



River Currents

A PUBLICATION OF
THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

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From the Radio Shack

Hello Everyone! As I sit here today writing this message to you, I am watching our first flakes of snow!!! Wow, where does the time go??? We have been very busy at your MRFA. The reaction to our upcoming reunion in 2019 has been overwhelming. Whether it is the location of Nashville or the fact that everyone just is excited to see their buddies again, we are booking up fast.



Harry Hahn

Frank Jones our Treasurer and Reunion Coordinator is working on additional rooms. Why? That's because we booked the reunion hotel to our booking guarantee and then some. We have obtained additional rooms there twice and now it is close to being totally sold out. I will let Frank go into this in greater detail elsewhere in this *River Current* edition.

Yours truly has been filling Gear Locker orders regularly. Since I took over that job from Gunner Stanley, we have shipped around 300 orders in the past year. The R17 reunion shirt of last year's reunion "I Grew Up in a Rough Neighborhood, Vietnam" still is a top seller. Please look online at our Gear Locker Store for the full catalog. We only pick one Gear Locker page at a time to mail in the *River Currents* as the Gear Locker is several pages long. There is an online fillable order form that makes it easy. If you're not computer-wise, have a family member or friend help you. FYI, our 8-dollar shirt and hat special is now discontinued.

I wrote a letter from the MRFA to President Trump this month. The letter addressed the issue of the pending acceptance by the Secretary of the Veterans Administration of the presumptive diseases caused by Agent Orange. Hopefully our strength of 2,600 members will get his attention. Here is an excerpt from the letter:

Delaying further decisions on Agent Orange-related ailments is disappointing to thousands of aging veterans with bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, Parkinson-like tremors and hypertension (high blood pressure). Veterans and survivors were hopeful some, or all those conditions, would be added to the VA's presumptive list of ailments linked to wartime herbicides, and based on the latest and final review of medical and scientific literature on Agent Orange from the National Academy of Medicine.

Lastly, please have a glorious and safe Holiday Season. The very best to you and your family from the Officers and Board Members of the Mobile Riverine Force Association.

Harry Hahn, President, SparksRivRon13@aol.com

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Veterans Day 2018, Washington DC

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers, for he today that sheds his blood with me, shall be my brother." William Shakespeare, Henry V

As we do each year, members of the Mobile Riverine Force Association, their families and friends came together to celebrate Veterans Day at the Wall—the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Veteran Women's Memorial.

We gather for the purposes of honoring our fellow Veterans, our Brothers and Sisters on the Wall that we lost so many years ago, and those who we have lost since that time long ago.

Wreaths were placed at the Wall for the 9th Infantry Division; Navy River Assault Squadrons 9, 11, 13, and 15; the 47th Infantry

Regiment; and the MRFA—Army and Navy Together—by members of the MRFA, their families and friends.

Each year our number is fewer as we are in the fourth quarter of our lives, and age and health are taking their toll. However, I am always struck by the dedication of those that attend each year.

Dedication is defined as the quality of being dedicated or committed to a task or purpose. Those who were in attendance clearly meet this definition. Thank you, Brothers and Sisters, for your dedication.

As long as we speak their names they will not be forgotten.

Never Forget!

Doc Pries, Vice President ★

THE BATTLE OF AP BAC II

Recollections of 2LT Howard Kirk/3/47th Recon Platoon

Ap Bac II was a different day for me—I felt my platoon should have been there, but we were on a Tango circling around the *USS Benewah* APB-35 in brigade reserve. We listened to the fight on our radio, and then I received a radio message that we were attached to the 4th Bn 47th Infantry, which was in the major fight. We arrived in time to observe part of the fight, but we were not used until late.

My best memory of AP Bac II will always be Tangos and Monitors “floating” by with the United States flag flying. The entire area was flat rice paddies early in the rain season with the fields being very wet. After dark my platoon was ordered to help the wounded—as I recall the wounded we found three or four were taken to a Tango for evacuation. One of my worst memories was finding my West Point classmate Fred Bertolino on the field.

The 9th Infantry Division was reactivated in the spring of 1966 for deployment in Vietnam—it was the first division formed for war since WWII. The forming of the division was unique with the brigades forming at the same time at differing stages of soldier training—one brigade received soldiers starting with basic training—one brigade with soldiers joining after basic training and undergoing advanced individual training, and one starting with troops fresh from advanced individual training with the units going into unit training.

The soldiers were primarily draftees. We were critically short of noncommissioned officers. The

Army was ramping up for Vietnam and NCOs were not available. For example, in my first assignment as a rifle platoon leader I had 2 NCOs—my platoon sergeant and my weapons squad leader. I should have had 13 NCOs—3 more E6s and 8 E5s. The good news was our young draftees responded magnificently with many filling the key NCO leadership positions.

I was one of my 27 West Point Classmates who joined the 9th. Doing the math, 27 was one third of the infantry platoon lieutenants in the division. Because of the rush to get officers to the division, we did not attend our 5-month long Infantry Officer Basic Course. We did attend the Army's 9 week-long Ranger Course which was a lifesaver for our knowledge and skills for Vietnam. We had less than 3 months with our platoons before deploying and in my case that included soldiers in Advanced Individual Training where we were not leading and training soldiers in unit operations.

Stories about the haste and shortages can go on and on. We trained with M-14 rifles and then were issued M-16s as we deployed; we did get to fire 10 rounds each.

We had 10 days leave before deploying. My weapons squad leader went AWOL, so I had only one NCO, SFC Claude Onley. When we arrived in Vietnam at Bear Cat, we spent a couple of days sorting everything out and then the brigade deployed for a “shakedown” operation to get us acclimated. On the second night, SFC Onley was killed in a horrible accident by one of my soldiers. The soldier was on outpost with another soldier and we lost contact with them. Onley thought they were sleeping and went out to check on them—an absolute don't ever do that. We believe Onley missed the outpost and when realizing where he was he approached the position from the right front—the enemy side. A young soldier in his second day in the field in Vietnam fired three rounds killing Onley. The platoon then had no NCOs—only a young, inexperienced lieutenant. The young draftees met their challenges.

A couple of days after Onley died, the battalion, 3/47th Inf, was sent into the Rung Sat Special Zone—the most god-awful place imaginable. We were sent there because of VC attacks against ships on the Soi Rap River going to Saigon. We were there about 6 weeks living in the mud with no showers or hot food. We were joined in our misery by the Navy! The Navy arrived in an assortment of boats “borrowed” from the Vietnam Navy. They were basically WWII landing craft. They were sent from heaven although we could now ride in boats to areas rather than walking through mangrove swamps.

After about 6 weeks, we were taken to Vung Tau where we billeted on a Navy troop ship (I think it was the *USS Henrico* APA-45) and conducted riverine training with the Navy—for us it meant riding around on boats—getting on and off a boat with a ramp is not a difficult task. Life was good on the ship with my soldiers sleeping in tiered racks 16 high—and maybe 8 or 6—but stacked. Officers fared better. The food was great and the showers better than great.

We then went to Dong Tam and conducted operations using helicopters, trucks, and Army LCMs for transport. Then the Navy arrived with the Tangos and Monitors—what a sight! We had a few operations along the Mekong with one major battle in May involving the new Navy boats. We were very impressed with the Navy firepower. I had moved to take over the battalion recon platoon that resulted in us working very early with the Navy in separate operations including reconning streams to see



L-R SSG Traux and Lt Howard Kirk E Co 3rd/47th Recon sharing a toast on a boat with SSG Traux going to Vung Tau after leaving the Rung Sat. My platoon had the first kills in the battalion.

where the boats could go. My platoon was initially billeted on the *USS Whitfield* City LST-1169—nice living except the first day we realized that going down many ladder steps—and then going up many ladder steps might make it hard to get out if water came in. We then moved to the *USS Benewah* APB-35—the ships the battalions were on could not hold everyone, so the recon platoons got to live on the *USS Benewah* APB-35. I have nice memories of the *USS Benewah* APB-35—great sailors who treated my soldiers extremely well, great food, good movies, hot showers, and on and on. When we were deploying in the middle of the night, we had a night meal where we could have anything they had. My favorite was a fresh loaf of bread with a stick of butter melting in it.

In June the MRF formally formed. Our first operation was in the northern Rung Sat. Then we went back to Dong Tam, and then in an incredible operation the MRF moved overnight to Long An Province and early the next morning launched the operation that led to Ap Bac II.

My personal memories of Ap Bac II include AWE—and I will always say AWE—was about the Navy guys! There is no doubt in my mind that Ap Bac II made the MRF a joint unit.

Enough of the memories as this is how we got to Ap Bac II. I had the honor of serving as the Aide-de-Camp to Bill Fulton when he was promoted to Brigadier General—and then again when he commanded the reactivated 9th Division at Fort Lewis. He wrote his book *Riverine Operations* while there and I enjoyed hours of reading and “editing” (spell checking). He refrained from writing about battle results and body counts as he wanted it to be history and the joint command.

I have posted the data on the MRFA website at these locations: www.mrfa.org:

1. Home Page >> Historical Data Project >> Infantry >> You'll see the article.

2. Home Page >> U.S. Army >> 9th Infantry Division Index >> You'll see the article.

Thanks to Howard for his efforts.

Warm Regards,

Mike Harris, webmaster and historian ★



Lt Howard Kirk Leaving Dong Tam. Kirk is the tall one.

River Currents Staff

Editor Albert Moore

Copy Editor Georginia Ardinger

Graphic Artist Robin Bartell

Mobile Riverine Force Association Membership Application Form

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MEMBERSHIP RATES

☐ 1 Year \$20 ☐ 3 Years \$50

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☐

To become a member, mail your check or money order (payable To MRFA) to Frank Jones, MRFA Membership Chairman, 9 San Marino Pkwy, Fenton, MO 63026-7513

2019 Reunion Plan

Dress Code: Dress is to be comfortable. Always wear a pair of comfortable shoes if you plan on visiting the local sites. Most of all just come and have a great time.

Individual Hospitality Rooms: Opening and closing of the individual hospitality rooms will be up to the different units.

We're hoping this will be the best reunion yet!

More detailed information to follow as we further develop the plan. ★

MRFA Reunion 2019 in Nashville, TN

August 29 to September 1, 2019

Start planning now for the 2019 MRFA Reunion in Nashville, TN. We will be at the Millennium Maxwell House Hotel. Check in will start on Thursday August 29 and the reunion will end on Sunday September 1.

We have had an unprecedented amount of reservations at the Millennium Maxwell House already. We only have a few rooms left at this hotel. All remaining rooms will be \$145 per night with breakfast included. The number to call for reservations is 1-800-457-4460 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please make sure to reference code 1908MRFAFJ when making your reservation on the hotel website, <http://www.maxwellhousehotel.com/>.

We have also arranged for an ADA accessible bus to transport our guests to the Opryland area, which includes stops at the Grand Ole Opry, the Opry Mills Mall, and the General Jackson riverboat tour. The bus will run on the hour from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. only on Friday August 30, 2019. The Millennium Maxwell House has a smaller shuttle every half hour to downtown Nashville from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m. every day.

This is a no pets allowed hotel. Service dogs are the only animals allowed.

There will be a BBQ on the covered pavilion Friday and Saturday for lunch. This is a cash BBQ.

The hotel parking is free. RV parking is allowed on the outer edges of the parking lot in the designated area only. No AC power is provided.

The Millennium Maxwell House will run a free daily shuttle service from the airport. Fill out a flight form (on the web site or in this newsletter) to co-ordinate an airport pickup by the Millennium Maxwell House Hotel only. This airport shuttle is not ADA approved. Those needing assistance with wheelchairs or scooters will need to call 1-615-256-7000 at least 2 days in advance to reserve a shuttle. We are sorry, but the ADA shuttles will have to be paid for by the members.

After the Millennium Maxwell House is filled, we will have a block of rooms at the Spring Hill Suites down the road from the Millennium Maxwell House. The Spring Hill Suites will be \$189 per night with breakfast included. Sorry for the cost but we cannot control their pricing. When the Spring Hill Suites rooms are filled, all members will have to find their own lodging. This area is called Metro Center. Spring Hill Suites does not have an airport shuttle. InShuttle Transportation offers roundtrip shuttle service to and from the Nashville airport to Spring Hill Suites for \$25 to \$30 per person. To book a shuttle, call 1-615-255-3519.

The cutoff date for reservations for both Millennium Maxwell House and Spring Hill Suites is July 27, 2019.

Hope to see you in Nashville!!

Frank Jones ★



MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Reunion Registration Form

August 29–September 1, 2019

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 2019 Reunion, c/o Frank Jones, 9 San Marino Parkway, fenton, MO 63026 before August 15, 2019. 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 2019 MRFA Reunion Flight Information Form and send to Diane Carroll as indicated on the form.

If you do not send the form to Diane, 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.

2019 MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Reunion Flight Information August 29 to September 1, 2019

Name(s): _____

Home Address: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Arrival Date	Airline	Flight Number INTO Nashville Airport	Arrival time INTO Nashville Airport	# of People Needing Ride
Departure Date	Airline	Flight Number FROM Nashville Airport	Departure Time FROM Nashville Airport	# of People Needing Ride

NOTE: Flight info due no later than August 14, 2019 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 form back to Diane Carroll by e-mail Diane.carroll@millenniumhotels.com; or fax to 1-615-254-8727; or mail to Diane Carroll, 2025 Rosa L. Parks Blvd., Nashville, TN 37228-1505, ATTN: 2019 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 1-615-259-4343, when you get into the Nashville 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.

Guests needing ADA transportation will be responsible for their own transportation. Call 1-615-865-4100 or 1-615-256-7000 to reserve a vehicle. Please call 2 to 3 days in advance.

Recollections: Remembering June 19, 1967

**Platoon Sergeant Dan Kerr
2nd Platoon, Charlie Company
Written April 5, 2014**

On the morning of June 19, I had just finished packing my bag to go on R&R on the next day. I was lying in my bunk on the ship when 1st Sergeant Crockett came hustling into the bay yelling, "Kerr, grab your gear and your weapon and report to the helo pad on the ship ASAP. Charlie Company is in a fierce firefight, and your platoon leader has been wounded." By the time I got to the helo pad, the chopper was already running, full of ammo and was ready to lift off. I did not find out this until our reunion, but Stan Cockerell was also on the chopper with me. Stan had been on sick call and was not given the okay to go out on patrol, but everyone was needed that day. Our chopper flew over the battle scene once before it landed. I helped Stan unload the ammo then asked someone where the 2nd platoon was located. I started to run in the direction of the platoon but enemy weapon's fire was too great, bullets hitting all around me. I dove behind a rice paddy dike and I never reached the platoon until that night when the firefight was finally over. I saw jets fly over and firing on the wrong side of the river; I could hear someone on the radio yelling to get the fire on the other side of the river. I was so scared that some of our guys were wounded or killed from friendly fire. I lost track of Stan somewhere as we maneuvered towards the 2nd Platoon and I did not know where he went. I remember our troopers getting on the Tangos and going down the river and assaulting the other side of the river, but that is all I can remember other than tallying up our losses for Lt. Jack Benedick at the battle's end. It was a brutal day to say the least.

The last day I saw my friend, Timothy A. Johnson.

Every time I think about that night a cowardly sniper shot and killed Timmy Johnson, I swell up with emotion and anger. Obviously, I do not know whom that sniper was, or whether the sniper was eventually killed in other battles or firefights, or if that person is still walking around today. Whenever I see Vietnamese people these days that would be of age for that period, I wonder, are you the one



This monument near Ap Bac Village, built after 1975 by local residents, memorializes the soldiers who lost their lives during the June 19, 1967 Battle. In typical communist propaganda, it honors their mighty victory over the 9th Infantry Division. The inscription reads (roughly): Soldiers of the Liberation Army, here in Can Giouc District (Long An Province), between the dates 5 June 67 and 20 July 67, defeated units of the 2nd Brigade of the US 9th Division, destroying 1,400 soldiers, 21 boats, and 12 jet aircraft.

who killed my friend. Sounds rather ridiculous I know. I should just let it go since it has been 35 years, but that was such a horrible day that I simply cannot forget.

I can still see Tim lying lifeless on a poncho there on the dirt floor of that old grass hooch. My friend Tim was gone. He was lying there in full battle gear with his steel helmet still on his head. The sniper's bullet had pierced through his helmet and Tim never had time to suffer as he was killed instantly. Tim, as usual was doing his job as a leader and as a diligent soldier. A superb soldier, he was always on guard and that is how his life ended—peering out a window, looking for any sign of enemy movement out there in the darkness. The battle, that 19th day of June 1967, had raged all day long and the shot down med-evac chopper still lay in a tangled heap upside down on the battlefield with Forrest Ramos and other dead troopers trapped inside. I suppose that is why Ramos' death is recorded officially as June 20, 1967, but I know that chopper went down on the 19th because I aided Ramos onto the



John Young's 2004 Trip to Vietnam. John served with the 1st Platoon, Charlie Company, 4th/47th Battalion, 2nd Brigade throughout 1967. Here's John Young on the old battlefield pointing out where the enemy had been entrenched and awaiting our arrival.



One of the small rivers near Ab Bac Village—it looks very peaceful today.

chopper telling him that everything was going to be all right, "You have a million dollar wound." Then those VC bastards shot it down shortly after it was airborne. I still have a lot of hate in me from that war and I guess that's why I remember it so well. I had just walked back into that hooch from my guard post on a make shift perimeter in the darkness to speak to Tim when I saw my friend and leader lying there on that poncho. I can't help but believe that just maybe if I had come back moments earlier to talk with my friend about how things were going he would not have been at that window.

Timmy Johnson is on guard forever now. Rest in peace, my friend. There is really nothing further I can add, except that in the days and patrols following that battle of June 19, I did some dark things that I am not proud of, as I was not in my right frame of mind—I took no prisoners. ★

USNS Corpus Christi Bay (T-ARVH-1), 1965–1973

EX USS Albemarle AV-5 Sea Plane Tender

USNS Corpus Christi Bay (T-ARVH-1) at anchor off Vung Tau, South Vietnam, circa 1967–1969. A pair of UH-1 "Huey" helicopters sit atop her aft flight deck.

Some of you that were in and out of Vung Tau must have seen the *Corpus Christi Bay*; she was stationed in Vung Tau for years anchored out in the harbor at Vung Tau. On 7 August 1964, MARAD transferred the ship—earmarked for conversion to a floating aeronautical maintenance facility for helicopters—back to the Navy. On 27 March 1965, the ship was reinstated on the Navy Vessel Register and received the new name and classification *USNS Corpus Christi Bay (T-ARVH-1)*, named for Corpus Christi Bay in the southern Texas Coastal Bend; the ship was transferred to the Military Sealift Command (MSC) on 11 January 1966. Converted at the Charleston Naval Shipyard to an Aircraft Repair Ship, Helicopter, *Corpus Christi Bay* emerged from the yard only faintly resembling her former self. Gone was the prominent seaplane ramp, aft, replaced by a built-up superstructure topped by

a helicopter landing pad measuring 50 ft (15 m) by 150 ft (46 m). Previously, damaged helicopters had to be transported back to the United States for refit; with the advent of this "new" ship type, repairs could be accomplished near the forward areas, damaged "helos" barged out to the ship and lifted onboard by two 20 short tons (18 t) capacity cranes.

Accepted by MSC in January 1966, *Corpus Christi Bay*'s first commander was Captain Harry Anderson, who had a crew of 129 men, a fraction of the ship's original complement, under him. Accompanying the ship on her first deployment in support of forces in Vietnam was the Army's 1st Transportation Corps Battalion (Seaborne), 308 aircraft technicians and specialists under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Harry O. Davis, USA. The ship operated out of Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam, during 1966. During the Vietnam War, *Corpus Christi Bay* participated in several campaigns from 1966 to 1969. Last anchored off Vung Tau, the ship left for the States in late 1972, stopping at Guam, Hawaii, and going through the Panama Canal up to its



USNS Corpus Christi Bay (T-ARVH-1) at anchor off Vung Tau, South Vietnam, circa 1967–1969. A pair of UH-1 "Huey" helicopters sit atop her aft flight deck.

home base of Corpus Christi, Texas, arriving in December, 1972. Ultimately determined by MSC to be "in excess of current and future requirements," *Corpus Christi Bay* was taken out of service in 1973 and berthed in ready reserve status at Corpus Christi, Texas.

Corpus Christi Bay was struck from the Naval Vessel Register on 31 December 1974. On 17 July 1975, the ship was sold to Brownsville (Texas) Steel and Salvage, Inc. for scrapping. ★

Being A Medic in a Recon Platoon

9th Infantry Division "Old Reliables" Page 61, By Jack Brunet

I arrived in Vietnam in November 1968 and after a week at Bear Cat at the Old Reliable Academy I was assigned to 3rd Battalion 39th Infantry, stationed at Rach Kien in Long An Province. This battalion had the distinction of sharing the base camp with the local civilian population. At first I was quite concerned because what I had heard the civilians would do if they had the opportunity to the American GIs. But for the 7 months I was at Rach Kien, we got along well with the civilians and I made friends with a number of them.

Soldiers of the 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, U.S. Army hold their weapons and supplies high as they cross a deep stream on a search-and-destroy mission in the delta near Rach Kien, south of Saigon during the Vietnam War, April 20, 1967.

After I got to Rach Kien, I was assigned to be the medic for the battalion Recon platoon. Most of the time on patrol, we went out with just our platoon and did a lot more walking than the other platoons. It usually seemed to be a game of hide-and-seek. Rach Kien seemed to get mortared quite often and after one heavy attack, the following evening about sunset we were to walk out, patrol and set up an ambush outside of town hoping we could ambush the ones mortaring us. Rach Kien got mortared again that night and we could see in the distance where the mortars were being fired from, but we did not see any evidence of the enemy all night long.

The next morning we saddled up and did a little more patrolling before heading back to Rach Kien. Our point man came up to an old abandoned hooch or what was left of it. He got the surprise of his life. There were four or five Viet Cong sitting there eating. They were probably the ones who had mortared us the previous night. They saw each other about the same time. The Viet Cong took off running and firing their weapons at the point man. The point man fired his weapon at the VC. None of the guys in the platoon were wounded but we thought we wounded at least two of the VC. They took off so fast we lost them.

On another patrol about 2 months later, we were patrolling an area north of Rach Kien. It was about ten o'clock at night and we came upon a well-built hooch in the countryside where there was a lot of activity going on. There were lights shining from the inside of the hooch and a lot of talking and noise. Our first reaction was that the VC were holding a rally. We slowly and carefully sneaked up to the hooch and surrounded it. Being the platoon medic, I usually stayed with the platoon leader and the radioman. The platoon leader and a couple guys barged into the hooch with rifles at the ready. There were a number of people in the hooch and they were surprised and scared upon seeing us. We had walked into a well-to-do family having a birthday party for one of their kids. It could have been a disastrous situation but after we secured the area we joined into the birthday party a little bit ourselves. Being a medic in a Recon platoon was always interesting and you never knew what to expect. ★

First M-79 Shot Routs Invaders

Ninth Infantry Division The Old Reliable, May29, 1968, Page 1

SAIGON—The first M-79 round fired in combat by Sergeant Darwin Gault was instrumental in securing the southern fringe of Saigon from the initial enemy thrust.

Gault, 24, of Atlanta, GA, a squad leader with Company C., 5th Mechanized Battalion, 60th Infantry, had entered Saigon May 7 aboard an armored personnel carrier and was stationed near the Y Bridge at the center of the Kinh Doi Canal.

When the enemy's pre-dawn assault was halted by a shield of burning lead from the APC guns, the VC fell back and tried to knock out the vehicles with anti-tank rockets.

The first projectile slammed into the bridge railing; the second whizzed high and detonated harmlessly in the canal; and the third was never launched.

"I saw the first two rockets being fired from the window of a building about 150 yards away," recalled Gault. "I picked up an M-79 grenade launcher although I had never fired one at the Cong before."

"I never heard the grenade explode," he said, "but it must have been right there because there was a blinding ball of fire, followed by the explosions of a great number of rockets."

With their positions destroyed, the VC could not hope to knock out the 5th/60th tracks. Another desperate ground attack met the same fate as the first onslaught and the insurgents withdrew leaving 35 dead at the bridge approaches. ★



Memories Onboard the USS Askari ARL-30

By Orville Daley (07/67-07/68)

I was stationed at the U.S. Naval Air Station in Dallas, Texas, when I got my orders back to sea duty to go to the *USS Askari* ARL-30. I asked the yeoman to check and see where it was. So later he said it was in Vietnam. I had 30 days leave to get to San Francisco, CA, and to Travis AFB for the flight to Vietnam. That was a long time in the air, but we stopped overnight before going into Saigon.

I met this First Class ship serviceman on the plane. He also was going to the *USS Askari* ARL-30. We stayed in Saigon for 2 days. That was too long, so then we got a hop to Vung Tau and the next day we got onboard a tug boat up to Dong Tam. The tug captain said to me, "Well, I'll make it."

So I checked in and met all of the cooks. We did not have that many cooks. I went to work baking at night. I made about 90 to 100 loaves of bread a night plus pies and cakes. I also helped the cooks out. I sure met a lot of good shipmates aboard.

I will never forget the time when the XO used to stop by at night while I was baking and I always had a coke at the end of the table. He asked one night if he could have a drink. I said to him, "You would not like it. I can get you one from the cooler." He said, "No, I would like yours." I said, "OK," so he took a good drink. He said, "That was the best coke I ever had." It had run in it.

I also had a good helper with me at night. His name was Paul Erasmus. I will tell you all the crew sure worked their butts off day and night. When we had a slowdown, we would have a Barge Party with good cold beer and cookouts. I had the keys to the coolers. I always had lots of friends. They were the corpsmen, the barbers, and the laundrymen.

When I had time off, I used to see all the boats that were alongside of the ship to be worked on. Some of them were shot up pretty bad with big holes in them. I know some of the crew did not make it back; sometimes we had about 25 to 30 boats alongside. I was so happy I was not on one of them.

When we moved up river sometimes we were damn close to land and that was scary. My GQ station was on the AFT mount.

I could go on and on, but I will stop now. I was proud to have served aboard the *USS Askari* ARL-30 and also I met some of the Korean War mates of the *USS Askari* ARL-30.

Lee The Baker ★





Boats Of RivRon 13

Snoopy's Nose After Action Report 13 July 1968

1. Operations:

A. The 4/39th Inf Bn was back loaded vic XS 195 472 at 130645H with intentions of proceeding to a PZ vic XS 183 383 for air mobile lift, however, as RAC transited down Rach Ba Rai enemy fire was received from both banks between XS 197 407 and XS 180 407, fire was returned and suppressed (my spotrep 130100Z and 130230Z Refer.) Co 3rd Bde and CTG 117.2 made decision to land 4/39 Inf Bn on both sides of entrance to Ba Rai. After beach prep, C Co was landed vic XS 190402 abt 0945hr. As A Co made beaching approach vic XS 172 406 aw fire was received from the beach. B Co was landed vic of XS 174 405 at 1046 hr. While beached vic 172 406 at 1136 hr T-131-8 received underwater explosion while adjusting position on beach. (my spotrep DTG 130410Z July refers.) At 1255 hr. as T-131 13 was beaching vic XS 173 406, an underwater explosion blew an 18 inch hole in lazaret (my spotrep 130550Z July refers.) No personnel casualties from either explosions. Salvage ops begun and both boats remained beached. Several boats beached in vic T-8 and T-13 and all RAC will remain inside of perimeter throughout night while salvage ops continue.

B. RAD 131 boats were refueled by *Windham County* in relays this afternoon.

C. *Windham County* remaining vic junction Song My Tho/Ham Loung. Shifted anchorage as a defensive measure.

D. Abt 1600 hr T-131-1 with army flame unit escorted M-111-3 (monitors were switched during one refueling run para 1.8) transited to Cai before recharging without incident. Flame was expended during this AM firefight.

E. M-111-3 and A-92-6 arrived from MRG Alfa at 131200 hr.

2. Maintenance:

A. Following RAC sustained battle damage:

1. T-131-5 heat round through MK 19 mount. Weapon damaged beyond repair. Heat round through stbd side under 20mm mt. Minor damage to bar armor and hole in armor plate at base of 20 mm mt.

2. T-131-13 underwater explosion caused an 18-inch hole in port shaft tunnel in lazaret. Will require lift.

3. T-131-8 underwater explosion caused an 18-inch hole in hull under stbd fuel tank. Eng room flooded. Will require lift.

B. Following additional material discrepancies exist:

1. T-131-2 port engine has broken crank shaft.

2. A-111-3 contaminated fuel system.

3. T-131-6 port engine still inoperative.

3. Supply/Support:

A. If present tempo of ops continues 40 mm HE, it will be in short supply only 40-mm ammo avail is what is on mike boats. My 130550Z Jul 68 applies.

B. *Windham County* provided outstanding service to RAS boats with chow, cokes, fuel and water, DC equipment, and shipfitters to AO on short notice.

4. Comments/Observations/Recommendations:

A. Casualties from this morning's action were as follows: 7 USA WIA, 2 dustoff and 9 USN WIA, 2 dustoff, one of which remained in Dong Tam,



Ralph Bigelow



Snoopy's Nose

Source: BuNavRec

Subject: RAS 13 after action report

Place: Rach Ba Rai (Snoopy's Nose)

Date: 13 July 1968

Daily OPSUM 13 Jul 68

the other medivaced to Long Binh.

B. After landing of 4/39 Inf Bn the troops sweep through the ambush site and discovered 2 VC KIA (one floating and one in small bunker) the KIAs were credited to CTU 117.3 by Army. Several blood trails were also noted.

C. From all indications damage sustained by T-131-8 and T-131-13 were from contact mines or trip wire activated mine which detonated as boats beached. There were no indications of command detonation.

D. For oprep 5 *Windham County* expended 40 rds 300 Dong Tam anchorage. RAS 13 will report ammo expenditure separate msg. Boat usage and AO's in previous opsum.

5. Future Plans/Future Operations:

A. Plan transit T-131-8, T-131-13 and escorts with A-111-3 and M-91-2 to Dong Tam as soon as patched, pumped and floated.

B. When above completed remaining RAD 131 units will remain vic mouth of Rach Ba Rai were 4/39th Bn will ron.

C. Plan transit RAD 131 units and *Windham County* to Dong Tam at AM 14 July if salvage ops go on sked.

D. Stand down and effect boat repairs. ★



Night Ambush Memories

Paul George: After posting my video clip of Tra Cu, I got to reminiscing about some of the things we used to do at Tra Cu. I was the boat engineer (i.e., rear gunner) on A-112-8. One of our missions was to go out on night ambushes. As far as I know, only PBRs and ASPBs (alpha boats) went out on night ambushes. While we didn't have quite the speed and maneuverability of a PBR, we did pretty well. As I remember, we always took a left onto the Vam Co Dong River coming out of the canal at Tra Cu which meant that we were heading towards Cambodia. We used to go out in pairs . . . one boat would take the lead and the other would trail by roughly 100 yards. We went out when there was little moon or the trees overhanging the river bank blocked out much of the light. Either way, we couldn't make out much of anything on the river bank. The coxswain made heavy use of the radar; both for navigating up the river and also for keeping an eye out for any sampans that might be trying to infiltrate men and weapons into the delta from Cambodia. I don't remember us ever engaging any enemy in boats while traveling up river. Most of our fun came when we shut off the engines and drifted into shore. Now picture this . . . you're idling down the river with no running lights (obviously) and the shore is just a dark blob. The only thing you hear are the engines idling and all of the sudden the engines are shut down and you turn into the beach. Every sense you have is straining to try to see what you're headed for . . . You can't hear anything and the shoreline is dark with black blobs where the bushes are. You only hope that there isn't a group of VC or NVA waiting for you. The boat finally reaches the shore and the bow noses upon to the bank. Now it gets real interesting . . . assuming no one was there to greet you, your job is to sit there and wait for someone to come traipsing down the river bank and walk into our ambush. Again, you're straining your eyes to see any movement and now your mind is starting to play tricks on you. Did that bush just move? The so-called pucker-factor is at about 110%!

I heard that one boat came up on the river bank (and maybe this was just a story) and was greeted by a genuine tiger. Our boat had one real memorable night that I'll never forget. It was a typical dark night and we cut the boat engines and were drifting into the shoreline. Again, it is dead quiet and everyone's senses are heightened and we are straining to hear the slightest sound. There's a piece of hardware on the boats called a bilge alarm. Attached to the bilge alarm is a water level sensor that will set off a Klaxon horn if the water level gets too high in the bilges. After all, you don't want to sink. Now, the coxswain is supposed to turn off the bilge alarm via a switch on the coxswain's panel. This night he forgot to shut off the alarm. Now, we're drifting into the shoreline, ears straining for the slightest sound. The bow of the boat hits the shoreline, the bow noses up and all the water in the bilge rushes to the stern of the boat and sets off the bilge alarm. All of the sudden this super loud Klaxon goes off and I just about shit my pants. I hear a G**D*** from the coxswain as he lights the engines off and we're reversing it off the beach at full speed. After we got down the river a bit, we all laughed our asses off even though I'm sure there were no clean shorts on the boat that night.

However, it wasn't all laughs. We made a couple of contacts. I never recall seeing anything from my position on the stern of the boat, but when the .50 forward mount opened up, everyone else just followed suit. Most nights we made no contact. We would change locations a few times and by then it was time to head back to Tra Cu. Time to hit the rack and get a few hours of sleep before it got too hot to sleep.

Steve Olson: Great story!!

Byron Dittamore (T132-12, June 68 to June 69): Wouldn't call it a night ambush, but Tangos, with a helo pad, would idle down the river with a sniper on the flight deck. Occasionally, we would hear a sound like "phut" and the sniper would say "That's one." Oh yea, we didn't use radar to navigate, one of us would be using the night scope, telling the coxswain to go left, right, faster slower, etc. ★



Leaders of the 65th Inf Platoon, Combat Trackers. From left to right: SSG Loquist, SFC Clark, SSG Marnell, Lt. Mercer, and Sgt Huggins.

Nebraska Native Led Combat Tracker Team in Vietnam

By Skip Vaughn Rocket editor skip.vaughn@theredstonerocket.com
Apr 15, 2015

The memory still bothers Roger Marnell. It was the thought that his unit didn't pursue a possible American captive of the Viet Cong because leadership didn't want to violate the Christmas truce in 1968.

Marnell was then a staff sergeant leading a combat tracker team with the 9th Infantry Division in Dong Tam, Vietnam. They received a mission to load onto a helicopter for a reconnaissance flight over the Plain of Reeds on the Cambodian border. The helicopter circled the area for about 30 minutes watching troops moving in the so-called elephant grass, which was 7 to 8 feet high. They returned to the Dong Tam airfield where the pilot shut down the engine and told them that a "Caucasian had been spotted on the ground" with the North Vietnamese troops and they were to return to the area, track him on the ground and find him.

But while circling in the air, they received a radio call to return to Dong Tam "because higher-ups were concerned that we would violate the Christmas truce," Marnell recalled.

"Of course the VC (Viet Cong) violated it every day. The pilot was so mad, he was livid," he said. "To this day, you have to wonder if that individual was a Russian adviser that they had over there or an American captive. It always bothers me to think, 'Couldn't you have done something for him.' To this day, I wonder who it was on the ground out there."

Each division had one combat tracker team per brigade plus one reserve team. Their role was to re-establish contact with the enemy after ambushes or firefights. If they located the enemy, the infantry would come in and do a sweep. Most of the time, the tracker team would be helicoptered to a site to follow a blood trail.

"One of the big problems over there was booby traps. There were booby traps everywhere so we had to always be careful we didn't trip a booby trap on our team," Marnell said.

His best friend was the team leader of a 25-member tracker team that got hit with a combat-detonated bomb. "We lost five out of that group," Marnell said.

On another mission, Marnell and his fellow soldiers were on a landing craft in the waters of the Mekong Delta. They were fired upon as soon as they landed on one of the islands. After the firefight, he and others volunteered to help evacuate a wounded infantry soldier who had been shot in the stomach. The four of them waded through chest-deep water holding the wounded soldier overhead on a poncho. The soldier was evacuated by helicopter.

"We found out later he died on the way to the hospital," Marnell said. "You do your best trying to get a guy out, you know." ★

“
One of the big
problems over there
was booby traps...
There were booby
traps everywhere
”

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

A Dose of Agent Orange

By Larry Hare, Tangos 91-5, 92-7, and 92-9 (11/68-08/69)

It was Saturday, February 1, 1969, and Operation GIANT SLINGSHOT was in effect. My boat was Tango 92-7 based off the *USS Harnett County* LST-821. At Ben Luc on the Vam Co Dong river, we had loaded 20 drums of defoliant (later known as Agent Orange) and a pump into our well deck in order to spray along the banks of the river to kill vegetation and keep the VC from setting up ambushes close to the river's edge and also to expose arms, munitions and supplies buried in caches along the river bank. Ron Arnold and I were standing outside the well deck on the starboard side of the boat with a fire hose that Arnold was



Larry Hare

long before we began receiving sniper fire. Before I could return fire, Arnold dropped the fire hose; not shutting the valve off, the nozzle hit the deck and shot chemical straight up into my face. I had Agent Orange in my mouth, nose, and eyes and I couldn't see a thing. At that moment, we both dove into the well deck on top of the drums. I was drenched with this stuff, so A.



USS Harnett Cty LST 821



Ben Luc

J. our radioman called back to the base and advised them of the situation. The reply was to rinse me off with water.

I was lucky that day and know things could have gone different in many ways.

I often think about the many veterans who have suffered illnesses or died from exposure to Agent Orange and realize how fortunate I have been not to have any known effects after receiving such a concentrated dose. ★

When and How the LSTs Became APBs Yavapai (APB-42) Ex LST-676

A county in central Arizona established on 21 December 1864 and named for the Yavapai Indians of the Yuma language group. The name itself means "people of the sun."

(LST-676: displacement 3,960 (trial); length 28'0"; beam 50'0"; draft 11'2"; speed 10.0 knots; complement 151' armament 7 40 millimeter, 12 20 millimeter; class LST-542).

LST-676 was laid down on 22 April 1944 at Ambridge, PA, by the American Bridge & Iron Co.; launched on 6 June 1944; sponsored by Mrs. C. F. Goodrich; and commissioned, at New Orleans, LA, on 30 June 1944, Lt. Pat Munroe, USNR, in command.

LST-676 departed New Orleans on 7 July 1944 for Florida and conducted shakedown training out of St. Andrews Bay, 2 weeks filled with drills of every description ranging from firefighting to abandon ship and from gunnery to beaching exercises. Returning to New Orleans following her shakedown, LST-676 took the tank landing craft LCT-900 onboard on her main deck and sailed on 2 August for Cuba, arriving at Guantanamo Bay on the 9th, enroute to Panama.

Reaching Colon on 16 August 1944, LST-676 took onboard 105 army passengers for transportation to the West Coast and transited the Panama Canal that day. After discharging her passengers at San Pedro, CA, on 1 September, LST-676 sailed for Hawaii and arrived at Pearl Harbor on the 14th.

While at Pearl Harbor, LST-676 received word that she had been selected for conversion to a logistics vessel for landing craft, a self-propelled barracks ship. The need for large numbers of small craft in the amphibious operations of the American campaign in the Pacific (craft and ships such as LCIs, LCTs, SCs, PCs, PCSs and YMSs) meant logistics headaches. Those vessels needed fuel, water, and provisions



1944

just like the larger ships; and thus specialized ships for supporting them were needed, too.

Still another large group of small craft needing support was the LCs and LCVs left behind when their transports sortied on night retirements from the beaches. The idea of a barracks ship came apparently, from Capt. Stanley Leith, operations officer for Commander, Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet, Vice Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner. When Leith suggested to Turner that LSTs be converted to serve as "mother ships," the admiral readily agreed, and a program to make these changes was promptly launched.

However, before her conversion, LST-676 was to perform one more duty as a true LST, lifting a detachment of Marines and their equipment to Hilo, Hawaii. She returned to Pearl Harbor on 2 October 1944 to moor at the Waipio Amphibious Operating Base at West Loch.

There the landing ship underwent the conversion to a self-propelled barracks ship of the *Benewah* (APB-35) class. Sixteen large refrigeration units were installed, as was stowage for dry provisions. Berthing space was provided at the after end of the former tank deck. One Quonset hut was added topside to provide a wardroom and quarters for transient officers and another was erected for a bakery and galley. Besides those main deck structures, the ship received portable distilling tanks to produce fresh water and several storage tanks for it.

Thus, equipped to furnish fuel, water, fresh and dry provisions, the

ship, reclassified as a modified LST, LST(M)-676, conducted her shakedown at Hilo before she put into the Supply Depot at Pearl Harbor. There she loaded 385 tons of fresh, frozen, and dry provisions, and, in addition, embarked 8 officers and 198 men from a boat pool for transportation. On 24 January 1945, LST(M)-676 departed Pearl Harbor, via Eniwetok and Guam, bound for Iwo Jima.

The Iwo Jima campaign marked the first time that LST(M)s were utilized in operations. On the D-plus-one day at Iwo Jima, 20 February 1945, LST(M)-676 proceeded to an anchorage about one-half mile south of Mount Suribachi, the scene of the famous flag-raising, and soon began tending the assault boats carrying men and equipment to "Green" and "Yellow" beaches.

During the ensuing 10 days of the operation to capture Iwo Jima, the converted LST fed 3,499 men and berthed 2,307; LCIs, SCs, and LSTs took on a total of 75,527 pounds of fresh and dry provisions, 37,250 gallons of water; and 89,334 gallons of fuel oil. Even after the island was considered secured, LST(M)-676 remained in the vicinity, taking part in the occupation and garrisoning of the island and furnishing logistics support for the ships and landing craft in the area.

LST(M)-676 remained at Iwo Jima until 27 April 1945. During the time she spent there supporting the invasion and occupation of that key island, she fed 27,823 officers and men and berthed 12,350. She transferred some 561 tons of fresh and dry provisions between 275 ships ranging in size from destroyers to LCTs. In addition, 203 ships received some 305,884 gallons of water between them, and 95 ships took on 324,030 gallons of fuel.

Retiring to Guam after the successful conclusion of the Iwo Jima operation, the ship there received

word that she had been given the name *Yavapai* and redesignated APB-42, effective on 1 May 1945. She affected repairs at Guam before she departed that island in late June, bound for Okinawa.

Yavapai arrived at Okinawa almost at the height of the campaign. Called upon to take over the function of provisioning small craft, *Yavapai* anchored off the Hagushi beachhead to proceed with her vital duties. During daylight hours, the ship provided logistics support to ships and small craft; at night, she manned the antiaircraft batteries against the almost ever-present Japanese raiding aircraft.

Some 556 ships came alongside during the days *Yavapai* spent at Okinawa and, when the end of the war came in mid-August 1945, she was still at Okinawa, performing her "over the counter" logistics function there. She subsequently participated in Operation Campus, the occupation of the southern half of Korea. Arriving at Jinsen, Korea (later known as Inchon), on 12 September, *Yavapai* provided food, fuel, and water; "mothered" a 300-man boat pool; and acted as station ship for their activities.

The barracks ship remained in the Far East into the spring of 1946. She served two tours at Jinsen (from 12 September 1945 to 31 January 1946 and from 21 February 1946 to 8 April 1946) and two at Tsingtao, China (from 1 to 20 February 1946 and from 9 to 14 April 1946), before she sailed for the United States. After proceeding via Okinawa and Pearl Harbor, *Yavapai* transited the Panama Canal on 11 June and arrived at the Charleston Naval Shipyard, Charleston, SC, on 20 June.

Decommissioned there on 3 December 1946, *Yavapai* was placed in reserve and remained in that status into the late 1950s before being stricken from the Navy list.

LST(M)-676 received one battle star for her World War II service. ★

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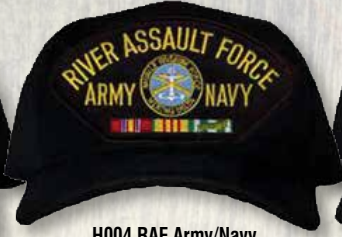


H001 MRFA Vietnam

H002 9th Inf Div Vietnam



H003 RAF TF-117



H004 RAF Army/Navy



H005 Old Reliables
9th Inf Div Vietnam



H006 USS Benewah Patch



H008 USS Colleton APB-36



H009 39th Infantry Regiment
w/black 6"x3" patch on black cap
(covers 2nd/39th, 3rd/39th, and
4th/39th 9th Inf Div)

H010 47th Inf Regiment
w/black 6"x3" patch on black cap
(covers 2nd/47th, 3rd/47th, and
4th/47th 9th Inf Div)

H011 60th Infantry Regiment
w/black 6"x3" patch on black cap
(covers 2nd/60th, 3rd/60th, and
5th/60th 9th Inf Div)

Mesh Back Hats



H017 Combat
Infantryman



H018 Purple Heart



H019 9th Med Bn Dong Tam Vietnam



H020 Combat Medic Vietnam



H021 U.S. Navy
Corpsman Vietnam



H012 MRF PUC



H013 MRF Svc Ribbon



H014 9th Inf. Div PUC



H015 9th Inf. Div. Vietnam
SVC Ribbon



H016 MRF CAR Vietnam



H022 Silver Star
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H023 Bronze Star
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black cap

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Do You Remember?

By Gerald E. Barney A-1 9th Signal Bn (02/66-11/67)

Story 1: This happened at our arrival in-country, while enroute via Route 15 in an area secured by the 1st Australian Task Force. The Vietnamese children along the route were yelling "Number 1, Number 1," much to our disappointment! As we were the 9th Division and we knew the 1st ATF was guarding the way. So being the NFGs in-country, we began to yell "No, No, Number 9, Number 9." Of course it took a 1ATF Sergeant, with tears in his eyes because he was laughing so hard, to bring us back to our senses with an explanation that "Number 1" meant Number 1 GI and that Number 10 meant NO GOOD.

Story 2: Upon arrival at Camp Bear Cat I was called in by our lieutenant who proceeded to explain to me how I had been volunteered and that I was about to receive one of the most important assignments of my young career. He "painted" this picture of my task with great care, even explaining if I had to use any ammo on this adventure, I would be held accountable. He then marched me to the target site which turned out to be a ¼ ton trailer dripping some type of liquid from it. "My God," I thought, I'm going to be killed by radioactivity on my first day in-country." Then the lieutenant stepped back several paces and ordered me to throw back a corner of the tarp. Much to my surprise, the tarp was covering a "ton" of various beers in ice!! My job? To keep the two legged rats from it, so the company commander could present his troops with a surprise later that evening.

Story 3: Remember the apparent tear gas attack on Camp Bear Cat in early '67? Well, I certainly do! There I was doing my duty for my country, pulling KP, and went to toss some used #10 cans into the trash barrel. How was I to know that some yo-yo had placed a torn bag of powder in the barrel before I got there?! When my #10 cans hit the powder it exploded into my first nightmare. I remember being blinded and staggering towards a "water buffalo (potable water type)." By the time I had half drowned myself and flushed my eyes enough to partly see again, the whole camp was on full alert to stop the impending attack! My second nightmare was explaining how I was just an innocent GI in this scenario.

From the Membership

Charlie and Georgie,

Thank you both for all of the generous and faithful work you both have provided to the MRFA over the years. You along with our favorite Cook have been the nuts and bolts that have kept this association together.

As all of us know our health is our most important possession in this world so sit back and relax and take care of yourselves. Thank you again for a job well done. Bravo Zulu.

Bob Flaige E/3/60

To Fellow MRFA Friends and Members

This is your Memorial Museum Driver just letting you know about our past summer.

We only had three events to attend so it wasn't real stressful.

First we went to Chicago over the 4th of July weekend. We set up at the naval base for 3 days as they had a military display/celebration.

We then went to New Lisbon, Wisconsin, for a car show at the American Legion. This turned out well and it was enjoyed by the public. They did a nice job.

Last we went to Decorah, Iowa, to a benefit with Thunder Rode—a group that give rides on horseback to qualified veterans and the general public. The people enjoy the horseback ride and the veterans get to talk to a Veteran's Administrative Officer, if they want.

We have now tucked it away for the winter and looking forward to next year's get together in Nashville. Hope everyone is well and look forward to seeing you in 2019.

Facebook Members Relate to Offloading a Tango Boat

Facebook Mobile Riverine Force Association and 9th Infantry Division

If you haven't registered for this page, do so you will find and meet a lot of Army and Navy Brothers of Vietnam. You want be disappointed.

Ray Ellis: This was some kind of scary sh..when that door dropped didn't know what was about to happen.

Robert Hoelle: How could we ever forget?

Bill Brinton: Won't ever forget.

Ted Garcia: Things to remember long time ago.

Frank Marshall: Yes it is scary I was the point man for plt and sometimes for the company so first off boats is hell.

Jim Gridley: Always hated that moment.

Robert Stumpf: Such a clear and vivid memory....

Joseph Focosi Sr.: I'll always remember! Kept thinking of the mud as I got off.

Roger Watson: I particularly remember offloading in the Rung Sat.

Robert Hoelle: M-60 gunners were typically one of the first off the ramp when it went down.

Dennis Polisano: Something you never forget. Always thinking Charlie was waiting for you hiding in the jungle.....

Ronald Mayeaux: I will never forget.

Richard Curtis Bee: My Tango boat did this countless times.

Chuck McCammon: Many times, Albert, more than that, the memory never fades.

Jim Kenney: Worst one I was involved in was a quick pick up and relocate troops from ambush. We got fully engaged. Don't remember too much. There is no thinking; just reaction doing what you do.

Jim Day: Some things you can't forget.

John Adame: I remember the mud.

Ron McClain: I probably hid behind you John.

John Adame: I knew I had a good backup.

Steven Vitale: For 13 months—kind of hard to forget.

Zev Goldman: I do, but it was South Vietnamese Marines.

Dave Knapp: I don't remember—grass only, mud, and Nipa Palm.

Russell Pollard: I was always concerned that we would get an AK-47 or machine gun shower when the ramp was dropped. An RPG blast was not out of the question either. If I knew the coordinates ahead of time I would place DEFCONS about 60 plus meters from the drop site.

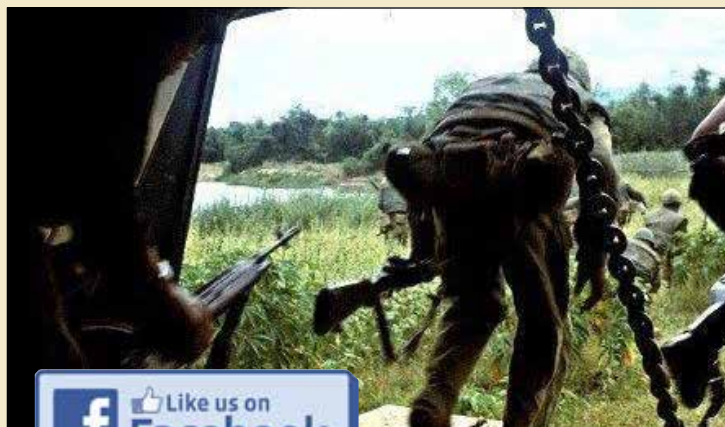
Rodney Mugs Steed: Very well explained.

Barry Greever: Too many times !!

James E. Foster: I rather reload.

William Mccollum: As a Tango Boat crewman, never had the pleasure. Felt for you 9th guys having to do it.

Ron Mason: I was a 20-mm gunner on Tango 131-12. I remember



The Mobile Riverine Force and 9th Infantry Division Vietnam Page. After you send a request to join the group, Bob Pries will approve your request to join the group.

very well. These guys were tuff and kicked butt. Some things you remember forever. Welcome Home to all my River Rat Brothers.

Lanny Snyder: Remember it well. I was the snipe on T-92-6. Was always happier when the ramp was back.

Ray Ellis: I don't know which was more nerve racking, the boats dropping the ramp or going to a LZ in a helicopter.

Ronnie Johnson: Like yesterday... mud, heat, noise, and bullets!

Ron McClain: Many scary exits in only 5 months.

Ken Gorsuch: Too many times I lost count. I liked the birds better. You could at least see what we were



getting into.

David Graves: Absolutely!!

Barry Baron: Will never forget..... ★

TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One



Hauser

Robert W. Hauser passed away February 22, 2014. While in Vietnam, he served in River Assault Division 152 onboard Tango 49 (1969-70). Robert was residing in Mount Pleasant, PA, at the time of his passing.



Layton

Member Robert Eugene Layton passed away February 3, 2018. Robert served on A-111-3 (03/68-03/69). You may contact the family c/o Verna Layton, 1219 S Evergreen Ave, Chanute, KS 66720-2955, 620-431-0492, grammyandpapa66720@yahoo.com.



Swart

Member BMC John E. Swart (USN Ret.) passed away March 11, 2017. While in Vietnam, he served with River Assault Squadron 13, River Assault Division 132 onboard T-132-1 (04/68-04/69). You may contact the family c/o Darlene Swart, 7084 Hwy 100, Bon Aqua, TN 37025-1384, 615-804-5415.



Walker



Walker

Dale Allen Walker passed away April 4, 2018. Dale served with River Assault Squadron 11 (02/69-06/69). After the Division was turned over to the South Vietnamese Navy, Dale transferred to RAS 15 where he served as Boat Captain on A-152-21 until he was wounded October 23, 1969. Dale was residing in the Jacksonville/Tyler, Texas, at the time of his passing.



Davis



Davis

Robert J. Davis passed away October 28, 2018, following a courageous battle against an extremely rare disease called "Stiff-person Syndrome" (SPS). While

in Vietnam he served with Charlie Company, 3rd Platoon, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Division from April 1968 to December 1969. At the time of his passing Robert lived in Westville, Illinois.



Vreeland

Member Walter "Steve" Vreeland was a member of the MRFA since 2015. He served on the USS *Page County* LST-1076 as part of the Mobile Riverine Force (04/68-01/72) during the Vietnam War. He later served in the New Jersey Army National Guard and retired with 20 years' service. In civilian life, he was a Lieutenant of Detectives with the Bergen County NJ Prosecutor's Office.

Steve passed away June 10, 2018, at the age of 68 leaving behind his wife, Deborah of 45 years. You may contact the family c/o Deborah Vreeland, 32 Colgate Rd, Oakland, NJ 07436-3625, deborahvreeland@gmail.com.



Jefferson

Member Paul H. Jefferson passed away October 18, 2018. Paul served on Tango 132-26 (05/69-05/70). You may contact the family c/o Deborah Jefferson, 825 Bayshore Dr, Ellenton, FL 34222-3100, debbiejffrson@yahoo.com. May our Brother Paul rest in peace.

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.

A fellow veteran, Harold & Beverly Bailey, David Blossom, Kimberly Butler, Delmar & Diane Cable, Robert & Barbara Crowley, Dean & Karen Despelder, Dick & Lisa Dorato, Steve & Leah Futch, Godfrey Lee Education Association, Lois J Host, J. H. & S. L. Nauta, Mrs. Artel Scheid, Gabriel S Snyder, Karen & Mark Vander Vliet, John F. Williams, David & Lavonne Yoder, and Connie L Young in memory of David Donovan HHC 3rd/47th Inf (01/67-12/67)

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9th Inf Div

Janice Dahlke for son Cpl. Randy R. Mueller D Co. 2nd/47th KIA 03/03/69

Orville Daley for my good buddy Merle Haggard, one of the greatest names in country music, 1937-2016

Fran Divilbiss for Cdr. Dave Divilbiss, Supply Officer on Staff COMRIVFLOT ONE, USS Benewah APB-35

(1966-68)

Sgt Robert Flaige for SP4 Robert "Bob" Jenks E Co. 3rd/60th KIA 03/03/68

From your Brothers B Co. 2nd 39th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division in memory of Monte Marten B Co.

2nd/39th (04/68-04/69)

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Regina Gooden for Sgt Lloyd Earl Valentine B Co. 3rd/47th KIA 09/05/68

Leo Haynes for my fellow plank owner and buddy Don Grier GM2 USS Benewah. He died in a car crash in 2003

James Henke and Dave Nelson for James Callan, Sgt Tony Spradling, Sgt Gerald Thurman, Spec James

B. Johnson, and all our Brothers lost on June 19, 1967, from A Co. 4th/47th 9th in AP BAC, Long An

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131-1 (May 69-May 70). We do this in his honor and remembrance.

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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)

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Chet "Gunner" Stanley for all the USN and USA KIAs of the MRF (1967-70)

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02/01/68, and Glenn Dean Taylor 5th/60th KIA 02/01/68

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3rd/47th

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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 Schnieder MR2

USS Guide MSO-447 for Shipmate and Brother Harold Foster

Henry Velez for my fallen brothers, B Co. 2nd/39th Inf

CPT Steve Williams and MAJ Bob Bischoff in memory of 2LT David George Williams, Co A, 4/47th, KIA

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