of sergeants, I was able to get the patrol's leader to give us the two seats in the back of one of the vehicles.

At the understandably slow-walking pace of troops with mine detectors, we gradually traversed the distance to the highway without incident. This leg of the trip took quite some time, but it was a

beautiful day and I was happy for the chance to soak up the view. Vietnam is actually quite a lovely place. On fair weather days, I remember the Mekong Delta as being a place of verdant fields and jungles topped by a crystal clear azure sky.

There was always a knot of peddlers at the junction of the battalion road and the highway. Had the war ended differently I'm sure there would be a 7-Eleven there today (remember the three rules of real estate: location, location, location). This was the turnaround point for the road sweepers, who were now free to bounce back to headquarters at top speed to catch their lunches in the mess hall. The junction was also a natural stopping point for truck convoys using the highway as well. Attracted by the peddlers, they stopped to pick up Cokes, pineapple slices dipped in salt (the Vietnamese love it that way, but we never could convince them that we didn't), and whatever contraband the individual favored.

We were able to get a lift with the first set of trucks headed in the right direction. By evening, the convoy had reached its destination, the huge Bien Hoa Replacement Depot on the outskirts of Saigon. The next day, they'd be carrying a nice big bunch of FNGs to their assigned units. Since travel at night was dangerous and because I was familiar with the Repo Depot from my own initial in-country processing, I requested and was granted billeting for the night for my prisoner and myself. Like any other US military encampment, the Repo Depot was fortified and guarded. Since once evening fell, you were effectively locked in, I told my prisoner where to meet me in the morning and headed off to the NCO Club.

Here, quite unexpectedly, I ran into three other Sergeants from my own company who were going to be rotated home the next day. To say they were in a party mood is just a

“ **My earliest
remembrance...
was the stink. As a
new guy I couldn't
figure it out. What
was that awful
smell? The jungle?
Napalm?** ”

bit of an understatement. Of course I joined them, vicariously enjoying their impending freedom while mentally going over the number of days I still had left. Every GI I ever met in Vietnam knew exactly how many days he had before DEROS—his Date of Estimated Rotation from Over Seas. Those who had completed most of their yearlong tour were called Short Timers, but there were plenty of so-called Short-Timer Calendars hung on bunker walls that still had nearly all of their 365 little boxes to be slowly colored in.

Anyway, the four of us were sitting on benches at one end of a long trestle table. Four "Sudden Sergeants" sat down at the other end. You could tell without asking. Hell, you could tell without even being much interested. They were so clean! Their uniforms were still stiff and unfaded. The blacking on the toes of their boots hadn't been scoured off yet. And their eyes were so wide! They needed a drink a good deal more than we did.

Let me explain. As the result of the attrition rate in infantry units, there was always a high premium placed on experienced NCOs. Additionally, since the infantry was largely made up of draftees with a 2-year service requirement, with only a year of that in Vietnam, it was common for a soldier to come up through the ranks to Sergeant only

a month or two before his DEROS. As soon as he got his stripes, he was gone. So the Army instituted a stateside training program that pulled individuals out of the normal training cycle just after their Advanced Individual Training. Then, following an additional 6 weeks of classes, they were shipped to Vietnam as Sergeants...having never lead anyone, anywhere. Called Sudden Sergeants or Shake 'n' Bakes, they didn't receive a great deal of respect from those of us who had earned our stripes in months of fighting. But, given enough time, they either made the grade or fell by the wayside at about the normal rate of success.

It isn't surprising that at moments of great transition, like leaving Vietnam for home, folks tend to reminisce. That's exactly what my buddies and I were doing. Among veteran infantry Sergeants reminiscences tend to be somewhat gory, especially if the amount of liquor consumed is appropriate to the importance of the occasion. The FNGs were trying to be unobtrusive, as they had damn well better be, but were hanging on every word. I was sitting closest to them and after a few drinks one of them screwed up enough guts to ask me a question.

They were all going to be assigned to their units the next day and were eager for any information about what difference it might make to their futures between going to the Delta, the DMZ, the highlands or wherever. He had seen by our insignia that we were from the 9th Infantry Division. We were Delta soldiers and he wanted to know how tough it was in our Area of Operations. I'm pretty sure I ruined his evening when I told him, quite truthfully, that between myself and my buddy across the table we had a total of six Purple Hearts. I have to say that I think my partner

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Viet Cong Attack Xom Cau After 5-60 Joins Coronado V

**By SP5 Mike Renshaw,
Staff Writer
Ninth Infantry Division
The Old Reliable
September 27, 1967,
Page 7**

XOM CAU—The Viet Cong returned.

It was a brief encounter and the enemy was beaten back, but the attack proved to the villagers here that the VC have not conceded defeat in the fight for control of this hamlet.

Soldiers from the 5th Mechanized Battalion, 60th Infantry had wrested the

village of Thanh Phu Long from a Viet Cong stranglehold and 2 months ago elements of the battalion moved right into the hamlet of Xom Cau to provide security so residents could live and work without the continual threat of enemy terrorism.

Villagers returned. The market reopened. Commerce increased.

The mechanized infantrymen moved out temporarily to take part in Operation CORONADO V.

Two days later (Sept. 15), the VC attacked the village.

Hamlet security during the absence of the Americans had been left to the Vietnamese 848th Regional Forces Company.

When the enemy probed the small outpost on the outskirts of the village at sundown Friday, the Regional Forces soldiers returned a heavy volume of fire. After 30 minutes, the enemy withdrew.

One RF soldier died in the encounter and another was seriously wounded. Enemy losses are unknown.

Army of the Republic of Vietnam officials estimated

the enemy force at platoon size.

Captain Richard L. Weber of Sharon, PA, Intelligence officer for the 5th-60th, speculated that the platoon was part of the 313th Viet Cong Company that has been reported working in the Xom Cau area.

Analyzing the action, Captain Tommie G. Copeland, battalion Civil Affairs officer, said, "I'm sure the VC realize that even though we weren't physically in Xom Cau, we certainly don't plan to let them take it back. The RF soldiers sure gave

the VC a fight they weren't expecting."

Copeland said the 5th-60th will return to the hamlet as soon as CORONADO V mop up operations are completed.

"Sure, the VC have more sabotage and harassment plans," he continued. "We're finding various types of enemy propaganda leaflets on the road to Xom Cau and even in the hamlet; but whenever they try again, we'll be ready for them." ★

Magpies Over the Delta; Greetings from 'Down Under'

Bob Howe Former Flight Lieutenant and Bombing Leader No 2 Squadron RAAF
Phan Rang (May 69-May 70)

Readers might like to know a little about Australia's contribution to the war in Vietnam in close partnership with our great mates, you Americans. More than 50,000 Aussies served in Vietnam from 1962 to 1972, with our main Army contingent, the Australian Task Force (ATF) responsible for operations in Phuoc Thuy Province. We lost over 500 killed in action.

Our Royal Australian Navy (RAN) contributed ships offshore, clearance divers and a bunch of Navy aviators, who with their ground crews, served with the 135th Assault Helicopter Company known as "Emus" that stood for Experimental Military Unit as well as being an Australian bird similar to an ostrich; they flew UH-1 Hueys in the Mekong Delta from 1967 to 1971 with great distinction.

The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) put three flying squadrons into the conflict, No 9 Squadron with Hueys supporting the ATF from Vung Tau, No 35 Squadron also at Vung Tau flying "Walaby Airlines" Caribous within the USAF air transport system and my unit was No 2 Squadron, part of the USAF's 35th Tactical Fighter Wing. Some RAAF fighter pilots also served as Forward



No. 2 Squadron Crest
Air Controllers (FACs) in Vietnam.

No 2 Squadron RAAF was formed in 1916 and fought in both World Wars. In 1958, the squadron left Australia for Malaysia on counter-terrorist operations with British forces and stayed there until April 1967 when its Canberra jet bombers flew across to Phan Rang Air Base in Central Vietnam for a 4-year stay. The bird on our squadron crest is an Australian magpie and thus our radio call sign was "Magpie."

The Canberra jet was designed in England in the 1950s as a high altitude bomber. The United States took the design to produce the B-57 dive-bomber, coincidentally based at Phan Rang as well. "Magpies" were tasked daily by HQ 7th Air Force on fringed missions as with other U.S. tactical fighters; however, our Canberras were different. We didn't carry guns or rockets, only bombs, usually four M-117



Canberra Jet Bomber

750 pounders in the bomb-bay with one on either wing-tip. Our way of operating was literally straight out of a World War II scenario. As a bomb aimer, I crawled through a narrow tunnel past my pilot to lay down flat on my stomach, looking through a Plexiglas window in the Canberra's nose, directing the pilot to steer left or right as the target came under the crosshairs of my bomb-sight. You would be right to think that we were crazy to unstrap from the safety of a Martin-Baker ejection seat to drop our bombs but that was the way the aircraft was designed and that's what we did.

And we got results, especially in the Mekong Delta where we could fly over and along the narrow canals accurately placing a stick of six bombs one after the other in a line. If the weather was lousy, we could fly below the cloud and still get our bombs away, whereas dive bombers would have to find other targets.

We never lost an aircraft in IV Corps as the Canberra could

absorb small arms fire fairly well. Disregarding danger zones around our exploding bombs when we came across troops-in-contact (TIC) situations, we were occasionally our own worst enemy. On one IV Corps mission after a low-level bomb drop, it wasn't until we had landed back at base that we discovered a hole in our port wing fuel tank with a sizeable chunk of a M-117 bomb inside. Fortunately, the Canberra used inert nitrogen purging as fuel was used in flight and we didn't blow up.

Our IV Corps missions involved LZ Preps in the U Minh Forest or around VC Lake and ranging across to the Three Sisters and the Seven Sisters/Mountains.

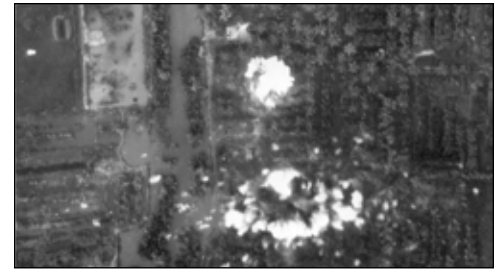
Against enemy base camps comprising bunkers or hootches, we had good results, often triggering secondary explosions. One "Magpie" in 1968 was even lucky enough to be given an NVA/VC ship in a sizable waterway as a target and blew it sky high, while other targets included radio stations, sampans, tax collectors,

burned their shit. Fifty-five gallon drums were cut in half and shoved under each hole in every latrine. Each morning across the country details would go out, flip up the back skirting from the latrines, pull out those big buckets, throw in a gallon or so of diesel fuel and set it afire.

After 9 months I guess I had grown accustomed to the smell, because the only question I could think of asking him was, "Does this place still stink?"

His jaw dropped and he just stared at me. He had been struck speechless. The guy was actually more impressed that I had acclimated to such a point as to be completely unaware of the stench around us than he was by any of the war stories he'd heard that evening.

The next morning I met my prisoner; we had a little breakfast and then headed into Saigon. ★



Secondary Explosion

rice mills as well as active VC companies.

Unfortunately, we never came into direct contact with you riverine guys who were performing so well in the Delta as we were controlled by USAF FACs, usually "David" FACs out of Binh Thuy until mid-1969 and then VNAF FACs. But we certainly saw you as we flew overhead. I recall seeing armed convoys approaching the coastline from the Gulf of Thailand, we looked down in awe at the strange constructions in the rivers that

were obviously part of SEALORDS and on a number of missions we were advised that we were supporting Swift boat operations. If requested, we even "beat up" friendly bases at Ca Mau and elsewhere after dropping our bombs.

So if anyone saw a strange grey shape cruising low overhead the Mekong Delta at around 300 knots disgorging a load of bombs, it may well have been a "Magpie."

Best wishes to you all from Uc-Dai-Loi (Australia). ★

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STINK

Continued from previous page

went a bit over the top when he chimed in, "Hell boy, we use 'em for poker chips!"

For just a moment there, I thought I could hear the sound of our little audience's bowels loosening in response. But I did have one question for him. Nine months before it had been at the airfield adjacent to this same Bien Hoa Repo Depot where I had first touched down. My earliest remembrance, even before I got out of the plane door, was of the stink. As a new guy I couldn't figure it out. What was that awful smell? The jungle? Napalm? Nothing in my military or civilian lives smelled anything like it. Of course the simple fact was that in Vietnam the US forces

WILL WE REMEMBER?

Who will we remember,
On Memorial Day, this year?
The list grows longer every day

With names of loved ones
lost, no longer here.

Will we remember one of
the daring Doughboys,

Who perished in a muddy,
gas-filled trench?

One of a hundred thousand
who did not return,

We sent him "Over There,"
to help the French.

Will we recall our heroes
of World War II?

They fought in many
lands, in the air, at sea.

Nearly half a million
gave up their lives,

To keep us safe and
free from tyranny.

Will we remember Korea,
"The Forgotten War,"

And the Soldier who died
taking Pork Chop Hill?

One of tens of thousands
who paid the price;

And one of the many
who are missing still.

Will we remember just
one special name,

One of those engraved on
that cold black wall?

One of over fifty thousand
gallant souls,

Who in South Vietnam did
bravely fight... and fall.

Will we recall that dreadful,
grim September day,

The day the Towers fell
and thousands died?

The day that terrorism
showed its ugly face,

The day that Lady Liberty
bowed her head... and cried.

Will we remember those
lost most recently,

In the Afghan hills, on
Middle Eastern sands?

Our troops protect our
freedom and our way of life,

As they fight and die
in foreign lands.

Will we remember them?

We will remember them,
each and every one,

And we salute them all
with heartfelt praise.

We will honor their courage,
their pain and sacrifice.

Not just for today, but
for all our days.

Supporting MRF Operations Floating Artillery Intimidates Enemy

By SP4 Don Drumm, Staff Writer

Ninth Infantry Division *The Old Reliable* December 27, 1967

DONG TAM—105-mm howitzers echo throughout the watery Mekong Delta during every 2d Brigade operations. Two batteries of the 3rd/34th Artillery live and work off barges that operate in dozens of Delta rivers and canals.

Often the artillery, towed in by M-8 landing craft piloted by the 109th Transportation Company of Vung Tau, precede the infantry troops carriers (ATCs-Navy) into an area and set up a fire support base before the Infantry's assault.

Intimidated by lethal rounds that large howitzers can fire directly at the banks of the rivers, the enemy often spares the artillery boats and opens up on the infantry, only to get pounded by the howitzers.

This was the case on Dec. 4, in Operation CORONADO IX. A VC attack on the Vietnamese Marine and elements of the 3rd/47th Infantry, touched off a fierce fight in which 250 Viet Cong were killed, many by artillery already set up in the area.

"Our six howitzers fired 1,200 rounds that day," recalled Captain James L. Noyes of Honolulu, Commander of Battery C. "Our barges were anchored on the river banks and they seldom stopped firing."

Five days later, Batteries B and C pulled out of Dong Tam shortly after midnight to support another operation in the same area. Each battery took three barges, with two howitzers apiece, towed by M-8 landing craft that doubled as fire direction centers and command posts. In addition, the battalion headquarters went out with its fire direction center, command post, medical boat with helipad (ATC-H Navy) and a special boat for possible detainees.

The artillerymen live right on their barges and landing craft, only a few feet from the guns they must be ready to fire 24 hours a day.

At dawn the boats pushed the barges onto a beach 28 miles west of Dong Tam, and the soldiers scurried out with anchors and aiming stakes. Within a few minutes, the barges were secure and the howitzers were registered to fire at suspected enemy positions on the opposite shore.

The boats then moved to positions just upriver, close to the battalion headquarters boats and, still farther upstream, Battery B.

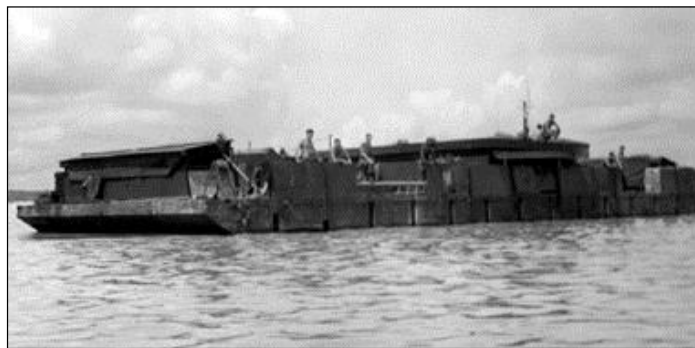
Artillery fire prepared to objective for the arrival of the Infantry, who found nothing but holes from exploding howitzer shells. The artillery was quiet the rest of the day.

Although it would have been desirable to relocate in mid-afternoon, the tide went out and both barges and boats found themselves high and dry on the muddy banks. A few artillerymen took off their boots and waded in the ankle-deep mud to improve the paint job on the vessels.

"Most of our boats were built around 1950, but some may go back to WW II with a few major repairs in Okinawa since," said Staff Sergeant James January 26, of St. Hellens, OR, platoon sergeant in the 109th Transportation Company.

High water returned shortly past midnight. The barges, afloat again, were pulled 11 miles farther upstream, past the ships of the Mobile Riverine Force and to the area of the Dec. 4, action. This time they tied up on the same shore they planned to fire on because an open field, rather than tall trees, lined the beach and the howitzers would be able to register on target without backing off across the stream.

B-52 airstrikes and artillery fire once again softened up the area for the infantry but the VC evidently had not returned to the area after their defeat on the 4th. ★



Over 2,000 VC Slain in Long An Enterprise Ends After 13 Months

Ninth Infantry Division *The Old Reliable* March 27, 1968

LONG THANH—More than 2,000 Viet Cong were killed in the 9th Division's long-term Operation ENTERPRISE, which ended March 11.

In addition the many-faceted operation in sprawling Long An Province produced more than 1,000 detainees and 35 Hoi Chanh (Government returnees).

In their drive to eliminate enemy tactical positions, 3rd Brigade units destroyed 8,500 enemy bunkers, confiscated 190 tons of rice, captured 250,000 small arm rounds, and flushed 111 feet of tunneling. A quantity of captured

enemy documents have helped piece together an extremely comprehensive intelligence report on the enemy situation in the province.

The Viet Cong also 752 recoilless rifle rounds, 367 sampans, 703 grenades and 129 of medical supplies.

Twenty-eight roadblocks were knocked out.

When the operation began in February 1967, the VC controlled many areas of the province. Roads were cut; district capitals were isolated; and the countryside was largely abandoned to the Viet

Cong who moved freely to dominate the rural population

The situation has changed markedly. Roads and waterways are now open; once-deserted villages are reoccupied; Viet Cong-controlled hamlets have reverted to Government control; and thousands of acres of land have put back into producing rice.

The scars of battle are slowly being erased as Long An Province once again become a productive element of the Government of Vietnam. ★

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VC Battalion Fails Attempt to Overrun 2nd-60th Outpost Enterprise Ends After 13 Months

Ninth Infantry Division The Old Reliable December 27, 1967

TAN TRU—At least 15 Viet Cong were slain and eight of their weapons captured as a result of simultaneous attacks on three 9th Division camps in the Mekong Delta, Sunday Dec. 10.

The enemy slugged An Nhut Tan, Tan Tru, and Rach Kien at about 4 a.m. with what were first thought to be mortars, but later identified as RPG rounds.

The heaviest fighting raged at a forward command post at An Nhut Tan, where an estimated VC battalion was driven off by Company A 2nd/60th Infantry, aided by 9th Aviation Battalion gunships and artillery.

At one point during the 2-hour clash, the intruders had overrun three bunkers on the south side of the camp, only to be ejected in no-holds-barred, hand-to-hand combat encounters.

Private First Class Loren W. Dupuy of Pasadena, CA, who was on guard duty at one of the bunkers described the close quarter action.

"When I heard explosions and small arms fire coming in, I took up position on the right side of our bunker and started firing my M-60 machine gun." At the same time Dupuy recalled PFC Mark W. Ramey, of Elkhorn City, KY, and an ARVN soldier, took up positions on the left.

The VC had already taken over the bunker to our right and were matching our every burst of my machine gun with RPG rockets," Dupuy continued.

"We kept firing at the advancing VC, but they still managed to overrun the bunker on our left and cut us off from the CP completely."

Shortly after, Ramey observed Lieutenant Joel N. Shreenan, of Buffalo, NY, 3rd Platoon leader Company A, assault one of the overrun bunkers with grenades.

Seven American soldiers were killed in the fighting. ★



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.

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

Baptism to Combat—July 11, 1967

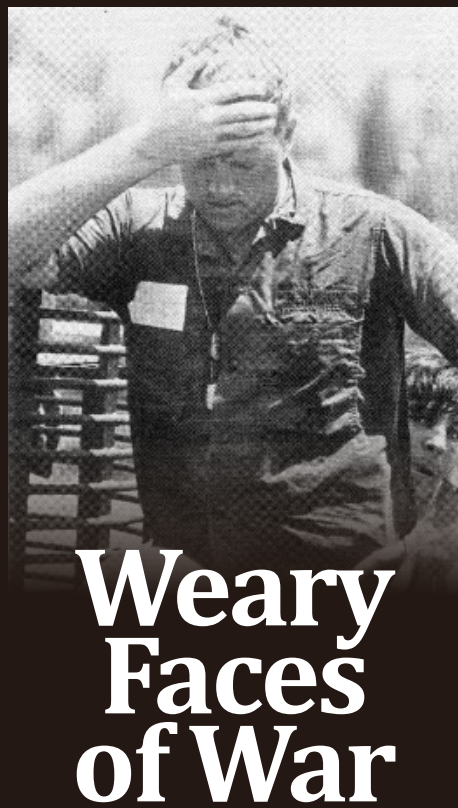
By Dave Nelson, Alpha Company
Written February 12, 2014

I was assigned as an M-60 Machine Gunner's assistant that fateful day and, although long ago now, it was my first taste of actual combat with real bullets fired at me. We were on a battalion-size operation with the various infantry companies spread all over many rice paddies in the Mekong Delta on what seemed like another long hot and boring mission when all of a sudden our world tipped upside down in an instant.

BOOM! A Viet Cong claymore mine or a satchel charge exploded followed by automatic rifle and machine gun fire coming directly at us. As I was hitting the ground, I saw several of our soldiers getting hit by enemy bullets. The shattering noise would barely describe the heavy volume of enemy fire and the stinking smell of gun powder filled the air as we fired back at a tree line filled with enemy fighters.

Surprise and confusion was soon replaced by anger and fear as a real slugfest developed. After the initial burst of fire our troops, lying in the prone position all over that rice paddy, tried to be as small as possible while enemy mortar rounds began dropping in on us. Screams for medic could be heard everywhere and I vividly recall one brave medic who never got lower than a crouch going from one wounded soldier to the next and never receiving so much as scratch. He stood out like a lone cue ball on a pool table, but he did his job without hesitation.

Pretty soon, our artillery and jet air strikes began to take control of the situation but that battle cost Alpha and Charlie Companies 7 KIAs and a number of WIAs along with a pile of dead Viet Cong fighters. July 11 proved to be quite an introduction to combat duty in the Mekong Delta wouldn't you say? ★



Weary Faces of War



Above Left: The faces of these weary MRF sailors reflect the intensity of the combat they have experienced. By 1968, the Viet Cong had become adept at ambushing the MRF units and inflicting heavy casualties on the Americans. Above Right: Army medics and fellow soldiers help wounded troopers return to the river assault craft after a fierce battle ashore.

TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One



Turner



Turner

Member **Dean E. "Fritz" Turner** passed away in December 2016. Fritz was stationed on the USS Brule AKL-28 (10/66-10/68). At the time of his death, he was residing in Stockton, California.



Slater

Member **Thomas F. Slater** passed away December 14, 2016, after a long and courageous fight against cancer. Thomas was stationed on the USS Hampshire County LST-819 (01/67-12/69). You may contact the family c/o Barbara Jean, PO Box 871, Napanoch, NY 12458-0871, 845-647-3196, super3267@yahoo.com.



Phillips

Member **Patrick Thomas Phillips** passed away March 6, 2017. Patrick served on A-112-3

(05/66-12/68). You may contact the family c/o Carolyn Phillips, 303 Henryville Bluelick Rd, Henryville, IN 47126-8587, 812-294-3464.



Watts

Member **Cliff Watts** passed away April 17, 2017. Cliff served on-board the USS White River LSMR-536 (10/65-03/68). Cliff was a long-time member of the MRFA. You may contact the family c/o Alice Watts, 368 Connor Cir, Evans, GA 30809-6100, 706-738-7640, cli.watts@yahoo.com. May our brother Cliff rest in peace and in God's hands.



Brown

Member CPT **Kenneth Lee Brown** passed away August 3, 2016. Kenneth served with A Co. 3rd/60th Inf. (10/67-07/68). You may contact the family c/o Juanita Brown, 648 Glenway Dr, Hamilton, OH 45013-3560, 513-895-3812, softball_jcb@yahoo.com. *Ken loved the reunions and everyone associated with MRFA and the 9th Division.*

Member **Robert H. Stoner** passed away March 1, 2017. Robert was stationed on the USS Nueces APB-40 (03/69-01/70). You may contact the family c/o Joan Whitner, 4444 N Brendenwood Rd, Apt 318, Rockford, IL 61107-2268.

Plankowner Member **William G. Stewart** passed away in 2016. Willie served with A Co. 4th/47th Inf. (10/67-10/68). You may contact the family c/o Ursula Stewart, 1915 Shawnee St, Leavenworth, KS 66048-1631.



Saboe

Member **James O. Saboe** passed away January 22, 2016. James served with C Co. 3rd/47th Inf. (02/69-07/69). You may contact the family c/o Mary Saboe, 4208 Nawadaha Blvd, Minneapolis, MN 55406-4033.



Arbogast

William J. Arbogast passed away March 20, 2017. Bill served as a BM2 on Tango-131-5 and RAID-72 (03/69-03/70). You may contact the family c/o Cynthia Arbogast, 5825 Teakwood Ln N Apt H, Minneapolis, MN 55442-1595. *Bill was a good shipmate and a good person and will be missed.*



Nichols

Barbara Ann Nichols passed away March 12, 2017. Barbara is the wife of member Bob

Nichols who served in B Co. 3rd/60th 9th Infantry Division Vietnam. You may contact Bob at 223 Cheyenne Ridge Trail, Campobello, SC 29322-9198. May our Sister rest in peace.



Covey

Member **Gary Covey** passed away April 17, 2017. Gary served on A-132-3 and Z-131-1 (08/68-07/69). You may contact the family c/o Rebecca Covey, 13437 E Chapel Rd, Solsberry, IN 47459-6012, 812-825-9645, recovey@indiana.edu.

Larry D. Long passed away May 10, 2016. Larry served in B Co 2nd/60th 9th Infantry Division (09/67-06/69). You may contact the family c/o Joan A. Long, 8546 Merribrook Dr, Sacramento, CA 95826. May our brother Larry Rest in Peace.



Fetting



Fetting

Member **Ted F. Fetting** passed away April 1, 2017. Ted served with B Co. 2nd/60th 9th Inf Div (10/67-02/68). At the time of his death, he was residing in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

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 Tago 112-11 (02/68-02/69)
William Blausner for Thomas Gaudet, David Land, and Jose Campos our 151 Division brothers that were KIA's
Maj General Lucien Bolduc, Jr. USA (Ret) for Guy Tutwiler
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Brothers of the 2nd/47th Inf for all Army and Navy KIA's
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John and Doris Chrzanoski in memory of SP4 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 name in country music, 1937-2016
Fran Divilbiss for Cdr. Dave Divilbiss, Supply Officer on Staff COMRIVFLOT ONE, USS Benewah APB-35 (1966-68)
Dennis Erlanson in memory of Fran Convery C & D Cos. 3rd/47th (1968)
Ted Fetting for Eloy "Stevie" LeBlanc, Roy Phillips, and Fred Jansoni B Co. 2nd/60th KIA 02/02/68
Sgt Robert Raige for SP4 Robert "Bob" Jenks E Co. 3rd/60th KIA 03/03/68
Nan Fulton for Lt Gen 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 Grier 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
Dave Justin for Robert "Bobby" Scharnick A Co 2nd Platoon 3rd/60th and Dennis McDougall 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 "Morto" 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
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 KIA's of the MRF (1967-70)
Ken Sundberg for Michael David Sheahan 5th/60th KIA 02/25/68, Robert L. Conley 5th/60th KIA 02/01/68, and Glenn Dean Taylor 5th/60th KIA 02/01/68
Robert Sutton for LT James F. Rost Jr. Vin Te Canal Chau Duc KIA 11/69
Okay Toothman in memory of Sgt Dick Arnold A Co. 3rd/47th, Max Delacruz and G. P. Jones C Co. 3rd/47th
Okay 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



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