



# River Currents



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## From the Galley

Fellow members and spouses I'm hoping each and every one of you had a great Holiday Season and everything you asked for you received and I hope everyone got through all this crazy weather we had during the winter months. Here in the foothills of North Carolina it was somewhat cooler than past winters. We did get some snow here in Conover, close to 10 inches and everything closes down for 3 or 4 days. Actually if the weather person even mentions snow here everyone makes a run to the store and buy out all the bread and milk. It's nothing to see a family of three purchase four gallons of milk, four loaves of bread, and many more items. This is when it's just a mention of snow. Everyone goes in a panic mood when it does snow. We don't get that much snow here but when we do folks who are not use to it go out and drive like crazy. Sara and I rather stay home. I believe we had 50 or 60 fender benders here locally so to be on the safe side we don't get out in it.



Al Moore

As for the Association we're still kicking along and putting finishing to final touches on the reunion. Frank Jones and his wife Linda have done another great job putting this together. Usually three reunions are about all you can get out of one hotel before the members start wanting another place. The Marriott has been real good to us better than the majority of hotels out there today, but the hotel pricing is going up everywhere.

On a sober note, we have lost a number of men and their spouses in 2016 and already starting in 2017. As we grow older, this will continue being the norm. I sometimes look back and wonder where all the time has gone. I can remember when we were the younger group. Now we have grown into the older generation of Veterans. With the numbers that Frank has received from the hotel, it seems like we are ahead in reservations this year than the past couple of reunions so we're looking for a good turn-out. Everyone take care of themselves and one another. The below I'm sure we have run before but I think it deserves to be run again. Be good. Albert

## These Good Men

Michael Norman

*I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted their best, men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped raw, right down to their humanity. I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another.*

*I cannot say where we are headed. Ours are not perfect friendships; those are the province of legend and myth.*

*A few of my comrades drift far from me now, sending back only occasional word. I know that one day even these could fall to silence. Some of the men will stay close, a couple, perhaps, always at hand.*

*As long as I have memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family and my comrades...such good men.*



## MRFA Reunion at the Indianapolis Marriott East Aug. 31 to Sept. 3, 2017

Start planning for the 2017 MRFA reunion. The dates are August 31 through September 3, 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*, 1-317-352-1231, 1-800-991-3346 (No pets allowed)

Standard Room \$82.00/night, Patio Room \$97.00/night, One Bedroom Suite \$112.00/night, and Presidential Suite \$132.00/night

*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 after September 16, 2016, at [kquinn@indymarriott-east.com](mailto:kquinn@indymarriott-east.com) or 1-317-322-3716, ext. 1113. These rooms are to be contracted by each individual group.

**Frank Jones**, [popsaroni@sbcglobal.net](mailto:popsaroni@sbcglobal.net)

MRFA Secretary / Reunion Coordinator

Home: 1-314-822-1230, Cell: 1-314-303-2730

## 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

## Vietnam Vets Remember the Battle They Survived

Posted on Orcas Issues

August 26, 2016, by Lin McNulty

The last time they were all together was February 14, 1968, Valentine's Day. And this week six members of 9th Infantry Division, 3/47th Battalion, Bravo Company reunited at the home of Bill Wulff on Orcas to remember, in their own way, a life-altering battle in Vietnam's Mekong Delta that forever bonded them.

Their Commanding Officer, Captain (at the time) Craig H. Boice credits his team from the 9th Infantry Division, 3/47th Battalion, B Company as being the "living legacy

and the demonstrated example of what America and Democracy stand for" following the harrowing battle. In return, the Bravo Company team—Richard Blair of Naples, Florida; John Bowen of Ferndale, Washington; Frank Cason from Ocala, Florida; Harry Ford of Tucson, Arizona; and Orcas Island's Bill Wulff—credits their Commanding Officer. Truth be told, they all worked, and sweated, in the hot, humid weather together, pooling skills, resources, training, and outright sheer courage they might not have realized, at the

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# Old Reliable – The Whole Trip Is Hairy Night Convoys Face Constant Ambush Threat

by CPT George Smith, Asst.  
Information Officer  
5th/60th Granted Permission for  
this article

TAN AN—"Nice night for a ride," I said.

"Roger that," replied the convoy commander.

A full moon darted in and out behind high scattered clouds. "Nice night for whom?" I asked myself. The air was crisp and a bit chilly.

Captain Richard S. Siegfried, 29, of Columbus, Ohio, commands a company of the 9th Division's 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry. It is a mechanized unit and tonight 12 of his armored personnel carriers (APCs) were ready for convoy escort duty.

"Mind if I go along with you tonight?" I asked.

"Not at all, be my guest," Siegfried replied.

He explained that last night one of his tracks was blown off the

road. One man was killed and seven wounded. His men, he felt, were a little jumpy tonight.

Highway 4 is the main road from Saigon to the Delta. It's a good, fast, hardtop road with five bridges between Saigon and Tan An in Long An Province. During the day the highway is jammed with commercial traffic but at night it becomes a deserted no man's land.

"We use the road at night," replied Siegfried, "first of all because there is no traffic to slow us down and secondly we want to let Charlie know we intend to use the highway 24 hours a day."

At 8:30 p.m. we met with the two gunship pilots who would be circling over our convoy the entire 30 km from Tan An to the outskirts of Saigon and then during the return trip. Siegfried explained the radio frequency and immediate reaction

"Mount up" cried Siegfried. Switching on the intercom he said to me, "The easy part is over. I expect Charlie is waiting for us right now."

procedures if we were hit. The choppers would be under the control of the convoy commander.

The tracks were already lined up in the order of march and we went out to where they were positioned.

"I want the convoy kept close enough so that you can see the vehicle in front and in back of you," Siegfried said, "I want one man looking in the rear at all times."

He turned to me and said, "I've been running Thunder Road here

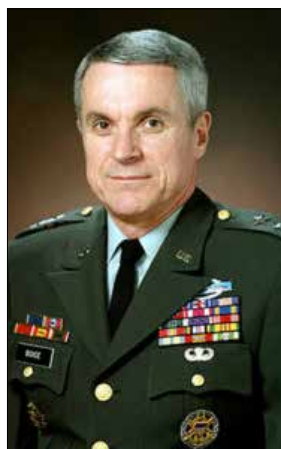
for 2 months and have been fired at six times. Last night was the first time I had anyone hurt. The man that was killed went down inside the track to get a pack of cigarettes and that was when Charlie struck. He never knew what hit him."

We all climbed on top of the tracks, flak vests on and weapons ready. The gunships scrambled and Siegfried commanded, "All right let's slide." It was 10 p.m.

We had a series of checkpoints to call in on the way to Saigon. At each one, the artillery covering our route adjusted to bring in immediate fire if we were hit. In addition, the two mortar tracks in the convoy were ready to poop out illumination rounds immediately. Retaliation would be swift and violent.

I sat behind the driver's hatch and put on a communications helmet so I could listen to the conversations. A triangular pennant of the

**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**



**Major General Craig H.  
Boice, USA**

**VETS REMEMBER**  
Continued from page 1

time, that they even possessed. As Cason pointed out, however, "no amount of training can prepare you for being shot at."

While on patrol in the Mekong Delta on that Valentine's Day, they came across a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) unit that was headed toward the city of Can Tho. As the 150-man unit from Bravo Co. approached the NVA from the rear, they became surrounded by 3,000 NVA regulars. Under attack, greatly outnumbered, surrounded, cut-off, and essentially written off as a loss, the soldiers, under command of Capt. Boice, slowly gained the upper hand, causing



**Onboard The Old Reliable John Bowen's Boat: L-R Frank Cason, Bill Wulff Maj/Gen (Ret), Craig Boice USA Ret., Rick Blair, Henry Ford, and John Bowen**

the NVA to withdraw before they could attack Can Tho. "We thought we were goners," they say as they recall that fateful day.

Although Blair, Boice, Bowen, Wallace, and Wulff had received Purple Hearts during their Vietnam combat tour, none were wounded on February 14, 1968.

Wulff met up some years later with Boice at Mike's American Grill in Virginia where they grabbed a table, laid out big sheets of paper, gave the restaurant staff \$100 to let them hang out, and re-strategized their original battle plan. Just like they had won in the field,

they again won the battle in the restaurant.

One of the most decorated generals in US Army history, Boice remained in the military retiring as a two-star Major General. As a result of his heroic action on that 1968 Valentine's Day, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism.

Wulff recently made a visit back to Can Tho, Vietnam, and with the assistance of a cell-phone GPS was able to pinpoint the actual location and was shocked to see that the area is a suburb of Can Tho; their former battleground



is now right in the middle of someone's backyard. The city, now the fourth largest in Vietnam, was no doubt saved from destruction by the actions of Bravo Company.

Orcas Islander Ron Wallace popped in on the group during their reunion on Wednesday. Although he was no longer with the unit on that day in 1968, he had previously been assigned to that same 9th Infantry Division Company.

A few in this group saw this week for the first time, a copy of a letter dated 19 April 1968. It's a heartfelt letter from their Commanding Officer Boice expressing his pride for Bravo Company. It reads, in part, "If I had to isolate one thing that has made an impression on me during my tenure as your Company Commander it would be you, the soldiers of Bravo Company; you who have been wrenched

from civilian life, trained as soldiers and thrust into combat... You have smelled the stench of death and felt the anxieties of armed conflict and you have endured this test in a remarkable fashion."

They laughingly toss barbs back and forth as if no time has passed. They share, at a cellular level, this specific, profound experience to which no one else on the planet can relate. The bond is unmistakably palpable.

*[Editor's Note: Every time I typed "Bravo Company" for this story, my heart caused my fingers to type "Brave Company."]*

*This article has been updated to reflect that although they each received a Purple Heart during their Vietnam tour, none of them was wounded on February 14, 1968. Can Tho is, and has always been, a city rather than a village. ★*

**OLD RELIABLE**

Continued from previous page

state of Ohio fluttered from one of the aerals. Siegfried was in the commander's hatch next to me.

Three tracks churned out in front of us. Behind us was a searchlight jeep that, if needed, could light up a rice paddy or woodline like Times Square. In addition in the tracks, we had two "dusters," armored track vehicles mounted with twin 40-mm cannons, in the column.

Soon we reached our cruising speed of 30 miles an hour. Siegfried switched on the intercom and said to me; "You can bet that Charlie will be watching us all the way. He knows we'll be coming back with the convoy. That's when he's likely to hit us."

Siegfried explained that Charlie sometimes waits in a rice paddy 50 meters off the road and when a vehicle nears, he stands up, fires his rocket and then beats a fast retreat. Before you can react he is gone.

The gunships could spot the flash and be on him in seconds. I thought to myself.

All you can do is wait for him to strike. There is little chance of spotting the enemy first. There is a series of critical areas between Tan An and Saigon, each about two km long. "The whole trip is hairy," said Siegfried, "but those areas are where we have been hit the most."

About halfway to Saigon, a track overheated and had to stop. Siegfried halted the convoy and the tracks alternately faced right and left off the road, 0.50 caliber machine guns poised for action. Meanwhile those angelic gunships kept circling and circling.

Finally, we reached Saigon at 11:10 p.m. The supply convoy from Bearcat, consisting of eleven 3 1/2 ton trucks with trailers and a wheeled wrecker, arrived a bit later.

"Mount up," cried Siegfried. Switching on the intercom he said to me, "The easy part is over. I expect Charlie is waiting for us right now."

That didn't make me feel very good and I told him so. "If we get hit, just pass your communications helmet to my driver and jump back down into the track. We're going into the rice paddies after him and I need plenty of room to wing my 0.50," he said.

"Roger that," I replied.

We left Saigon at midnight, once again in blackout, and it was cold. I didn't have goggles and bugs kept slapping on my face. My thoughts turned to the men of Company B. They had to do this three or four times a week. I knew they were scared, too. Strangely, that made me feel better.

On the way back, a track ran into a pile of barbed wire. The column stopped and deployed while the track was freed.

Siegfried showed me where the VC hit the night before. There was a black ditch to the right where a track was blown off the road and burned. Deep ruts were cut through rice paddies where armored vehicles had reacted to the ambush.

As tracers flew through the sky from a nearby outpost, Siegfried noted that the night was really bright. "I'd rather have no moon at all," he said. "A full moon silhouettes tracks like ducks in a shooting gallery."

A while later the lights on the Tan An bridge came into view. Siegfried had told me it would look like the Golden Gate bridge, it did.

"We've got it made now," he said at that point.

With the mission accomplished, Siegfried and I relaxed at 3rd Brigade Headquarters here. "Well, how did you enjoy it?" he asked.

"I wouldn't trade my experience for a thousand bucks," I replied, "but I wouldn't give a nickel to do it 10 more times." We both laughed, more from relief than from the attempted humor.

He started talking about his men and how great they are, "You know the rest of the company back at Binh Phuoc stays up until they hear that the convoy is all right."

"I suppose you are going out again tomorrow night," I asked.

"Roger that," he affirmed. ★

**MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Reunion Registration Form****August 31-September 3, 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 Reunion

Registration 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** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**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 3, 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 <b>INTO</b> Indy Airport	Arrival time <b>INTO</b> 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 <b>FROM</b> Indy Airport	Departure Time <b>FROM</b> 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@indymarriotteast.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.**



# 1970—Cambodian Incursion

Bases outside South Vietnam had been strictly off limits to allied ground forces. This rankled US commanders, who regarded the restriction as a potentially fatal mistake. By harboring enemy forces, command facilities, and logistical depots, Cambodian and Laotian bases threatened all the progress the allies had made in the South since Tet 1968. To the Nixon administration, Abrams' desire to attack the Communist sanctuaries had the special appeal of gaining more time for Vietnamization. With most US combat units slated to leave South Vietnam during 1970 and 1971, time was a critical factor for the success of Vietnamization and pacification. Neither program could thrive if South Vietnam's forces were distracted by enemy offensives launched from bases in Cambodia or Laos. Because of the proximity of the Cambodian bases to

Saigon, they received first priority. In early 1970 Cambodia's neutralist leader, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, was overthrown by his pro-Western Defense Minister, General Lon Nol. Nol closed the port of Sihanoukville to supplies destined for Communist forces in the border bases and in South Vietnam. He also demanded that Communist forces leave Cambodia and accepted the South Vietnamese government's offer to apply pressure against those located near the border. (A year earlier American B-52 bombers had begun in secret to bomb enemy bases in Cambodia.) The mood in the Oval Office just before the Cambodian "incursion" at the end of April 1970 bordered on the desperate. A joint American/GVN move against the supposed headquarters of the NLF/North Vietnamese would serve two purposes, then: protect Lon Nol and demonstrate

that Vietnamization really was working. Nixon expected trouble with the antiwar movement and "up on the Hill," but the risks seemed worth it. On television, he told the nation that the operation would strike at the "heart of the trouble." It "puts the leaders of North Vietnam on notice that . . . we will not be humiliated. We will not be defeated."

By mid-April 1970 South Vietnamese armored cavalry and ranger units, with no US advisers accompanying them, were mounting large-scale operations across the border from III Corps and uncovering large caches of enemy supplies and equipment. The main assault began on the twenty-ninth. That morning three South Vietnamese task forces, this time with a full complement of US advisers, and preceded by heavy air and artillery attacks, launched Operation TOAN THANG 42, knifing into Cambodia's



Svay Rieng Province and pushing through enemy resistance. Two days later, on May 1, units of the 1st Cavalry Division; 25th Infantry

Division; 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division; 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment

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## Coming Home

By R.L. (DOC) Pries 1976

What little I had, I gave away. My orders came down, so I took everything out and spread it on a cot and stood looking at it. Give it all away; it doesn't mean anything! What could I do with this crap back in the World?

I pulled my AK-47 down from the wall. I have to give it away, too. The one the gook shot me with down in the Delta. It will be the first thing I will give away. A buddy had picked it up for me after he fragged the gook that shot me on an Eagle Flight 14 long months ago. I have kept it since that day and have counted my blessings many times. It is my lucky charm; my Mojo; my Saint Christopher's medal.

The night before I left there was a party down at the Doc's hooch. Drunk and disorderly were my middle name. I had a hard time believing that this was really coming to end for me. The more I thought about leaving, the drunker I got.

On this last night sleep was impossible—not even the sleep so familiar to grunts pulling guard on a night ambush, sleep where the body stiffens and nods, but the mind still churns along, listening, sniffing, seeing past the heavy, heavy, eyelids.

I sat in back of the hooch and watched the wire and listened for the soft plushy sound of incoming and if they come I will hear the rounds screaming like the screams of the dead and count them with my fingers. I will sit through everything—the mortars, the rockets, the skinny sappers hugging their packs while they crawl along the ditch out back, and I will be silent, because I



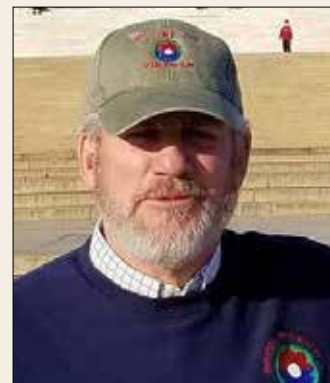
**Six track gang, 1970**

am going home in the morning. I know they can't kill me; I'm going home!

Everyone talks about what they are going to do when they get home. Those magical words spoken with no small reverence, "I'm going home, back-in-the-world!" A mystical place held to ground by trees, green like the color green that dripped from the hand of God—the green of all green. That's where I'm going in the morning. God or the Devil could walk into this hooch and call me, saying, "Come with me, I will take you to my house and give you soft fine clothes, your fondest wish—simple rest. But I would not go with them, because first of all, first of anything, I must go home. I have come too far, done too much, seen too many things to deny myself the ritual of stepping back from all this.

Now it's my turn. I have to go home the way I came, alone and with nothing, that's why I have given everything away.

In the morning I was still drunk (and a bit disorderly). I caught a convoy to Long Binh for out processing. Finally I see what I've longed for, my Freedom Bird. "See that plane new guy?" "That's MY FREEDOM BIRD!" But as I get ready to board I realize that I am not alone, this place and its



**Doc Pries**

people are with me now and will be forever. The dream is dead; only the ritual remains.

During the flight, I find myself feeling as if I just lost my home, my family, MY WORLD. Could this really be? The dream is dead; only the ritual remains.

March 2001: I wrote this many years ago when I was struggling with the loss of connection with my Nam Brothers from the 2/47th. Since that time I have been very fortunate by renewing many old friendships from Nam. I now know that I didn't lose my "Nam Family" as I thought when I wrote this. We were all just out of touch for a while as we worked at getting on with our lives. We only lose our 'family' when we allow it to happen. The lesson for me was that you shouldn't wait and think that you will get in touch with your Brothers from Nam later. Do it today! You will never regret doing so . . . you most likely will regret not doing so. Use the Internet to search for them, write to any old addresses you may have, check out the 2/47th web sites, do something, but please don't wait. Your life will be much richer for reaching out and reconnecting with your Brothers. Trust me on this one, mine sure is. *Bob ★*



9th Infantry Cambodia 1970



9th Infantry Mech Cambodia 1970



9th Infantry Cambodia 1970

## INCURSION

Continued from previous page

(ACR); and South Vietnamese 3d Airborne Brigade, under the command of Brig. Gen. Robert L. Shoemaker, followed from slightly to the north. The 4th Infantry Division attacked from II Corps 4 days later.

Cambodia became a new battlefield of the Vietnam War. By May 2 South Vietnamese forces had cut off the Parrot's Beak, an area that jutted into South Vietnam near the III Corps-IV Corps border, and US and South Vietnamese troops had linked up near Memot in the so-called Fishhook, meeting little opposition from enemy security forces. Snuol, a large enemy logistical hub, fell to the tanks of the 11th ACR 3 days later. In the weeks that followed, the allies cut a broad swath through the enemy's sanctuary and uncovered storage sites, training camps, and hospitals far larger and more complex than anyone had anticipated. One site in the Fishhook, dubbed "the city" in deference to its size, covered three square kilometers and contained mess halls, a livestock farm, supply issuing and receiving stations, and over two hundred caches of weapons and other materiel, most of it new. By one estimate, the allies in Cambodia seized enough weapons and ammunition to arm 55 battalions of main-force infantry. Main-force offensives against South Vietnam's III and IV Corps were derailed for at least a year.

However, the allies did not find large enemy forces or the COSVN headquarters. Only relatively small delaying forces offered resistance, while main-force units retreated deeper into Cambodia. Meanwhile, the expansion of the war produced violent demonstrations in the United States. In response to the public outcry, Nixon imposed geographical and time limits on operations in Cambodia, which enabled the enemy to stay beyond reach. At the end of June, one day short of the 60 days allotted to the operation, all advisers accompanying the South Vietnamese and all US Army units had left Cambodia.

Political and military events in Cambodia triggered changes in the war as profound as those the Tet Offensive had engendered. From a quiescent sideshow of the war, Cambodia became an arena for the major belligerents. Military activity increased in northern Cambodia and southern Laos as North Vietnam established new infiltration routes and bases to replace those lost during the incursion. North Vietnam made clear that it regarded all Indochina as a single theater of operations. Cambodia itself was engulfed in a civil war.

As US Army units withdrew, the South Vietnamese Army found itself in a race against Communist forces to secure the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh. Americans provided South Vietnam's overextended forces air and logistical support to enable them to stabilize the situation there. The time to strengthen Vietnamization

gained by the incursion now had to be weighed in the balance against the South Vietnamese Army's new commitment in Cambodia. To the extent that South Vietnam's forces bolstered Lon Nol's regime, they were unable to contribute to pacification and rural security in their own country. Moreover, the South Vietnamese performance in Cambodia was mixed. When working closely with American advisers, the army acquitted itself well; though there were flaws in planning and the use of air and artillery support. The South Vietnamese logistical system, with a few exceptions, proved adequate. The difficulty was that the North Vietnamese Army largely chose not to fight, so the South Vietnamese Army was never really tested. Furthermore, the South Vietnamese command had relied on rangers, armored cavalry, and airborne troops—elite units—bypassing the mediocre infantry divisions hampered by their politics. If the elite units performed credibly, the shortcomings in the regular army remained intact, starting with poor leadership and lack of discipline.

The explosion Nixon set off with the Cambodian "incursion" reverberated across the political landscape from Congress to Kent State University and back to the Lincoln Memorial, where Nixon tried to start a pre-dawn dialogue with college students from all parts of the country. Whatever time the incursion may have bought for Saigon, it did not do anything to improve Lon Nol's chances for surviving. A special National Intelligence Estimate in early August 1970 reported that in the 4 months since Sihanouk's ouster, half of Cambodia had been overrun by the Communists. Without outside support in the form of heavy military assistance, the outlook was grim. He might survive until the end of the year, until the rainy season ended, but after that the Cambodians were in for it, with the prospect for heavy fighting against long odds.

Hanoi would have to judge above all how the Cambodian situation would affect the will of the US to prosecute the struggle in Vietnam. The tone of this conclusion was very different from the pre-incursion Estimate as it reverted to the "test of wills" theme. Hanoi had never doubted the superior physical and material capabilities of the US, it asserted—without saying how those capabilities could have been used differently from Rolling Thunder to Cambodia—while North Vietnam's hopes had lain in its ability to out-stay the US "in a prolonged politico-military contest carried on according to the principles of revolutionary struggle." The public outcry against "the Cambodian adventure" might lead Hanoi to believe it had the upper hand now. Dean Rusk never said it better: "But it [Hanoi] must recognize that the contest in Indochina will continue for some time."

Calling the incursion, "the Cambodian adventure," was something of a give-away, even if not precisely intended in that way by the August 1970 Special NIE. At the least it suggested Nixon's

rash effort to test Vietnamization had made things worse, politically at home and militarily in Cambodia. In April 1971 a new NIE foresaw little change in the "reasonably good" outlook for Vietnam for that year but thought an enemy offensive was likely the following year when the US election season opened and the troop draw-downs continued. South Vietnam would continue to require substantial US support. It took note of serious problems in ARVN morale, while Hanoi's advantage was still the "apparent durability of the communist party apparatus." Besides the communist threat, moreover, the GVN faced other internal problems that might well produce tensions, growing anti-Americanism, and a government relying solely on coercive powers. Should that happen, the outlook would change to one of increasing instability "risking political disintegration." ★

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# That 'Whup-Whup' Sound

By Tom Sparkman

My son and I were out in the yard yesterday when I stopped dead in my tracks. I cocked my head to one side to listen. Patrick asked, "What is it?" I said, "Can't you hear it?" "No, I don't hear anything," he replied. "There is a Huey coming this way," I said. I then held up my hand indicating that he should be silent and listen. In a minute or so, the whine of a jet engine came to us. Shortly after that a UH1 Huey helicopter came into sight.

"How could you hear the engine that far off?" my son said. I told him that it wasn't the engine that I heard. It was the noise the rotor blades made. They make a peculiar "whup whup" sound that is unique to Hueys. For some reason I could hear that sound long before other people could. There are no military bases close by and we don't see many helos, or planes for that matter, around here. My being able to identify the sound of a Huey goes back many, many years.

In 1968 found me many miles up the Mekong River in Vietnam. I was assigned to a barracks ship that was the flagship of a Mobile Riverine Base. I was a new naval officer and it was my first ship.

The ship had a helo pad in the middle of the ship, way up on the top deck. As the flagship we were used to getting a lot of helicopter traffic. There was one large H34 Sikorsky helicopter that came once a day with the mail. It had a huge piston engine whose roar blotted out all other sounds. Then there was a two-seat Hiller helicopter with a smaller piston engine. The most frequently used helicopter was the Army's UH1 Huey. It had a jet engine that had a whine to it. It also had a distinctive "whup whup" rotor noise. There were four of us junior officers who had to take turns being "Landing Signal Officer" (LSO). Whenever a helo wanted to land, we had to guide it down to that small flight deck with hand signals. A public address system announcement of "Flight quarters, flight quarters. All hands man your flight quarters station,"



**H34 Sikorsky helo brought the mail each day.**

meant me, along with two enlisted men with wheel chocks for those helos with wheels. There was also a man dressed in a silvered firefighting suit. He manned the foam station on the flight deck in case of a crash and a fire.

Hueys, Hillers, and the later Hughes scout helos were easy to guide onto the deck. It was that huge mail carrying H34 that caused us the most problems. It would barely fit on that helo pad. In fact, if you stood directly in front of that helo while it was landing you would wind up going over the side. That is 40 feet above the water. There is a safety net to keep you from falling. You had to stand off to one side and let the pilot know when his wheels were over the flight deck. Only then could he set down. Worse yet, his wheels that had to be chocked by the safety crew to keep it from rolling over the side. We're talking about 3 to 6 feet or so clearance here. I was glad that only one of these showed up each day. They never showed up at night, thank goodness.

Helo landings at night were interesting because we could only show red lights at night on deck. Any type of white light was liable to cause us to draw enemy fire from the riverbank. It was also hazardous. One night I was officer

of the deck on the bridge, and a Huey called in for a landing. I called out the duty flight quarters crew. We waited and waited, but the helo didn't show. About half hour later, we were informed that the pilot had flown his helo into the river. He must have become disorientated because it didn't even happen near us.

Whenever we had Very Important Persons (VIPs) show up, they always came by helo. When that happened we turned out "sideboys." That is two rows of sailors in dress white uniforms. The visitor walks between the two rows while a bosun "pipes" him aboard with a whistle. As a junior officer, I often had to stand there in short sleeved dress whites. I had a telescope under my left arm. I would be in charge of the detail.

When the ship was underway in the Mekong River, we were always at general quarters (battle stations). All officers changed from khakis to green battle dress uniforms. That was so we wouldn't stand out against the dark green of the ship's paint scheme. We were painted dark green so we wouldn't show up against the dark river bank at night and draw enemy fire. Often, when we steamed up or down the river, we were under fire from hidden, fortified positions. They would be back away from the river banks.

Once in a while, we would have VIPs arrive by helo while we were steaming up or down the river. Many of these times we had been fired upon from the river banks. We would change from our dark green uniforms into the dress whites for the sideboy detail. We would be standing out on the flight deck as perfect targets waiting for



**Sideboys for a VIP. I'm the one in white to the left of the double line of sailors. I have a telescope under my left arm. Huey helo on deck.**



**Ship's bridge, looking forward. White area is beginning of the flight deck. Major sun is on the far right on the flight deck.**

the VIP to arrive. This was while the entire crew that was on deck, most of them manning the guns. They would be dressed in their greens. They would also be wearing helmets and body armor. What we called "flak jackets." What was the VIP wearing when he stepped off the helo... why combat greens, of course. So much for those dress whites we wore.

Junior officers ate at the first of two seatings in the wardroom for lunch because of the limited size of the wardroom. One day was different from all the rest. There was an hour and a half allocated for lunch. Most of us in our stateroom were lying down taking a short nap... a "nooner." We heard a loud bang. Someone said, "Sounds like they dropped that new diesel generator we loaded aboard this morning." I said, "Either that or else..." I never got a chance to say, "... or we are under attack." All of a sudden the general quarters alarm sounded. It is a loud klaxon horn followed by, "General quarters, general quarters. All hands man your battle stations."

Since we went to general quarters almost every night, for real, we wasted no time in getting to our battle stations. My station was in the Combat Information Center (CIC). It has very little to do in this type of ship. Reports came in that we had been hit about five times on the starboard side and that we had casualties.

I could hear every gun on deck firing. The noise was deafening. Then, to my surprise came the announcement for flight quarters. I was the LSO that day. The Commander of the 2nd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division was returning to the ship. I couldn't believe his

helo would try to land while we were under fire. I also couldn't believe they would want me standing out there on that flight deck.

The door to the flight deck was right next to CIC. I put on a helmet and yellow vest and stepped out onto the flight deck. The first thing I saw when I went on deck was signalman McGuire. He picked up a 50-caliber machine gun from the port side rail and carried it to the other rail where all the action was. There wasn't a place to mount the machine gun so he laid it on the rail. He then began firing it from his hip, sort of John Wayne style.

The next thing I saw was smoke and a fire. There was a landing craft loaded with a fuel bladder in the cargo area tied up to the Landing Ship Tank (LST) that was acting as our ammunition ship. It had been hit and the entire landing craft was blazing. I saw a crewman jump aboard the craft and get it underway away from the ammo ship. He then jumps into the river to get away from the blaze. A gunboat picked him up.

With all that firing going on, I walked to the side of the ship where we were being fired upon, turned around with my back to that riverbank. I then began signaling to the Colonel's Huey, indicating for it to land. Every second I was expecting to be hit in the back. I wasn't hit, but I had other problems.

As soon as the Colonel's helo landed on the deck, he jumped out and headed for the bridge. That's where the ship's Captain was.

I walked towards the pilot's side of the helo to tell him he had better swing around. I wanted him to leave the way he came even

CONTINUED PAGE 8

# Maj. Gen. Craig H. Boice - Distinguished Service Cross

*Awarded for actions during the Vietnam War*

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Captain (Infantry) Craig H. Boice (ASN: 0-5315188), United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company B, 3d Battalion, 47th Infantry, 2d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division. Captain Boice distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 14 February 1968 during a reconnaissance-in-force operation 3 kilometers southwest of Can Tho in Phong Dinh Province. When elements of his company came under a ground attack, Captain Boice dashed forward through the bullet-swept area to a dike-line. Despite a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire cracking above his head and splattering a few feet to his front, he exposed himself to hurl grenades at the communist positions, silencing one automatic weapon and killing five Viet Cong. Crawling forward to a vantage point, he then directed gun ship attacks on an enemy rocket position only 25 meters to his front, successfully destroying the weapon. During a second assault by the communists, he shot four Viet Cong as they rushed his position. Then directing artillery fire to within 50 meters of his forward and flank positions, he repulsed the attack and nine more

aggressors were killed. After a third assault had been repelled as darkness approached, Captain Boice requested an ambulance helicopter. When the ship landed it came under a deadly hail of small arms fire. Realizing that the craft would be forced to take off immediately, he picked up the most seriously wounded man and, crossing through the hostile fusillade, placed him aboard. Once he had moved the remaining casualties back within the perimeter to await evacuation in daylight, he continued to direct artillery fire until the Viet Cong withdrew. Captain Boice's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

*General Orders: Headquarters, U.S. Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 463 (February 10, 1969)*

*Action Date: 14-Feb-68*

*Service: Army*

*Rank: Captain*

*Company: Company B*

*Battalion: 3d Battalion*

*Regiment: 47th Infantry Regiment, 2d Brigade*

*Division: 9th Infantry Division*



CHARLES N. SCHALL JR.

## One Day in Nam (for Chuck)

By Sgt. Fats

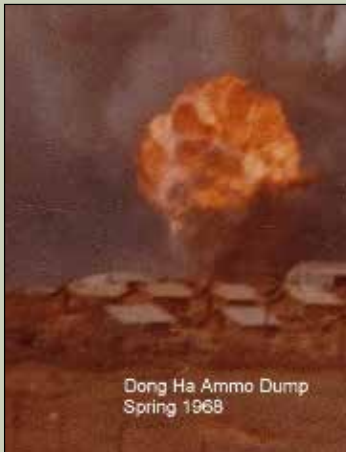
It was an unusually unpleasant night on the 3rd of October, 1968.

I was not used to being in a base and here we were sitting around in Binh Phuoc, our Battalion base camp. I felt a sense of uneasiness compounded by a feeling of exhaustion. It was odd, but that night I was sweating, something I rarely did in Nam. I was actually looking forward to sleeping on a cot surrounded by mosquito netting, which to me was invented to make one sweat. (I felt it restricted my breathing by cutting down any chance of a breeze.) I was just so tired I didn't care. This wasn't long after dark but I was burnt out from whatever patrols we had done earlier.

My recollection of some of the details of that day is not that clear. My recollection of the following events of that night and the next morning has haunted me for 30 years. Just prior to my trying to go lay down and drop off into what to this day I call my "black sleep" (a dreamless near comatose state), someone came around and said they needed guys from our platoon for an Ambush Patrol. Having not too long before become the 2-3 squad leader, I was called upon to choose someone for the ambush patrol from my squad or go myself. Being certain I would fall asleep and put everyone else in jeopardy, I asked for a volunteer from my fellow squad members. Eddie Bivens offered to go but they still wanted one more guy. Around this time my feelings of uneasiness were increasing, I asked whoever was in charge that night if perhaps the 2-3 squad could be let off the hook for that night, making the Ambush Patrol up out of the remaining three Second platoon squads. (This was not an uncommon practice to cover for each other, but at that time the company strength was kind of low.) I was told a resounding NO. I was then derided for my poor skills as a squad leader; I had never asked for the job, no one else would take it, so I did. I finally spoke with my friend Chuck Schall who agreed to go. We were speaking for only a short while when an overwhelming sense of doom came over me. Chuck confessed he had been having the same sense of uneasiness that I had. The person in charge interrupted our conversation to say that they had to leave ASAP. Before leaving Chuck and I again spoke, then Chuck did something truly odd, he asked me for my C.I.B. (Combat Infantry Badge), I didn't know what to make of it. As I handed it to him and he handed me his, a chill passed over me. We both said that if he didn't come back we would never speak to each other again, a little combat humor thing we used to do, showing concern but pretending we would be angry. Chuck said to keep the C.I.B. forever so that I would always remember him. Chuck left and I went to lie down.

I slept briefly and woke up with an even stronger sense that something was terribly wrong. When I got out of the cot, I saw that even though it was the middle of the night a lot of the guys in the company were up and walking around. I asked what was going on? No one seemed to know. Someone said we hadn't heard from the Ambush Patrol in quite a while, someone else went to check. I couldn't find anyone who knew. I waited, we all did.

At sunrise we (the Company) all mounted up on our tracks and headed for the location of the Ambush Patrol. I remember we were in fairly deep water in one of the paddies when I first spotted Eddie Bivens, who was another member of my squad, and Hodges (whose first name I cannot remember) hanging onto each other looking injured even from a distance. When we got up



Dong Ha Ammo Dump  
Spring 1968



Dong Ha Ammo Dump  
Spring 1968

## Asst Dong Ha Ammo Dump

Sgt. Rob Hawes 2111/2131 Ord. Maint. Plt.  
Maint. Bn. FLSG-B Chu Lai/Dong Ha, RVN  
1966-69

*"20 Jun 1968—8,500 tons of munitions go up."*

During that time frame, the "Class 2 Ammo Dump" (small arms) was destroyed. I remember it well. Several weeks after it happen, we received a copy of the "Sea Tiger" (anyone remember that newspaper?), and there was a big article about how Charlie blew up the ammo dump. In reality, a fire started by a "pop-up" flare that didn't have a parachute in it set it off. If you remember, we use to keep several like that in our track vehicles. They were used to shoot a flare directly into the jungle or hut from a moving vehicle.

The flare was launched from a bunker in the US Army (Twin 40 AA) compound. It was quite a show. Luckily, no one was hurt. As Ollie mentioned, we were hit so many times, it is hard to distinguish between events. From the Base Ops records, there were six major attempts at the main ammo dump during that time period. ★



CONTINUED PAGE 10



## WHUP-WHUP

Cont'd from page 6

if it meant taking off with the wind instead of into the wind. It was too dangerous to attempt to fly off in the direction he was headed. Every gun we had was blazing away on that side of the ship. Before I could reach the pilot's window, he lifted off. He headed towards the side of the ship where I just knew he would be blasted out of the air.

As the Huey went past the edge of the flight deck, 40 feet above the water, he no longer had the ground effect of the deck. He swooped down towards the water and made a tight left in front of our guns. There were 50-caliber machine guns firing from two decks and the four 40-mm cannons that were going, "ka-boom,



***Me on the flight deck as a helo takes off. There is an LST supply ship alongside. This is to show you how high the flight deck is above the water.***

ka-boom, ka-boom-boom-boom," in rapid succession.

In all the excitement, it is a miracle that the Colonel's Huey didn't get shot down by our guns. Imagine the gunner's surprise to see the Huey swoop around the side and in front of the



***The Colonel's helo arriving***

ship about 80 feet in front of them and 20 feet above the water. They could have probably read the pilot's name on his helmet from that distance.

I know I raced to the edge of the flight deck and looked down expecting to see the Huey explode in flames. It never happened.

It was after this incident that Major Sun tried to

convince me again to transfer to the Army. This had been an on-going discussion for months. This time the major pointed out that had I been an Army officer I would have gotten a Bronze Star for walking out on that flight deck and exposing myself to enemy fire. I still wasn't going to give up my Navy commission. It was the only time in my year

aboard ship when we were attacked during the day while at anchor.

The Mobile Riverine Force has a web site (<http://www.mrfa.org/>). There is an article listed about the ship celebrating its 10 thousandth helo landing. I had to laugh. The last week I was onboard the ship, while I was standing one of my last watches as officer of the deck, I got out the helo log. I went through it, page by page, and counted the times I had been Landing Signal Officer. I had been LSO for just over 800 helo landings. Approximately 95% of those had been Hueys. In that time, I got exactly two rides in a Huey. Here it is 34 years later and I can still identify that "whup, whup" sound of a Huey long before most people even hear anything at all. ★

## 15th Combat Engineers: An Odd Piece Of Equipment—Jungle Crusher

By Richard Coogan

The 15th Combat Engineer had a piece of equipment called a "Jungle Crusher" when we operated near Bear Cat, which was east of Saigon. The Jungle Crusher was made by Letorneau out of Texas. It could flatten a 30-ft wide swath of jungle. The drums were filled with water and when empty, it would float. Yeah, right, I'll take a boat.

Richard Coogan: Major Mort Roth, Battalion S3, who supplied the original photos, was known for his 'relaxed' dress code.

Richard Coogan shared 15th Combat Engineer Battalion's post.

1. Mike Hale: I was with the 15th from 6/66 to 4/68 and never saw that thing.

2. Ed Hinojosa: I remember the bulldozers and giant chains they used to drag between the dozers and tear up the jungle road to Xuan Loc.

3. Richard Coogan: Ed, you remember the Rome Plow, a large, armored bulldozer pictured above. Neither the Rome plow nor the Jungle Crusher could be used in the Mekong Delta. They would sink into the Delta silt like ground. Too heavy.

4. James Yenne: I remember bear arrived 1/11th Artillery 1967. I was with the 15th at Riley in summer 1966.

5. John Thibado: The delta was like the "Twilight Zone?" You had to be there to appreciate its uniqueness, I still hate the place!!

6. Steve Jenkins: I remember seeing one of these when I was at Bear Cat when I first got in-country.



***Major Mort Roth Battalion S3 (1967) standing beside the big Mamyjammy.***



***Rome Plow, a large, armored bulldozer***



***Major Mort Roth is holding a meeting with SFC Wood, Battalion S2 NCOIC, Air Recon shown on the right. SFC Wood was in the Merchant Marines during WWII.***



## Fire Support Base Lambert

in *The Old Reliable*, April 24, 1968, Page 8

***Permission was granted by the 5th/60th association to use this article***

*Ambush Alley' near Duong Diem becomes 9th Division fire base*

FIRE SUPPORT BASE JAEGER - "Ambush Alley" is no more. In its place stands a brand new 9th Division fire base—Fire Support Base Lambert.

Ambush Alley was the name given to a section of high ground near the village of Duong Diem on Route 4. The area was one of the worst of many places the Viet Cong launched violent terror campaigns aimed at cutting off the People's Road, Saigon's lifeline to the Mekong Delta.

To counter this threat, the 9th Division initiated Operation PEOPLE'S ROAD to clear the route of Viet Cong harassment.

The task was not easy.

"Every time I sent my men into that area, they were soon engaged in heavy fighting," said Lieutenant Colonel Eric F. Antila, 41, of Santa Fe, NM, commander of the 5th Mechanized Battalion, 60th Infantry. "Each time I flew over there, my chopper would be machine-gunned."

After a series of vicious battles, however, the 5/60th infantrymen pushed the VC out of Ambush Alley and returned Duong Diem to government control.

Division engineers immediately began clearing the land and building the new fire base that now sits on the site of three major battles.

Named in honor of the first American soldier killed in support of Operation PEOPLE'S ROAD, Fire Support Base Lambert is a tribute to the men who were determined to take and hold Ambush Alley.

Now that the Viet Cong are gone, the men of the 5/60th have taken on another task—rebuilding the village of Duong Diem and bolstering the people's confidence in the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.

"Schools are being rebuilt and reopened that were closed when the village was under communists control," Anntila said. "Homes and farms are being reconstructed by the people with the help of the 5/60th."

"Ambush Alley also sits in the center of a major Viet Cong infiltration route, where men, food and munitions flow from the south toward Saigon. Now with our fire base directly in their path, they're going to lose that infiltration route. ★



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## RTO—The Voice of Combat

Permission was granted by the 5th/60th association to use this article

There is another important job in an infantry unit that certainly deserves tribute and that is the guy who carries the radio on his back.

He is the one who calls in the dust-off when you are hit and artillery when you are pinned down. Sometimes you think he has it easy and other times you wouldn't take his job for all the rice in Asia. He is a radio-telephone operator (RTO)—often your only contact with other elements. Any private first class or specialist assigned to a line unit as a rifleman is eligible for the job. Yet only a handful ever makes good RTOs because they require what commanders call "that something extra." An RTO needs above average intelligence because he must understand the entire tactical situation and juggle calls for resupply, medical evacuation or information. He also needs a cool head. His knowledge is useless if he gets rattled during combat and can't keep his call signs straight. There is more. Company commanders and platoon leaders say, "I pick a guy who has a lot of confidence." Often the platoon leader doesn't have time to take every call that comes in and the RTO must have the brains and confidence to supply a quick, correct answer. At the same time, he must be a good soldier who follows orders explicitly. A platoon leader or CO must have confidence in him because if they get hit he may end up taking over much of their jobs. There are cases where an RTO has taken over an entire platoon. Other descriptions



add depth to the image of the good RTO. He must be good enough to be your best squad leader should the need arise. He must be someone who can talk, has quick reactions, knows radio procedure and has logic and common sense. The RTO's job is considered more dangerous than that of a rifleman. He must tag along with the platoon leader, sergeant or FO, holding their pace and keeping the handset to his ear, at all times. He should always know the tactical situation and be prepared to act. An RTO in a mechanized unit has a slightly different job. Although he doesn't have as much equipment to carry as his infantry counterpart, he must contend with other problems, such as more radios. Most who have done it know it is an important and rewarding job. Quoting from a former RTO, he states "In addition to knowing everything that is going on, you get a good feeling when you help someone, as in a dust-off." If you have a good RTO, you've got it made as a platoon leader." ★



## Vietnamese Holiday - May 15, 1970

Submitted by Dennis Evenson

Lt. Robert Goodrich, Robert "Doc" Owens, and Howard "Howie" Hilliard and the rest of the platoon were operating from Firebase Jamie preparing to go into Cambodia and Shakey's Hill. Howie and Doc along with several others were sent out from the company to look for a water source. What they found were major trails, bikes, and other signs to indicate that the NVA were close by. They also found a hidden, camouflaged bunker and as Howie was removing some of the branches he heard voices inside from the NVA. They withdrew from the area and returned to the platoon because they didn't have a radio. Upon their return to the platoon, they relayed the information to Lt. Goodrich who discussed the situation with the Company Commander. By this time, it was late afternoon and it would be getting dark soon, but the Company Commander ordered Third Platoon to engage the enemy as he (the CO) moved the rest of the company to cut off any escape route the enemy would take. Lt. Goodrich and his RTO, Doc

Owens and second squad leader Howie, and the rest of Third Platoon maneuvered into position and engaged the NVA, throwing grenades into the bunkers. This battle resulted in Lt. Goodrich receiving a neck wound with a great deal of bleeding, and the point man being severely wounded, along with several other wounded. It was then that the Battalion Commander ordered everyone to stop fighting and evacuate the area because it was a Vietnamese holiday and there was a cease fire in place for the day, with no artillery or gunship support. As they were evacuating Lt. Goodrich, who had lost a lot of blood was getting disoriented and was lost. As they evacuated, the only thing he could do, at this point was to yell out for GIs. Someone finally responded so they were finally able to get back to their unit. The CO and men were forced to move several clicks with the wounded to get to a jungle extraction point for the severely wounded. The next day those who were less severely were medevacked out for treatment. Some holiday. ★

### CHUCK

Continued from page 7

to them, someone spoke to them then sent them back to our base camp on another track. I didn't get to talk to them. I was getting more and more anxious as we finally approached the area where the Ambush Patrol had set up the night before. As we got there, I saw Sgt. Peace, another second platoon member, leaning on a tree in broad daylight waving a strobe light up and down as if to signal in a dust-off (a helicopter coming to remove the wounded and dead) during the night. The rest of that morning is a blur, somehow I had learned that out of 10 Second platoon

members, 7 had been killed, Chuck was amongst the dead. I remember sending Ernie Strimback to help with the retrieval of bodies. When he finally did come back, he refused to talk about it. I felt a tremendous sense of guilt, I was sure that had I been there I would have been able to do something that would have prevented the deaths of my friends.

Whoever I was before that day also died out there with that patrol. I decided, whether consciously or unconsciously I am not sure, that I would never again allow myself to get close to anyone, never again expose myself to that kind of hurt that kind of pain. And I decided that I must get even!

Killing no longer became wrong, so long as it was the enemy that was getting killed. I never let go of my newfound philosophy through the remaining 8 months of my tour in Nam. I have paid the price for living that way and still am paying today. For the rest of the time that I was in the Army, I wore Chuck's C.I.B—No one challenged me to replace it, even Stateside, even through the jungles and the boonies had caused the paint to come off just ahead of the barrel of the rifle. It sits in a frame just above where I am writing this and I see it every day.

*Chuck I will never forget you, and I am sorry.*

*Love, Fats ★*

## TAPS

**James Leroy Brown**  
Jr. passed away April 13, 2007. James served on T-112-4 (1967-68). He resided in Charleston, South Carolina, at the time of his passing. *Steve Fetty, Thanks for the information.*



### Fulton

**Nancy "Nan" Fulton**, widow of Lt Gen William B. Fulton US. Army (Ret.), passed away in Arlington, VA, December 6, 2016. She was 95 years old. General Fulton served as CO in 2nd Bde, 9th Inf. Div. (1966-67) and was responsible for making the Mobile Riverine Force Army and Navy the fighting force it was. Nan was a big supporter of the association and enjoyed receiving the *River Currents* and the functions she was able to attend. She will be truly missed by the Mobile Riverine Force Association membership. She was truly a fine and loving person. Nan will be buried beside General Fulton this spring in Pocatello, ID. May she rest in peace. Albert



### Gray

Member **Robert Lee Gray** RCM USN (Ret) passed away December 10, 2016. Robert served with River Section 523 as a Patrol Office (07/68-07/69). He was the TF-116 Representative when we fought to receive the VCCC insignia for all three Task Forces. You may contact the family c/o Barbara W. Gray, 1600 Township Rd., Jeromesville, OH, Pbr55@neo.rr.com. May our Brother rest in peace in God's Hands.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



## TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One

**TAPS**  
Continued from  
previous page



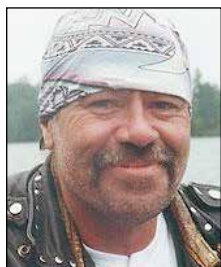
**Hawkes**

Sgt. **Robert L. Hawkes** passed away November 9, 2016. Robert served in C Co. 4th/47th Riverine Infantry (1967-68). You may contact the family c/o Debra Hawkes, 43 Burnside Dr., Palm Coast, FL 32137.



**Yates**

Member **Michael Yates** passed away January 12, 2017. Michael served on the USS Epperson DD-719 (1960-63). You may contact the family c/o Joyce Yates, 3047 Saint Ann St., Owensboro, KY 42303-6349.



**Noteboom**

**Arthur "Art" Noteboom** passed away December 10, 2015. Arthur served in Co. B. 4th/ 47th 9th Infantry Division. You may contact the family c/o Renee, 111 Third Street NW, Cook, MN 55723.

Greatly missed by member **Harley and Sue Timmerman**.



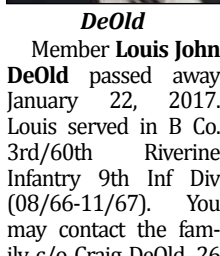
**Mortensen**

Member **G. Thomas "Morto" Mortensen** passed away July 6, 2016. Morto served in RivDiv 92 A-92-8 (01/68-11/69). You may contact the family c/o Victoria Mortensen, 1709 Main St, Cedar Park, TX 78613-7574, 512-694-8067.



**DeOld**

Member **James P. Wiener** USN (Ret) passed away October 18, 2016. James served at the PBR Mobile Base 1 (06/70-05/71). You may contact the family c/o Laura Wiener, 27024 Trimp Rd, Yalaha, FL 34797-3412, 419-304-6719, wlaurae@yahoo.com.



**DeOld**

Member **Louis John DeOld** passed away January 22, 2017. Louis served in B Co. 3rd/60th Riverine Infantry 9th Inf Div (08/66-11/67). You may contact the family c/o Craig DeOld, 26 Dixfield St., South Boston, MA 02127, 02127-2909, cdeold@gmail.com.

Member **James J. Caruso** passed away November 29, 2016. James served in A Co. 4th/47th Inf (05/66-04/68). You

may contact the family c/o Diana Caruso, 4421 60th St Ct E, Tacoma WA 98443-2458, 253-922-7421.



**Betram**

Member **Marilynn Betram**, wife of member Jerry Betram, passed away January 8, 2017. Jerry served in D. Co. 3rd/47th Inf (08/68-08/69). You may contact the family c/o Jerry Betram, 2603 Marilyn Dr, Eau Claire, WI 54701-6715, 715-835-5070.



**Wiener**

Member **James P. Wiener** USN (Ret) passed away October 18, 2016. James served at the PBR Mobile Base 1 (06/70-05/71). You may contact the family c/o Laura Wiener, 27024 Trimp Rd, Yalaha, FL 34797-3412, 419-304-6719, wlaurae@yahoo.com.



**Convery**

Member **Francis M. "Fran" Convery Sr.** passed away January 20, 2017. Fran served in D Co.

3rd/47th Inf (03/68-03/69). You may contact the family c/o Linda Convery, 4126 E Howell St, Philadelphia, PA 19135-3940.

Member **Scott K. Taylor** passed away December 21, 2016. Scott served in A Co. 4th/47th Inf (07/66-08/67). He resided in Socorro, New Mexico, at the time of his passing.



**Wallace**

**Judy Wallace**, wife of Ronald Wallace, passed away November 22, 2016. Ron served with B Co. 3rd/47th Inf (05/66-08/67). You may contact the family c/o Ron Wallace, 2115 Enchanted Forest Road, Eastsound, WA 98245, 360-376-4294, judy13W@aol.com.

*Our dear friend, whom Okey and I often called "Wonder Woman" or "Super Woman" because of her strength, intelligence and heart, passed away. All of us owe this wonderful friend a great debt. Her ceaseless work to find veterans, get us to MREA reunions, as well as organizing her own small and large reunions, brought so many of us together and helped us find lasting friendships. RIP my friend. Okey and Carol Toothman*

**Woodrow Sweeney** passed away in early February 2017. Woodrow served on the USS White River LSMR-526 (10/66-08/69) as a 2nd Class Shipfitter. You may contact the family c/o 12371 George Drive, Brooksville, FL 34613. May our brother rest in peace.

## In Memory Of

This section is for members who wish to sponsor the MREA 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 Affeld for Buddha Ed Thomas, Boat Captain Tango 112-11 (02/68-02/69)  
William Blausner 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)  
Brothers of the 2nd/47th Inf for all Army and Navy KIAs  
Bill Buffie in memory of Lyle Parin USS Floyd County LST-762 (Vietnam)  
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 name in country music, 1937-2016  
Fran Divilbiss for Cdr. Dave Divilbiss, Supply Officer on Staff COMRIVFLOT ONE, USS Benewah APB-35 (1966-68)  
Ron Easterday for Marco A. Serrano Jr. and Franklin D. Hite HHC 2nd/47th Inf (Mech) KIA 03/13/67 and William B. Cronin (LTC) HHC 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 Jansonius B Co. 2nd/60th KIA 02/02/68  
Sgt Robert Flaige for SP4 Robert "Bob" Jenks E Co. 3rd/60th KIA 03/03/68  
Nan Fulton for LtGen Bill Fulton Cdr 2nd Bde Asst Div Cdr 9th Inf Div (1966-68)  
Tony Garvey for Wes Sade, Billy Olsen, and Staff Sgt. James Williams C Co. 4th/47th 9th Inf  
John W. Gerbing for Noel T. West A Co. 4th/47th KIA 06/19/67  
Regina Gooden for Sgt Lloyd Earl Valentine B Co. 3rd/47th KIA 09/05/68  
Mrs. Elizabeth M. Hayes for LTC Daniel P. Hayes HQ 3rd/34th Artillery (06/67-01/68)  
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  
Bruce Jensen in memory of Frederic Peers Webb A-111-4 KIA 12/21/67  
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  
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. Bronakowski 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

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# Mobile Riverine Force Association

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RADM Merrill Ruck USN (Ret) CosDiv 13 Cat Lo (02/66-02/67)  
Ronald Rulon HHCO and D Co. 15th Combat Engr. Bn (03/6-10/67)  
Billy Sanders RivRon 11 RAD 112 T-112-1 & CCB-112-1 (Vietnam 1967)  
Norman Saunders B Co. 3rd/39th Inf (01/69-08/69)  
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 Shaven Friend of the Ardingers  
Joseph W. Shedlock A-152-4 (10/68-07/69)  
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)  
Jim Towey Co. B 2nd/60th Infantry (10/68-08/69)  
Milton Turnage M-151-1 (07/68-06/69)  
Erol Tuzcu A Co. 3rd/60th Inf (1968-69)  
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  
GMGI Ricky Vice USN (Ret.) T-131-7 (03/68-05/69) and NAG (01/71-06/72)  
Ron Wallace B Co. 3rd Plat 3rd/47th Inf (05/66-08/67)  
Hank and Becky Washburn USS Colleton APB-36 (01/67-09/68)  
Bill Weidman A Co. 112-12 (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 Tip 3/5  
Cav 9th Inf Div (03/68-03/69)  
BMCN 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)  
Robert Zimmer XO USS Mercer APB-39 (02/68-07/69)  
Admiral Elmo Zumwalt ComNavForV