



SEA MATE
Not Since Vietnam

River Currents

Artwork by Dwayne Peterson C Co 4th/47th Riverine Infantry 9th Infantry Division

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THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

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Veterans Day 2016 - Washington, DC

The MRFA and 9th Infantry Division will be placing wreaths at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, on Veterans Day, Friday, November 11, 2016. 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 10, 2016.

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 2016. We look forward to seeing you in DC.

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

From the Galley

New Web Site for MRFA

Folks Mike has done an excellent job with the web site we now have but it's way overdue to be redone and Mike has been given the go ahead on this project. We will keep everyone updated as we go along. We're in good hands with Mike. He has done a great job with what he has been working with for years. **Albert**



Al Moore

Folks:

This will be a large and lengthy process, but the end result will benefit all of us as we continue to do our best to retain our unique Joint Army/Navy Vietnam history for generations to come.

The new web site will be built offline so the existing site will be up and running as is until the new one is launched. It is estimated that it could take as long as 5 months to transition all 1,259 pages over to the new software. Yep, this is a LOT of pages for one web site. We can be proud.

I cannot take all of the credit. I seem to recall that Bruce Schulze from the *USS Satyr* (ARL-23) formed the initial web site and then Don Blankenship took over for him in the 90s. Then in 1999 or 2000, I accepted the task from Don.

As this project moves along, we will keep you all abreast of the progress.

Once again, thanks for your overwhelming support and trust! It truly takes "A Team" to accomplish what we have done over the past 23 or so years.

I truly appreciate the vote of confidence!

Bravo Zulu, Mike



L-R Everett Jones, Jim Steffes Tug Captain, Don Blankenship, and Bob St. Martin



Many of the Special Warfare Combatant-Craft (SWCC) Graduation Ceremonies are held at the Memorial.



CCB-18 at the present time. Thanks for the outstanding job the working party does



CCB-18 arrived safely aboard the U.S. Naval Ship Sioux in San Diego on Sunday, August 27, 2000.

Mobile Riverine Force Association CCB-18 Memorial Fund

The Command and Communications Boat (CCB-18) is the last known surviving boat of the Mobile Riverine Force. It arrived safely in San Diego on Sunday, August 27, 2000, aboard the U.S. Naval Ship *Sioux*. See the web page <http://mrfa.org/ccbfund.html> for a photo tour of her arrival in San Diego from her previous home in the Sacramento River near Rio Vista, California. The photos also give you an indication of her present condition, what we'll be referring to in the future as the "before" photos. Your donations are what have made this mission possible. Many have donated to help the project progress to this point. If you would like to assist personally with additional funding to help with maintaining the CCB in good condition, then here's how to do so:

Make your check payable to the MRFA CCB Fund and send to MRFA Treasurer Charlie Ardinger, 1857 County Road A14, Decorah, IA 52101. ★



Mike Harris standing in a B-52 crater



Tribals we assisted. Note balloons that I always passed out to win them over.



A shrapnel pile in a village including a couple of GI helmets. They will use for scrap.



Mike Harris with a couple large bombs.



Some Montagnards that we worked with.

Member Remembers Lam Son in the '90s

Mike Harris T-152-1 (07/68 to 07/69)

This was our Area of Operation as Missionaries from 1990 to 1997. Our target town was Tchepone, same as this 1971 Lam Son 719 operation from January 30 to March 24, 1971. The terrain lays on Highway 9 below high peaks on both sides. The old Khe Sanh battle site is 8 clicks from the Lao/Viet border.

The old Tchepone was bombed into submission during the operation. A new town was built across the river from it. I walked in the midst of old Tchepone. All I could see were foundations and bricks lying everywhere. Trees still showed the result of bullets and shrapnel.

At the time I realized that thousands of combatants from all sides had died out in this remote, but highly contested area. Estimates are placed as high as 13,000 NVA killed and 5,000-10,000 ARVN casualties. The U.S. flew cover and lost 65 KIA, 818 WIA, and 42 MIA. 618 U.S. helicopters

were damaged including 106 that were totally destroyed.

Unexploded ordnance is everywhere. More bombs were dropped on Laos than in Britain and Germany combined in WWII. Unexploded Ordnance Teams finally began working on clearing the area, but it is estimated that it will take at least another 100 years to dispose of most of the deadly ordnance. The real tough ones are the "Bombies" or cluster bombs. They were dropped in canisters and when opened they released dozens of little Bombies. These deadly munitions are still maiming and killing Lao and Montagnard tribesmen today as they clear land and farm. Bomb craters still litter the landscape. It is easy to see the bomb pattern where each plane dropped its load as it strafed the countryside. B-52 craters are 10-15' deep and 20+ yards wide. We had to watch our every step. As an example, there was a little bamboo fenced off area about 6' x 6' beside the dilapidated "Guesthouse" where we stayed often at Tchepone. It was protecting the children and animals from a 250-lb unexploded bomb right there in the center of the town.

During our work I met an elderly Montagnard husband and wife who had lost all 10 of their children to the war or disease. During our time there, the malaria rate was almost 100%. Of the newborns, 74% were dying of preventable causes. Luang (Uncle) Praat said that he had wept so much that he couldn't shed anymore

tears. While talking to him through my translator it hit me. I told my translator to ask him if I could be his son. When the translation went forth, I could see light in Luang Praat's eyes and a smile come to his face. He quickly said "Yes, you can be my son!" It so touched the Lao translator that he also asked to be his son. Luang Praat agreed. What a special moment in a place filled with decades of tragedy.

Our years over there were rough at times, but when lined up with the hardships of those we assisted it was nothing. I saw so many miracles right before my eyes that when we returned to the United States it was similar to leaving Vietnam in July 1969. We were leaving people behind so I suffered from "survivor's guilt" and other deep emotions. It was quite a letdown to return to our country where things were "business as usual."

We moved to Bangkok, Thailand, in January 1990. Sometime in 1992, I made contact with Albert Moore. He informed me of the new Mobile Riverine Force Association. Through those years, we shared many letters back and forth across the Pacific Ocean. They were very encouraging to me. I told Albert back then that when I returned to the United States permanently I would do my best to assist in the growth of the MRFA. We returned from Laos in August 1997 and I have been doing my best to keep my word ever since.

Operation Lam Son 719 continues as reinforced South Vietnamese forces push into Tchepone, a major enemy supply center located on Route 9 in Laos. The base was deserted and almost completely destroyed as a result of American bombing raids.

The operation, begun on February 8, included a limited incursion by South Vietnamese forces

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LAM SON

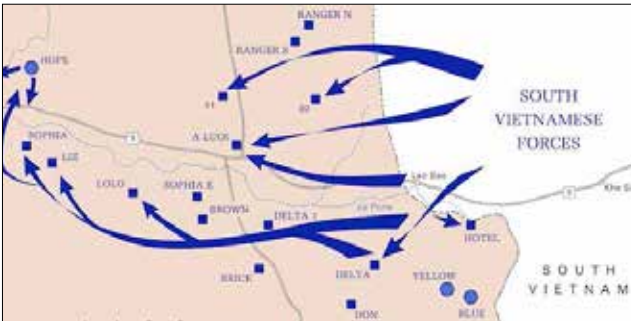
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into Laos to disrupt the communist supply and infiltration network in Laos along Route 9, adjacent to the two northern provinces of South Vietnam. The operation was supported by U.S. airpower (aviation and airlift) and artillery (firing across the border from firebases inside South Vietnam).

Observers described the drive on North Vietnam's supply routes and depots in Laos as some of the "bloodiest fighting" of the war. Enemy resistance was light at first as a 12,000-man spearhead of the South Vietnamese army thrust its way across the border into the communists' deepest jungle stronghold toward Tchepone. However, resistance stiffened in the second week of February as the North Vietnamese rushed reinforcements to the area. On February 23, the big push bogged down around 16 miles from the border after bloody fighting in which the communist troops overran two South Vietnamese battalions.

The fierce fighting continued into March and the South Vietnamese finally reached Tchepone. However, fighting near the Vietnam border intensified and in the second week of March, South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu gave the order for his troops to withdraw as casualties soared on both sides.

However, withdrawing the ground task force under heavy North Vietnamese pressure was a difficult task. The South Vietnamese fought for 2 weeks to get back inside their own border and losses were heavy. The South Vietnamese suffered some 9,000 casualties, almost 50% of the force. In supporting the South Vietnamese, the United States sustained 1,462 casualties and lost 168 helicopters. ★



Lam Son 719 map. Photo by Mike Harris



Lam Son 719 map. Photo by Mike Harris

2017 MRFA Reunion in Indianapolis

Start planning for the 2017 MRFA reunion. The dates are August 31, 2017 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. You will be able to start making reservations on September 16, 2016. 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.

Marriott East, 1-317-352-1231, 1-800-991-3346

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

Indianapolis Conference Center Hotel (La Quinta) \$69.00/night, 1-317-359-1021

Fairfield Inn & Suites \$74.00/night, 1-317-322-0101

Hospitality rooms are available for \$125 per day. Contact Kellie Quinn after September 16, 2016 at kquinn@indymarriott.com or 1-317-322-3716, ext. 1113. These rooms are to be contracted by each individual group.

Frank Jones (frank@raffertylighting.com or popsaroni@sbcglobal.net)

MRFA Secretary / Reunion Coordinator

Home: 1-314-822-1230, Cell: 1-314-303-2730, Work: 1-314-918-8144, ext. 528

Recognize anyone?

Hello All,

That link to the Navy site yesterday stimulated me to dig out an old photo.

I had communications with Susan, CDR Walter Deal's daughter, several years ago. She was going to send me copies of his photos, but it never happened. I'd like to see the "Collection" of CDR Deal's photos that are on the Navy site, but cannot figure out how to get to them.

Below is a copy of that photo that Susan sent me years ago. We were down towards the U Minh Forest area. I've numbered the guys that I'm pretty sure I recognize:



(1) Robert Buchanan T-152-2; (2) Rich Weisend T-152-2; (3) Barry Duschaneck T-152-5; (4) I thought this was Andrew Hart T-152-6, but Rich Lorman confirmed that it is not; (5) Patrick Denny T-152-1; (6) John Viggiano T-152-10; (7) Tom Brunner T-152-1; (8) Richard MaMahan BC T-152-8; (9) LTJG Nick Miller; (10) Commander Walter Deal; (11) LT Tobolski; (12) Mike Knapp T-152-2; (13) Daniel Scott BC T-152-3; (14) Joseph Francis BC T-152-5; (15) Alex Lincoln T-152-5, and (16) Pat Rooney T-152-7.

I think that could be me (T-152-1) between 14 and 2 in the white T-shirt and green ball cap. Could be Ted Cheser from T-152-4 behind the black man with the ball cap. Ted was from my hometown.

Can anyone recognize any of the others? All help would be appreciated.

Warm Regards, Mike Harris

Check out the MRFA website
www.mrfa.org



The ATSB known as "Breezy Cove" (more commonly known as Song Ong Doc) was at the mouth of the Ong Doc River. This is an airborne view looking due east before the attack on October 20, 1970. (Photo by Ed Lefebvre)



A closer airborne view of "Breezy Cove." This view is looking due south Boston whalers, PBRs and "heavies"—armored troop carriers, monitors, assault support patrol boats—are shown in the photo. (Photo by Ed Lefebvre)



Breezy Cove



The Ca Mau Peninsula showing the locations of Breezy Cove and Sea Float/Solid Anchor. (Drawing notes by Robert Stoner)



A Mk II Patrol Boat, River (PBR) makes a high speed turn to port. (Photo by Lee Wahler)

Attack on Song Ong Doc

By LCDR Lee Wahler USNR (Ret)

(Additional material from GMCM Robert Stoner [Ret])

During 1969 and 1970, several American and Vietnamese naval units used the Advanced Tactical Support Base at the mouth of the Ong Doc River (Song Ong Doc). By July 1970, those units were RVN (Vietnamese) River Patrol Group 62 (along with Naval Advisory Group Vietnam advisors), USN River Assault Division 15, Detachment 6 of HA(L)-3 "Seawolves" with two helicopters, a "Dufflebag" sensor-monitoring group for electronic detection (from Beach Jumper Unit 1), and the Naval Support Activity (NSA) base unit. The base itself was composed of AMMI pontoons (flat deck barges) lashed together. On the shore, next to the pontoons, was a helicopter pad and buildings for the Seawolf detachment.

"Breezy Cove" was part of a joint USN/RVN operation established in September 1969 and commanded by Commander Cyrus Christensen. The Senior Advisor to RPG-62 was Lieutenant Bill Dannheim. Dannheim had one officer and six enlisted advisors assigned to him. The mission of the USN/RVN units was to interdict enemy movements from the U-Minh Forest (to the north) across the Song Ong Doc down to the lower Ca Mau peninsula where Operation Sea Float/Solid Anchor area was (by Nam Can on the Cua Lon River). The units were also to keep the river open for civilian waterborne traffic from the Gulf of Thailand into the province capital of Ca Mau.

RPG-62 Vietnamese crews had only been at the base since June 1969 when they arrived with 10 PBRs that had been turned over from USN River Division 554 as part of the U.S. Navy's Accelerated Turnover

to the Vietnamese (ACTOV) program. Added to those existing boats were 10 more PBRs from River Division 572 that had been at Breezy Cove since September 1969.

One of Commander Christensen's first orders was to remove all ammunition stored on the AMMI pontoons except for ready-service ammo for base defense weapons. That arduous job meant 3 days of humping ammo in the hot sun down the gangplank into bunkers on the shore. After the ammo was removed, Commander Christensen came up with a rather remarkable base defense plan. He decided that the base was highly susceptible to surprise attack and the only important things on the base were the men and their boats. Consequently, he ordered that if the base was attacked, the crews (USN and RVN alike) were to get to their boats and fight the enemy from the river.

A small village of about 2,000 Vietnamese (called New Song Ong Doc) grew up next to the ATSB. There were Regional/Popular Forces (called "Ruff-Puffs") who worked out of the village that were supposed to help defend the base. But, Commander Christensen doubted their effectiveness or loyalty. The base used 0.50 cal machine guns, concussion grenades, and 60- and 81-mm mortars for defense. The mortars were shot at Dufflebag sensor activations regularly. Little did the men on the base know that the increasing numbers of activations

were caused by more than just "animals and wind." It was a case of not being able to see the forest for the trees. The Viet Cong guerillas were massing for an attack.

In the late evening hours of 20 Oct 1970, the base was attacked by what was later estimated to be a VC company reinforced with heavy and medium weapons. The VC started pouring in 57-mm recoilless and mortar rounds from two directions, the north side jungle adjacent to the base and the south side free-fire area of swamps across the river. In addition to the mortars and recoilless rifle rounds, the VC were shooting 12.7-mm machine guns and small arms into the base.

Incoming rounds were landing everywhere and sank two PBRs that were tied up alongside the AMMIs. Lt. Dannheim was in the Naval Operations Center (NOC) immediately calling for air support. He called for the return of the two Det 6 Seawolf helicopter gunships (then refueling and rearming at Sea Float), and he got OV-10 "Bronco" Black Ponies from VA(L)-4 at Binh Thuy scrambled. As the fight at Song Ong Doc developed, three Seawolf detachments—Sea Float/Solid Anchor (Det. 1), Ca Mau (Det. 3), and Song Ong Doc (Det. 6)—flew in defense of the base.

The offshore gunfire support ship USCGC Bering Strait fired 5-inch shells at points south of the river. As was pre-arranged, the crews scrambled into their boats and got the remaining PBRs and heavy river assault boats underway.

When the NOC started getting hit, and fuel and ammo stores started exploding, Lt. Dannheim called in a PBR and

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A UH-1B "Seawolf" gunship launches from USS Garrett County (LST-786) in 1969. Seawolf Det. 6 flew from USS Garrett County until facilities were developed for them at ATSB Breezy Cove. Three Seawolf detachments were involved in repulsing the VC attack on October 20, 1970. During the attack, Garrett County provided refueling and rearming services for the helicopter gunships defending the base. (Photo by Gerald Busic)



A pair of OV-10A "Broncos" from VA(L)-4. The lead aircraft is firing 5-inch "Zuni" rockets. The Zuni was the heavy punch of the Bronco. Picture from R. G. Smith's painting "Special Delivery." (Photo by R. G. Smith and Blackpony.org)



The USCG cutter Bearing Strait (WHEC-382) provided naval gunfire support during the attack on Song Ong Doc. (Photo by USCG taken 2 October 1970). On 1 January 1971, Bearing Strait was transferred to the South Vietnamese Navy as part of the ACTOV program.

My Story

By Ronnie Fontenot YRBM-17
(Served in-country from 01/68 to 11/68)

I arrived in Vietnam, January 1968 on a Pan Am jet. When the jet landed at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, the runway was under attack. We were told to run to the only building I can remember to check in. Everyone was issued a rifle and ammunition, a 45 pistol and told to get out of the building and go hide till daylight. We found a ditch to hide in, not knowing who to shoot at we just sat there for hours, sitting back-to-back guarding each other. At daylight all firing stopped and it was like we just stepped into an instant war and then no war, for all firing had stopped. I spent 3 days in at the Annapolis hotel in Saigon waiting on my orders as to where I was going. I was loaded on to a military type plane that hauls vehicles and equipment, and it landed on a grass runway in the middle of the jungle. The plane took back off and with me and one other guy just stood there not knowing where to go, as there were no buildings and no one in sight. Then this hatch rises up and an army guy told us to get in quick before we got shot. An army truck came and picked us up and we were brought to Dong Tam. There were lots of blown up and burned vehicles in the ditches and the driver said they were the ones that hit land mines, but the land mine finding guys had cleared the road before he came and got us. I was stationed on the YRBM and was given the job as an electrician, rebuilding the electric systems on the gun boats. Dong Tam was called mortar city because just about every night we were hit with mortar rounds just to keep us awake knowing we had to work the next day. We ate at the chow hall

on the base. On May 30, a rocket or mortar hit the chow hall just as I sat down to eat. Everyone ran for bunkers but there were too many guys and they were all full, so I took off for a building to get under, all of a sudden it was gone, the only protection was to lay flat on the ground. As I took off again, I noticed a guy in the road with his arm blown off begging for help, as I helped him up I was hit from I guess shrapnel from a rocket or mortar, and was either blown down the hill or

“ **At daylight all firing stopped
and it was like we just stepped
into an instant war
and then no war,
for all firing had stopped.** ”

I rolled. I woke up thinking the top off my scalp was blown off and my brains were exposed. I finally got the courage to touch the top of my head and then I knew I was ok. I couldn't see out of my right eye and was bleeding really bad. I was laying in the water only my head on the bank. As I sat up, a crew member said to me he thought I was dead so he left me there; he was fighting to put the fire out on the boat. I crawled up the embankment and crossed a walkway then crossed two barges. As I was going up the steel stairs, a rocket hit between the stairs and the side of the boat. The steel backing of the stairs protected me from the rocket. I and the stairs were blown the distant off both barges and I landed against the motor going in the boat I was working on. I

was knocked unconscious again. When I woke up I realized I had been wounded in the chest and my clothes had been blown off me. I was bleeding really badly once again and a guy hiding behind those engines refused to help me, of course I don't blame him. I went up the back set of stairs and walked through the fire on the boat, I was in shock. Someone brought me to see the medic and they strapped me down in a metal basket. After the firing slacked off, I was loaded into the bed of a pickup truck and brought to the hospital in Dong Tam. I had lost too much blood so I was operated on wide awake; the pain of the operation was horrible. There were lots of guys hurt in that attack and I remember them crying asking not to let them die and crying for loved ones, the room was full of blood, it was a horrible sight. The next day I was flown to Vung Tau and operated on again. When I woke up, the Doctor said I had a souvenir for life in my head and was flown to Cam Rahn Bay hospital to recover. I was given the choice to go to Japan or back to the States. I asked to stay since all my buddies were still there. So I stayed and had to hitchhike across Vietnam to get back to the YRBM-17. When I left Vietnam in November, I was on emergency leave because my father was about to die. I caught a ride on the first plane out to the States, and it was a refrigerated plane loaded with dead bodies in body bags. I was on that plane 2 days and 2 nights. It was an old prop type plane and it was slow. I was the only live one in the back of the plane. I had volunteered for mine-sweeping duty right before I left. I was given a hardship discharge at the time so I could take care of my family. I now live in Louisiana and enjoy shrimping and fishing and street rods. Thanks for letting me write my story of Vietnam! ★



Development of attack on Song Ong Doc. Early in the attack with a flare in the background.



Fires starting from direct hits on the AMMI barge.



SOD fully engulfed at the height of the attack (Photos by Ron Mitchell).

SONG ONG DOC

Continued from previous page

took charge of the upriver group of boats. At the same time, Lt (jg) Wahler went with the boats headed downriver from the base. American advisors, including GMG2 Wayne Palmer, EN3 Joe Flowers, and EN3 Joe Brown, along with the RVN boat crews returned the incoming enemy fire effectively. Some fire was received from New SOD village. Overhead, the Seawolves and Black Ponies were directed at the attacking enemy force.

After an hour, the firing tapered off and the boats started patrolling further up river just in case Charlie was planning on making a crossing. Offshore was the support ship, *USS Garrett County* (LST/AGP-786). Many wounded were taken onboard the ship to be treated. Seawolves used the *Garrett County* as a refueling and rearment point. After the October 20 attack, boats



The ATSB at SOD on the morning after the attack. All the living quarters were burned-out or heavily damaged and the AMMI barges were either sunk or sinking. Fires continue to smolder in this photo. (Photo: Ron Mitchell)

refueled and rearmed from the *Garrett County* until facilities ashore were rebuilt using AMMI barges from the old Sea Float base. Some boat crews moved back ashore to live and eat on what was left of the base, or lived on their boats when not on patrol. The helo pad and huts ashore had not been touched and were used by advisors for berthing.

The morning of October 21, the boats returned alongside the base. Commander Christensen assessed the damage. All the AMMI pontoons had been hit and/or sunk. The buildings had been



***USS Garrett County* (LST-786/AGP-786) with PBRs alongside. *Garrett County* provided refueling, rearming, and medical assistance for the wounded during the attack on Song Ong Doc. After the attack, *Garrett County* provided berthing and facilities until the facilities at SOD were rebuilt several miles upriver. (Photo by Gerald Busic)**

burned from fuel fires or destroyed or heavily damaged by enemy fire. Two Americans were killed in action: GMG3 Thomas Stewart McGarry, age 26, of Springville, TN, and RMSN John DeWitt Drake, age 19, of Stockton, CA. Twenty-six American and Vietnamese sailors were wounded in the attack.

Several weeks later, some of the original AMMIs along with some newer armored AMMIs from Sea Float were all towed up river to Old Song Ong Doc village where operations continued until all the boats were moved to an earthen compound in Ca Mau. RAS-15 left Song Ong Doc in November 1970 to stand down as the last USN river unit turned-over to the Vietnamese Navy.

Lt. Dannheim received a Navy Cross for his actions during the attack. Several other advisors were awarded Bronze Stars and Navy Commendation Medals. ★

Anatomy of An Infantry Battalion



The 4/39 Infantry Battalion

The 4/39 Infantry Battalion arrived in Vietnam from Fort Riley, Kansas, on January 3, 1967, and was assigned to the 1st Brigade at the Division Bearcat base camp in Long Thanh North (southeast of Saigon in III Corps Tactical Zone). Under the command of LTC Clyde B. Bell, Jr. (January-August 1967) battalion operations were conducted predominately north of the Mekong Delta in the provinces surrounding Saigon. The terrain was hilly and fairly solid ground. Fatalities were incurred in Phouc Tuy, Go Cong, Hau Nghia, Bien Hoa, and Kien Tuong Provinces. 3 KIAs (13 hostile)

Between November 1967 and January 1968, under the command of LTC Daniel L. Baldwin III (August 1967-February 1968) the battalion relocated from Bearcat to Ban Me Thuot (Darlac Province) in the Central Highlands of II Corps Tactical Zone. Here the terrain was firm and mountainous. During this period, fatalities were suffered in Vinh Binh, Kien Tuong, Bien Hoa, Long Khanh, Phuoc Tuy, and Phuoc Long Provinces. 28 KIAs (23 hostile, 1 accidental homicide, 4 non-hostile due to accident)

February 1968 the battalion was transferred to the 3rd Brigade and moved 5 miles southeast of Saigon to Nha Be. Here under the command of LTC Robert L. Adcock (February-July 1968) elements of the battalion, operating in conjunction with the 3/39 Infantry engaged a large force North Vietnamese Army unit in the Ong Song

River section of Long An Province (April 22, 1969). On a reconnaissance-in-force mission occurring on the evening of March 18, 1968, conducted in the vicinity of Nha Be, a battalion infantryman (Edward A. DeVore Jr.) distinguished himself and the 4/39 Infantry by becoming the battalion's only Medal of Honor recipient during the Vietnam War. The battalion sustained fatalities in Gia Dinh, Long An, Kien Tuong, and Tay Ninh.

LTC Robert L. Archer was replaced by 1st Brigade Executive Officer, LTC Franklin A. Hart, who at the time took command of the battalion with elements conducting reconnaissance in force, foot mobile searches, and eagle flight operations northwest of Tan An for 3rd Brigade, mobile riverine operations in the Mekong Delta for 2nd Brigade, and local operations in the Nha Be battalion HQ area. During August 1968, the battalion participated in the longest (to date) operation of the Mobile Riverine Force. In November 1968, the 4/39 was redirected to Binh Long Province, northwest of Saigon. At the end of November, the battalion was reassigned to 1st Brigade. Although battalion headquarters remained in Binh Long Province, elements of the battalion conducted a series of half-platoon size (12-15 men) night ambushes along canals in northwestern Dinh Tuong Province. These missions had been executed as an adjunct to Operation My Dien, which was part of overall Operation Giant Sling-shot. The prime goal of Operation Giant Sling-shot had been to interdict Communist waterborne movements against Saigon on the Vam Co Dong and the Vam Co Te rivers near Ben Luc and on the Tra Cu north of Saigon. Operation My Dien was an off-shoot operation conducted in and on canals leading to Dong Tam in the Plain of Reeds of northwest Dinh Tuong Province. These night missions were coined aquabushes (as opposed to ambushes) by the Division newspaper and proved highly successful in interdicting VC canal movements. As a short-term expedient near the end of January 1969, the 4/39 was relocated into an unimproved Plain of Reeds position, northwest of Dong Tam, near the intersections of several canals. This area had been a sanctuary of main force Viet Cong who had heavily secured their base areas with mines and booby traps. During LTC Hart's command, the battalion suffered fatalities in Long An, Kien Hoa, and Dinh Tuong Provinces. 28 KIAs

On February 1, 1969, a few days after the move into the Plain of Reeds position, command of the battalion rotated to LTC David H. Hackworth. The

battalion hardened its position while anticipating a move to Dong Tam. The battalion was, instead, diverted to FSB Moore. At the beginning of March, the 2/39 was directed to establish a new base in western Dinh Tuong Province, north of the village of Ap An Tri (Giao Duc), along National Route QL-4. The name assigned to the new installation was Dickey. LTC Hackworth was an experienced combat officer, having served in the Korean War and an earlier tour in Vietnam with the 101st Airborne Division in the northern highlands of I Corps Tactical Zone. LTC Hackworth moved the 4/39 headquarters into the new fire support base, which he immediately renamed Danger. He also coined the nickname The Hardcore Battalion and demanded the greeting Hardcore Rondo, Sir! His forces were emplaced at four different locations: Headquarters & Headquarters Company and Company B Battle Company at FSB Danger (alternating with Company D Dagger Company); the battalion kitchen and mortar platoon at District Headquarters in Ap An Tri; Company A Alert Company in a Vietnamese cemetery dubbed Tombstone Territory, a click or so north of FSB Danger; and Company C Claymore Company at an abandoned school they named FSB Claymore. Combat and MEDCAP operations were centralized in IV Corps Tactical Zone. The battalion's days of wandering over II, III, and IV Corps Tactical Zones were now over. Under LTC Hackworth's 4-month command, Hardcore fatalities were incurred in Kien Tuong, Sa Dec, Dinh Tuong, Kien Phong, and Kien Hoa Provinces. 25 KIAs (23 hostile, 1 non-hostile air crash, and 1 intentional homicide)

On February 18, 1969, LTC Hackworth received a minor wound not requiring hospitalization, which resulted in his sixth Purple Heart. On March 25, 1969, he was again wounded and received his seventh Purple Heart. Although LTC Hackworth soon returned to his battalion, Division ordered him relieved. On May 25, 1969, command of the Hardcore Battalion was prematurely relinquished to MAJ James R. Taylor. Under Major Taylor's command the Hardcore Battalion endured fatalities in Kien Phong and Dinh Tuong Provinces. 11 KIAs (11 hostile)

The last commanding officer of the 4/39 Infantry Battalion was MAJ Ronald J. Crooks who assumed command on July 21, 1969, for the sole purpose of returning the battalion to the United States on July 30, 1969. Under his command, the 4/39 did not engage the enemy and, as a result, suffered no casualties. ★

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Seeking Info

Dear Sir

Let me tell you about my brother Roger E. Ward. He was born in Grand Haven, Michigan. He graduated in 1966 from high school. He was a member of the "Great Lakes Surfing Association." He loved to surf every chance he got. His lifelong dream was to surf the big waves in Hawaii. He was WARD, ROGER ELGIN US-54-967-046, CPL, AUS, CO-B, 4th BN, 47th Inf 9th Inf Div. He died 5 April 1968 in Vietnam.

I was in by third week of Boot Training at Fort Knox, KY. I was a sole surviving son so I went to Germany.

My brother went surfing in Hawaii. He got his big dream. After his R&R, he went back to Vietnam. He was killed the next day. He is buried in Grand Haven, Michigan.

I have been trying to come to the reunion for 2 years but it seems like something comes up. My cousins, Ron and Judy Wallace, come every year. I hope to make it some time. I really enjoy reading your *River Currents*. I would like to meet some of my brother's fellow friends.

Thank you for your time. Hope to come soon.

Sincerely,

Dennis R. Ward, PO Box 2012, Alma, AR 72921-2012



Roger Ward

Memories ATSB Song Ong Doc

By Lee Whaler President
PBR-FVA LCDR USNR (Ret.)

I was at ATSB Song Ong Doc from July 1970 until Jan 1971 as Asst. Advisor so this incident was before my time there. The events below happened in October 1969. I never heard of a Marine Base. There were two SODs. Old SOD was halfway downstream from Ca Mau to Gulf of Thailand. "New" SOD was at the mouth of the river on north side, which is where the ATSB was built and there were a helo pad and huts for Seawolf Det 6.

Yes Charlie pretty much controlled the south side of the river up until when I left country. It was considered a No Go Zone. North of the river was mostly unoccupied so Charlie transported supplies freely from North to South and then to Sea Float.

While at SOD, we had two heavies a Monitor and Zippo from RAID-75. They would patrol the river like the PBRs did (usually in day time). Interdiction of supplies was the main mission. Charlie would attack patrolling boats all the time. We even had a regular 0930 firefight. Stupidly, the VC attacked those boats one morning and were wiped slicked.

We had a Seawolf Det there the whole time, EXCEPT the night the



Song Ong Doc



Lee Whaler

base was attacked. They were helping out down at Sea Float. Pretty sure Charlie knew that. We were attacked by a VC company reinforced with heavy weapons—recoilless and mortars which in the end wasted most of the AMMI barges, coincidentally about one year after the below story.

The Seawolves came back up to help strafe the north side of the river; while Black Ponies were called in to shoot up the south side where Charlie and company had also infiltrated. That was

pre-arranged by AO CDR Combat Chris. All of the air assets did a pretty good job suppressing those on the ground. The *USCGC Bering Strait* was the first to fire NGFS from offshore, but had to stop when birds arrived on-station. We also had the ADP/LST *Garrett County* to support us afterwards (no LSD then).

When I arrived in the AO, Old SOD had a battery of RVN 105 mm with US advisors. Jim Greenwalt has dope on that. After the ATSB was blown away, its barges were replaced by armored Ammis and moved up to Old SOD. Meanwhile the RCN RPG was based at an old fort in Ca Mau where again Charlie controlled the marshes south of the base.

One of the sea stories that went around while I was there was about the Tran Hung Dao operations carried off by the RVN. One of those went north of the SOD bases into the southern end of the U Minh Forest. That was until they had a Tango boat blown in half by one of those AF bombs used as mines.

Reportedly they turned around and came back?

That is all I can dredge up out of my bad memory.

Guys, my experience was only at SEA FLOAT/SOLID ANCHOR. I never got to SOD (aka BREEZY COVE, before or after the ground attack on 20 October 1970). Other parties have written about that episode. Mike Dobson of the Seawolf Association can contribute information (checkout their web site for stories). These are arranged by Detachment (usually); SF/SA was Det. 1 and SOD was Det. 3. There are also stories not associated with any detachments. One of the biggest battles flown by the Seawolves was against VC Lake (south of SOD). This battle lasted for three solid days and involved Dets 1 and 2, SEALORDS, Army gunships, and USAF fixed wing, including B-52s. I think the date was 15 September 1970.

Robert Stoner GMCM USN (Ret.) ★

U.S. Naval Riverine Operational Base Song Ong Doc (1970)

Located on the western coast of South Vietnam's Mekong Delta region, the Advanced Tactical Support Base at Song Ong Doc served for a short time during the Vietnam War as an operational base for the U.S. and Vietnamese river forces. During 1970 allied naval units patrolled the area's numerous waterways as part of the Sealords strategy to interdict the Viet Cong supply lines and troop movements. As part of the Vietnamization program, the Song Ong Doc facility was completely turned over to the Vietnamese.

On the night of October 20, 1970, the advanced tactical support base at BREEZY COVE (Song Ong Doc) was destroyed by mortars, recoilless rifles, and a company-sized ground attack. The old SEA FLOAT barges were used to rebuild a New Song Ong Doc several miles upriver from the old base. In June 1971, the remaining barges were moved to Ca Mau. ★

March 9th 1862 Battle of the Ironclads

<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/battle-of-the-ironclads>

During the American Civil War, the *CSS Virginia*, a captured and rebuilt Union steam frigate formerly known as the *Merrimac*, engages the *USS Monitor* in the first battle between iron-fortified naval vessels in history.

The Confederate navy's addition of iron plates to the captured *USS Merrimac* steam frigate temporarily made it an unstoppable force in the disputed waters of the Civil War. After seeing the *Merrimac* in action, the Union navy constructed its own ironclad, the *USS Monitor*. On March 8, 1862, the *Virginia* attacked a Union squadron of wooden-hulled vessels in Hampton Roads off the Virginia coast. The *USS Congress*, a frigate, and the *USS Cumberland*, a sailing sloop, were easily sunk by the *Virginia*, which suffered no noticeable damage. Late that night, the *USS Monitor* arrived in the area. With its deck nearly at the water level, the *Monitor* had an unassuming appearance, but it was a formidable match for the Confederate ironclad.

On March 9, the two vessels engaged each other and both the *Monitor* and the *Virginia* suffered direct hits that failed to penetrate their iron shells. Finally, after 4 hours, a cannon blast from the *Virginia* hit the *Monitor's* pilothouse, temporarily blinding the ship's captain, Union Lieutenant John L. Worden. The *Virginia* was thus allowed to escape to Norfolk, Virginia, and the Battle of the Ironclads ended in a draw. Two months later, the *Virginia* was trapped in Norfolk by advancing Union forces, and its Confederate crew blew up the fearful vessel rather than allow it to fall into Union hands. ★



History of the YRBM-17 (Vietnam)

By Doug Lindsey
(1967-68 crew member)

YRBM-17 was retrofitted from the YFNB-24 in a small shipyard south of Yokosuka, Japan. The YFNB was what the Navy classified as a large covered lighter. It was a non-propelled barge with a length of 260 feet and a beam of 48 feet. This construction took from late 1966 to March of 1967 and upon completion it was towed to Yokosuka, Japan, for final preparations for duty with the Mobile Riverine Force in South Vietnam.

The sole purpose of this retrofit was to make the YFNB-24 a floating repair center for the specialized boats of the Navy's newly formed Mobile Riverine Force or River Assault Flotilla One in the Delta region of South Vietnam. Generators and switchboards were added to supply the power to all the different shops that would be needed. This included engine repair, electronic, electrical, welding, machine shop and an armory for weapons repair. Modern galley and refrigerated storage areas and air-condition berthing spaces were also part of the retrofit.

In late March 1967, the YFNB-24 was towed to Vung Tau with a skeleton crew onboard. She was only in Vung Tau a short period just long enough to pick up the remainder of her crew and additional stores once this was completed she proceeded up the Mekong River to the Army base at Dong Tam. It was shortly thereafter that

her designation was changed from YFNB-24 to YRBM-17, which reflected her mission (YRBM Yard Repair Messing Berthing).

During the first 6 weeks after the YRBM-17's arrival, a number of things had to be done to ensure that she could perform her mission. The 100-ton floating crane YD-220 and numerous barges were brought in so that the ATCs, Monitors, and ASPBs could be hauled out of the water for hull and propulsion repairs. Communications gear had to be installed as well as water purification systems. At the same time, the Navy portion of the base was being constructed at a rapid pace until the base galley and mess hall was completed the YRBM-17 was called upon to feed around 300 people three times per day.

In June of 1967, things started coming together for the crew of YRBM-17, the new boats began arriving in ever increasing numbers. At first most of the work performed on the boats were modifications such as experimental mine seats for the Tango boats and weather



PERSONAL AWARDS Purple Hearts

6 KIAs (BM1 Simon, Joseph L. J.; GMG3 Crose, Ronald A.; GMG3 Evans, Lonnie B.; SN Egbert, Dale E.; SN Ycoco, George R.—24 Nov. 67; LTJg. Norris, Kenneth E.—31 Jan. 69)

2 WIAs (EN2 Flowers, Wilson N.; ETN3 Gray, Robert L.—24 Nov)

stripping around the gun turrets to help keep out rain from the upcoming monsoon season. As the boat operations began, the crew became very busy repairing the boats because of battle damage and normal maintenance.

The YRBM-17 and Dong Tam Base were not immune to enemy action. Five days after her arrival, YRBM-17 experienced her first attack. Mortar rounds walked around the basin and base but never found their mark. Every night concussion grenades were tossed in the water around YRBM-17 to protect it from swimmers that might attach a mine to the hull. At first it was hard for the crew to get a good night's sleep, but after the mining of YRBM-16, in Tan Chau in November 1967, it became a very comforting sound. After numerous mortar attacks, the crew thought they had an early warning

There is no official record of YRBM-17 ever existing as there is on some of the other YRBMs. To all of us who served on her, the memories are real and will forever be etched in our hearts and minds.

system in place for these attacks. There was a small village at the entrance of the boat harbor at Dong Tam and if any of the crewmembers saw the Villagers leaving just before dark, they would pass the word to be on alert that night. As it turned out, it was pretty accurate.

During the TET Offensive of 1968, YRBM-17's luck ran out. The Dong Tam Base was being hit two or three times a night by enemy fire. One night an unknown type of round was fired from the Mekong River side of the base. It penetrated the large steel sliding door in the machine shop. Its effect was somewhat lessened as it hit a large storage rack of steel and brass shafts, but still threw off enough shrapnel to wound seven crewmembers, one seriously. On May 30, 1968, YRBM-17 was hit again by a



AWARDS, CITATIONS AND CAMPAIGN RIBBONS

Precedence of awards is from top to bottom, left to right

*Top Row: Combat Action Ribbon and Navy Unit Commendation (3)
Second Row: American Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, and National Defense Service Medal (2)*

Third Row: Vietnam Service Medal (10), Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation, and Vietnam Campaign Ribbon



YRBM-17 being refitted prior to going to Vietnam and the MRF, Yokosuka, Japan

120-mm round, wounding nine of her crewmen.

Early in 1968 the Navy finished installing floating dry docks on the Navy side of the basin and YRBM-17 was moved in-between them. This enabled the crew to perform their work faster as the ever-increasing volume of work required. It was also during this time that YRBM-17 began installing the flame thrower systems on the Zippos. Throughout the rest of 1968 and into early 1969, it was pretty much business as usual for the crew. It meant working 7 days a week and making their best effort to give the boat crews what they needed to perform and complete their missions.

In late spring or early summer of 1970, YRBM-17 was pulled out of Dong Tam and towed to Sasebo, Japan, for a scheduled overhaul. On the way to Sasebo, the fleet tug towing her and YRBM-17 were hit by a typhoon, causing considerable damage. Some of the superstructure had been torn away by the pounding of the sea. After her overhaul, YRBM-17 was towed back to Dong Tam. Based on the information I have, this probably would have been mid to late summer of 1970. The YRBM-17 was turned over to the Vietnamese Navy in December 1970. In January of 1971, YRBM-17 was towed up river to Tan Chau and given a new hull designation of HG-9610. There is no official record of YRBM-17 ever existing as there is on some of the other YRBMs. To all of us who served on her, the memories are real and will forever be etched in our hearts and minds. We performed a very important function to the Mobile Riverine Force in the Mekong Delta and did so with pride and distinction.



YRBM-17 (left) and APL-26, Dong Tam 1967



YRBM-17 (foreground) and APL-26, Dong Tam 1967. YRBM-17 is displaying the YFNB-24 hull number that was later changed.



Boats of RivRon 9 alongside YRBM-17, Dong Tam May 1967



YRBM-17 as HG-9610 after the turnover

A special thanks to all of YRBM-17 crewmembers, who took the time to contribute information. Without it, this bit of history may never have been preserved.

Note: Please contact Doug at vermin250@aol.com for any additional information you may have on the YRBM-17. ★



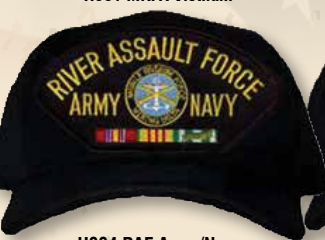
H001 MRFA Vietnam



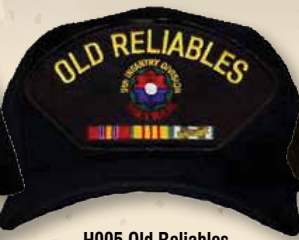
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USS Mahnomen County LST-912

Mahnomen County recommissioned at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on 27 March 1963 with Lieutenant (jg) John H. Withers in command. Assigned to Reserve LST Squadron 2, she served for the next 3 years in the 5th Naval District, operating along the Atlantic Coast from New York to the Bahamas.

On 21 December 1965 *Mahnomen County* was again placed in the active fleet and on 27 January 1966 departed Little Creek for Charleston, South Carolina, arriving the 29th to embark Army supplies. The next day she sailed for Southeast Asia with the *Pulaski County* (LST-1088) and *New London County* (LST-1066), stopping at Pearl Harbor from 4 March to 21 April before continuing on to Vietnam via Okinawa, arriving Vung Tau on 27 May. She operated as a military transport and supply ship between Sasebo, Japan; Subic Bay, Philippine Islands; Kaohsiung, Taiwan; and Phan Rang, Vietnam, through the next 7 months, supporting the effort to curb Communist aggression in South Vietnam.

On 3 December *Mahnomen County* departed Kaohsiung for Vietnam, docking at Chu Lai on the 18th. On 30 December she was driven ashore by the 18-foot surf and high wind of a typhoon. Attempts to refloat the wrecked LST during January 1967 were unsuccessful. *Mahnomen County* was struck from the Naval Vessel Register on 31 July 1967, and, stripped of any salvageable materials; her hull was demolished by the Navy Support Detachment at Chu Lai.

Note from Harry Morris Ships Crew Member: Hello Al: Came across the web site of U.S. Naval Bases and Support Activities, Vietnam. Scrolling down and reading the incident off Chu Lai of *Mahnomen* LST 912 was riding out a storm and torn from its anchor going aground on the rocks. Really

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



Engine Room Snipes A Nasty Bunch

By Albert Moore USS Benewah and IUWG-1 (04/67-04/70)

The snipes were the most underrated rate in the Navy when I was in. I was on a few ships that I don't know how the snipes kept them running—16-hour days were nothing for them. I never had a problem when something would breakdown in the Galley or we would lose steam—they were always on it.

I kept them in coffee, on a couple ships they would make their own soup, and I would provide whatever they needed. It was that or they would rip me off when we loaded stores you had to be fast on your feet or you would be short a 40-pound case of coffee; they also like the cans of powdered bullion for their soup mess. To keep it from getting to far out of hand when loading stores, I would bust open a case of oranges or apples for the working parties that helped some. Everything was fair game to the snipes; if it wasn't tied down they would take it.

I was on a Minesweeper and I had a slight problem with the snipes. They were always stealing bread and sweet rolls, pies, etc. when I had them cooling off in the issue room. The engine room hatch was right across from the issue room if I went to the head or took a break on the fan tail or mess deck when I came back sure as s---something would be missing.

I got them back one day. We had chocolate cream pie on the menu. I made some extra pie filling enough for two pie shells and loaded them up with laxatives. I put the pies in the Fridge we had in the issue room so they would cool off and set up. I put the two loaded pies up front. I went to the mess deck sat down and waited. A short time later I heard the hatch to the engine room open; a minute later I heard it close. Close to an hour later word came over the 1MC: Chief Engineman and all off duty snipes lay to the engine room.

Seems they had a problem with those on watch and also a couple of the invited off duty snipes as well. To help with the pies, it seems they were unable to control their bowels and had messed on themselves and in doing so had craped all over the engine room. They would not admit what had caused the pie caper that they failed on.

But they knew I had got them. Nothing big came of it they just quit stealing pastries, etc. and went to stealing something else. I was on a couple more ships where the snipes off our ship were barred from the tenders, but they were hardworking and kept a beat up Navy going for years in the '50s and into the '60s and '70's there were a lot of old ships in the fleet... So my hat always goes off for the snipes! ★

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

TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One



Richey



Richey

Member **Robert William Richey** passed away December 30, 2015. Robert was on the USS White River LSMR-536 (12/66-12/68). You may contact the family c/o Suzanne Richey, 1600 Nutwood Ave, Fullerton, CA 92831-2934, 714-879-4776.

wife of member William Frede, passed away March 4, 2016. William served on T-112-2 (04/67-10/67). You may contact the family c/o William Frede, 813 Agnes Dr, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701-5605, 407-376-2137, flafash7@cfl.rr.com.



Gruenberg

Member **Max F. Gruenberg Jr.** passed away February 14, 2016. Max served on USS Whitfield County LST-1169 (08/65-05/67). You may contact the family c/o Kayla Epstein Gruenberg, 4801 Kenai Ave, Anchorage, AK 99508-2328, kaylaepstein48@yahoo.com.



Schulte

Member **Terry R. Schulte** passed away February 22, 2016. Terry served in B Co. 3rd/60th Inf. (08/67-05/68). You may contact the family c/o Kathryn Schulte, 400 N Sherwood Dr, Grand Junction, CO 81501-2166, 970-986-8745. May our Brother Terry rest in peace. MRFA



Grooms



Grooms

Member **James F. Grooms** USN (Ret.) passed away March 10, 2016. James served with MinDiv-113 NSA Danang (1966-68). You may contact the family c/o Eddie Grooms, 3100 Blenkarne Dr, Carlsbad CA, 92008-1118, eddiegrooms@icloud.com.

Thomas E. Huffines passed away September 28, 2015. Tom served with the River Raiders



Frede

Patricia A. Frede,

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One

TAPS

Continued from previous page

B Co. 3rd/60th Inf (03/69-07/69) and D Co. 2nd/60th (08/69-02/70). You may contact his lifelong friend and fellow Riverine William Nesmith (XO C Co. 2nd/4th Artillery [08-69-12-69]), 5718 Colby Road, Winchester, KY 04391, who will forward all to his family.



Jones

Member **John L. Jones** passed away February 15, 2016. John served in the US Army Battery D 2nd Battalion 10th Artillery 197th Infantry Brigade 3d USA as a Field Artillery Section Chief (10/66-11/67). You may contact the family c/o Carol Jones, 28365 Clark Ave, Millsboro, DE 19966-9281, 302-549-1149.

Charlie Marx passed away after a long battle with Parkinson's disease on May 4, 2016. Charlie served as a BM3 on the USS White River LSMR-536 (12/66-12/68). Charlie was a fine man and a great shipmate. You may contact the family c/o Bonnie Marx, 108 Morningside Dr, Lake Charles, LA, 239-249-9229. May our brother and shipmate rest in peace. BM2 Joe and Vickie Harper.

MAHNOMEN

Continued from previous page

what happen was on New Year's Eve of 1966-67 as the storm and high seas prevented her from entering Chu Lai, it was decided to anchor off shore and take readings every 15 minutes of the ship for anchor movement. Some of the officers on watch decided to break out the booze and do a little celebrating of New



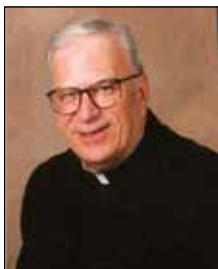
Frazier

Member **Jerry Vern Frazier** passed away March 17, 2016. Jerry served with C Co. 3rd Platoon 4th/39th Inf (01/69-09/69). You may contact the family c/o Jane Frazier, 827 Walnut St, Webster City, IA 50595-2133, 515-832-3861.



Howard

Member RMC **Jerry O. Howard** USN (Ret) passed away April 14, 2016. Jerry served on the USS Askari ARL-30 (11/68-10/69). You may contact the family c/o April L. Howard, 3386 S. Williamsburg Way, Boise, ID 83706-5320, 417-813-6595.



Sheridan

Member Rev. **Patrick Leo Sheridan** passed away April 28, 2016. Rev Patrick

served with A Co. 3rd/60th Inf (01/69-08/69). You may contact the family c/o Margaret Ann Sheridan, 1100 East Lee Street, Pensacola, FL 32503-5676, masheridan2@gmail.com.



Banbury

LCDR Floyd R. Banbury USN (Ret.) passed away March 29, 2016. LCDR Banbury was the Commanding Officer of the USS Colleton APB-36 (1966-68). Captain Banbury and his crew were responsible for putting the USS Colleton APB-36 back in commission for duty with the Mobile Riverine Force Task Force 117. River Assault Squadron ONE (RVN).



USS Colleton

It was as Commanding Officer of the USS Colleton that was the highlight of his career. He often said it was the best ship he served on. The ship with the crew was the best of crews and made it the best ship. Captain Banbury was a great Skipper and loved the ship, the crew and in turn was respected, admired and loved by the crew. He will be remembered by the way he fairly lead the crew

to perform the duties they were assigned to make a successful tour of duty. Always recognized with a quiet, easy demeanor and his cigar he had a way with the crew he respected and was able to command them with ease and the crew was able to complete their duties with that special touch of leadership.

All of the above made the Skipper the great man, leader, Captain and friend that he was. LCDR Floyd Banbury was a man who made a great impression on all he met. LCDR Banbury was one of the last few Sailors to serve in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

He is survived by his three stepdaughters, Karen, Donna and Monica. You may contact the family c/o Karen or Donna at 321-421-0418.



Wilson

Captain **H. H. Wilson**, USA, (Ret.) passed away from an Agent-Orange related illness on June 26, 1996. Major Wilson served as CO of C Co 3rd/60th Riverine Infantry 9th Infantry Division (04/68-03/69). You may contact the family c/o Marilyn S. Wilson or son Mike Wilson, 29 S Greenfield Ave., Hampton, VA 23666, e-mail hunnskyy@gmail.com.

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.

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 Leo Haynes for my fellow plank owner and buddy Don Grier GM2 USS Benewah. He died in a car crash in 2003
 James Henke, Dave Nelson, James Callan for 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
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 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
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 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
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 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
 John Smith for Paul D. Jose B Co. 3/60th KIA Westy 11/01/68
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 Chet "Gunner" Stanley for all the USN and USA KIA's of the MRF (1967-70)
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 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 Schriener MR2
 USS Guide MSO-447 for Shipmate and Brother Harold Foster
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Year's Eve and forgot about taking readings at the point of being unaware the LST was in dire straits and had gone up on the rocks. The officers-in-charge plus the "Skipper" were ordered back to Sasebo, Japan, to face the Commodore in charge of Commander Landing Ship Squadron Two where it hit the fan. The officers were transferred back to the States and their status unknown. ★



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