



River Currents

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Riverine Infantry 9th
Infantry Division

A PUBLICATION OF
THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

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From the Radio Shack

Hello Everyone!!! The reaction to our upcoming reunion in 2019 continues to be overwhelming. The Maxwell Millennium House room block is now filled. If you try to book a room, there it will be at the "rack rate," which is much higher. Please look at the backup hotels that are on our web page. Aside from that, I know that there are several people booking at other hotels in Nashville. If you do not stay in the convention hotel, you still need to fill out your Registration Form for the reunion and return it with the fee. This allows you to receive an entry badge and to be part of the reunion.



Harry Hahn

Frank Jones our Treasurer and Reunion Coordinator has done an exceptional job of ensuring this location is the best ever. Frank, however, cannot process any hotel registrations. Our unsung hero here is Linda Jones, who in addition to putting up with Frank daily, works tirelessly at processing memberships and reunion registrations!!

Please note that the Gear Locker order form is now changed to reflect increases in postal rates. Orders are still strong, and we process them as quickly as possible! Please look online at our Gear Locker Store for the full catalog as we only publish one page of the items here.

Lastly, but very important to the changes that occur within our organization, is the retirement of our Editor for the *River Currents*. Albert Moore, who has given his all to making the MRFA successful as President, *River Currents* Editor, and Chief Cook and bottle washer (sorry Albert, but I could not miss that pun) is now retiring from the *River Currents* Editor position. There is not enough print space in this newsletter to tell all the accolades of the accomplishments of Albert. This organization would not exist today if not for Albert! Albert continues to offer his advice to me as past President and as a Board Member Emeritus. Thank You, Thank You Albert for all that you have done and continue to do for the MRFA. You and Sara enjoy your retirement!

Terry Sater has stepped up to the plate to take over the important job of Editor of this publication. Terry's writing and publishing abilities will be put to work here as our new Editor. We appreciate his willingness to accept the position and we appreciate all the hard work that our leadership expends daily to make this organization one of the longest, if not the oldest, association serving Vietnam Veterans!

Harry Hahn, President, SparksRivRon13@aol.com

MRFA Reunion at the Millennium Maxwell House Hotel, 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/>. Ashley Souter is taking a standby list if there are cancellations.

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. Also, LIVE ENTERTAINMENT both Friday and Saturday Nights! Sailor Jerri on Friday night and from the Grand Ole Opry, Mike Snider on Saturday night!!!

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.

Harry Hahn
President
Mobile Riverine Force Association

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. ★





Operation STABLE DOOR

A task assigned to the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War was harbor defense. Massive amounts of material came to Vietnam by ship and were unloaded at any of several major harbors in Vietnam. Ships waiting at anchor to unload were vulnerable to sapper attack. And because of the heavy traffic passing in and out of these harbors, infiltration of enemy supplies and men was a continual worry. On 14 January 1966, MACV directed CHNAVADVGRU to create a plan for the defense of Vietnam's major harbors. In February representatives from CINCPACFLT, CHNA-VADVGRU, and COMIUWGRU1 (Commander Inshore Undersea Warfare Group 1—a San Diego-based command already in existence) traveled to Da Nang, Qui Nhon, Nha Trang, Cam Ranh, and Vung Tau. They found that Da Nang had already

developed a good harbor defense system, but that the other ports needed some help. In Saigon the group decided that each harbor except Da Nang would need a Harbor Entrance Control Post, a tactical command center in the best location to see and control the harbor, equipped with enough radar and communications equipment to coordinate the operations of assigned patrol craft. COMIUWGRU 1 would initially provide detachments to man the sites until permanent personnel could be gradually phased in. These units would fall under the operational control of Commander Task Force 115 as part of Market Time. In August 1966 they received their own name, Operation Stable Door, but remained a part of Task Force 115. Assigned to these units were LCPLs (Landing Craft, Personnel, Large), 16-foot skimmer craft (Boston Whalers), and a specially designed 45-foot "picket boat" that began arriving in Vietnam after June 1967 and carried a crew of five men plus one officer. The other craft were assigned to all enlisted crews. The total Stable Door inventory would eventually reach a peak of 16 LCPLs, 25 skimmers, and 8 picket boats. In early 1968 another unit was established at Vung Ro Bay, bringing the total to five. They were designated by that time as Inshore Undersea Warfare Units: IUWG-1 at Vung Tau, IUWG-2 at Cam Ranh, IUWG-3 at Qui Nhon, IUWG Unit-4 at Nha Trang, and IUWG-5 at Vung Ro. The total force consisted of more than 500 people at its peak. A November 1968 COMNAVFORV press release described the Stable Door mission: STABLE DOOR units maintain 24-hour visual and radar surveillance of harbor approaches and anchorage areas. STABLE DOOR harbor patrol boats intercept and search local indigenous craft, maintain a vigilant



watch for enemy swimmers or floating objects which could be mines, and carry Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) diver personnel for inspection of ship's hulls and anchor chains. These duties proved to be even more mundane than the average Market Time operation. Once the patrols began, the enemy moved their infiltration attempts from these harbors to the coastal areas where the chances of success were greater. Sabotage attempts on anchored ships continued throughout the war, but the men on Stable Door patrols were dealing with an unseen enemy. They conducted random sweeps of the harbor, dropping grenades into the water and watching for bubbles that might mark a sapper's approach. Occasionally bodies washed up on the beach as evidence of their success, or ships exploded as evidence of their failure, but rarely did they find themselves in a direct confrontation with the enemy. There was an important but intangible job. Not until January 1968 did a Stable Door unit make its first capture of an enemy swimmer. Units were disbanded in 1970-71. ★

River Currents Staff

Editor Albert Moore

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Mobile Riverine Force Association Membership Application Form

- ☐ New Member ☐ Associate Member ☐ Renewal ☐ Sponsor
☐ Donation ☐ CCB-18 ☐ Mobile Museum
☐ Change of address below.

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY

- ☐ Postal Delivery ☐ Go Green with Email

Name _____
 Street _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip Code _____
 Phone _____
 Cell _____
 E-mail _____

☐ WW-II ☐ Korea ☐ Vietnam

☐ Army Member

Unit (Division, Brigade, Battalion, Company, Platoon, Battery)

☐ Navy Member

Unit (Ship, Boat Hull Numbers, Navy Activity/Detachment, etc.)

Dates Served in Unit (mm/yr - mm/yr) _____ to _____

MEMBERSHIP RATES

☐ 1 Year \$20 ☐ 3 Years \$50

DONATION

☐ _____

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

"These Good Men"

by Michael Norman

I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted their best, men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped raw, right down to their humanity.

I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another.

I cannot say where we are headed. Ours are not perfect friendships; those are the province of legend and myth. A few of my comrades drift far from me now, sending back only occasional word. I know that one day even these could fall to silence. Some of the men will stay close, a couple, perhaps, always at hand.

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



3rd-60th Double Silver Star Awardee Witnesses Granddaughter Graduate From His Battalion

For one recent Basic Combat Training graduate living up to her grandfather's military legacy pushed her to try harder to succeed.

See Pvt. Kelsey McCarthy's grandfather served in the same unit she trained with nearly a half century earlier, where he was awarded two Silver Stars—one from the Army and one from the Navy. He is one of three Soldiers to receive the Navy medal.

The Navy awarded Larry the Silver Star for his bravery on the night the Westchester County LST-1167 was mined.

"It fills me with elation," said Larry Reid, who fought with Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion 60th Infantry Regiment in Vietnam where he was awarded the Silver Stars, Bronze Star, Soldier's Medal, Air Medal, and two Army Commendation Medals, one with a "V" device.

The regiment's moniker, "River Raiders," traces their lineage back to the Vietnam War where they participated in a joint operation in coordination with the U.S. Navy tasked to patrol the various canals and creeks of the Mekong Delta River.

McCarthy too was so excited she "definitely couldn't sleep" the night before graduation because she "was looking forward" to seeing her family at graduation.

Her grandfather being there "definitely made me think that if there was ever a moment I felt like I want to stop, it kept me going—especially knowing he's done a lot more," she said.

"We made a helicopter insertion," he said recalling Oct. 27, 1968, during his tour in Vietnam. "As we were going up the (paddy) dikes by this hooch, they opened up on us." The sergeant in front of him, four others, and a "brand-new" captain were killed.

Reid's citation states the then Specialist Fourth Class, began an assault on the hostile position, running forward

through the fusillade to get within grenade range of the emplacement.

"I went up and threw a grenade in the bunker and stopped them," Reid added.

Even so Reid has no qualms about his granddaughter following in his footsteps.

"Keep strong," he advised her. ★



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, Jenton, 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.



Navy River Assault Squadron

Originally two, and ultimately four, Navy River Assault Squadrons were created: River Assault Squadrons 9, 11, 13, and 15. The 2nd (Riverine) Brigade of the U.S. 9th Infantry Division was assigned to work with these units. A fixed land base was created by dredging a portion of the Song My Tho near My Tho and was named "Dong Tam." This became the administrative headquarters of the MRF.

Nonetheless, the Navy created two floating Mobile Riverine Base (MRBs, Alpha and Bravo) by assigning barracks ships and barrage barges (non-self-propelled) to house both Army and Navy personnel, provide communications and staff support, mooring and support facilities on Ammi pontoons alongside, and refit, rearm, and resupply stores. The MRB also included repair ships (ARLs) and supply ships (Landing Ship Tanks [LSTs]). The ships of the MRB also had helicopter-landing capabilities, provided air resupply and medical air evacuation ("dust off") capability, and had significant medical care facilities aboard. Thus, the entire force could move throughout the major rivers of the Delta, and launch troops, on boats, into assault operations deep into the narrowest rivulets and canals. Given the low limit speed of perhaps 6 knots (or less if opposing the fierce lower Delta currents), this "MOBILE" capability made boat assault operations in the furthest reaches of the Delta feasible.

Eventually, the MRF included Army floating artillery and mortar barges, which could be moved throughout the Delta and positioned to support the planned area of each assault operation. Integral air support came from newly created Navy gunship helicopter squadron HA(L) 3 (Helicopter Attack, Light), the SEAWOLVES, based at Dong Tam a unit of CTF 116. This was additional to such air support, both troop insertion and gunfire ships, as the Army tasked to each operation and air support from Air Force TAC air units on call. ★

VC Battalion Fails in Attempt to Overrun 2d-60th Outpost

Ninth Infantry Division The Old Reliable December 27, 1967, Page 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Seven American soldiers were killed in the fighting. ★

2nd Brigade Gnaws at Enemy in Mekong Delta Actions

Ninth Infantry Division The Old Reliable April 22, 1967, Pages 1 and 8

DONG TAM—Enemy forces in the Mekong Delta suffered 24 killed and the loss of a munitions factory, a number of weapons, radio equipment and documents after scattered encounters two days last week with elements of the 2d Brigade.

All of the action occurred near the brigade's base camp here, about 40 miles southwest of Saigon.

The mechanized infantrymen of Company C, 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry—attached to the 3d Battalion, 60th Infantry—made the first kills of the day, Thursday, when they cut down two members of a fleeing enemy force that had attacked them.

The company captured an automatic pistol and a Chinese-made hand grenade in the encounter.

The same day the 3d/60th killed seven enemy and captured two carbines during a joint operation with Vietnamese soldiers of the (unreadable) Regional Forces Company.

In a separate engagement on (unreadable) Island in the My Tho River of Dong Tam, Company A, 3rd Battalion, 47th Infantry clashed with a hostile force killing four enemy. Meanwhile supporting fire from the 3rd Battalion, 34th Artillery killed four more enemy during the island action.

The next day 2d Brigade units continued to cut away at enemy positions in the Dong Tam area.

Company C, 5th/60th, uncovered an enemy munitions factory southwest of Dong Tam. The factory concealed mines, mine parts, casing for booby traps, explosives and a number of homemade gas masks. Demolitions were used to destroy the factory.

Company A, 3rd/47th Friday uncovered an enemy base camp of 40 bunkers and 16 punji stake pits. Artillery fire, called in by the infantrymen, destroyed the fortification.

Two enemy short wave radios were captured by elements of the 3rd/60th after action, which resulted in seven enemy dead. ★

MRF pounce on VC, Kill 90

Two Day Operation Rips Into Enemy North Giong Trom

Ninth Infantry Division The Old Reliable March 5, 1969, Page 1

TIGER'S LAIR—Element of the 9th Division 3rd/47th and 3rd/60th teamed up with artillery and gunships to kill 90 Viet Cong during a two-day operation Feb. 20-21 4 miles northeast of Giong Trom in Kien Hoa province.

Action began at 11 a.m. Feb. 20, when gunships of Troop D 3rd Squadron 5th Cavalry spotted and killed two enemy soldiers running into a woodline when the gunships began receiving heavy automatic weapons fire; airstrikes were called in, destroying seven enemy bunkers.

Co B 3rd/60th, on a nearby sweep, was lifted into the area where they reported killing one VC. Sweeping southeast ahead of the infantrymen, 3rd/5th gunships killed an additional five enemy soldiers.

When Co B 3rd/47th was inserted south of the 3rd/60th, they came under heavy automatic weapons fire and killed 19 VC.

"We were surrounded, so we hit the dikes and canals for cover," said SP4 Phil Barile, Bronx, NY, Co B 3rd/47th RTO. "They had snipers all around us, so we started putting out M-60 fire."

Before nightfall, Co A 3rd/47th was inserted on Co B's left flank. With Co B 3rd/60th inserted on the right flank and elements of the 126th Regional Forces Company utilized as a rear blocking force, the cordon was complete.

A resupply helicopter carrying LCol Ishmael Pack, 3rd/47th Battalion Cdr, of Clarksville, TN, was hit by enemy .50 cal machine-gun fire, but limped into Ben Tre where supplies were loaded onto another chopper and successfully dropped into the area of contact.

Artillery, gunships and airstrikes pounded the area throughout the night and into the next day.

An all-day sweep following the night of contact turned up 56 more enemy dead and scattered weapons, clothing and documents. ★

Unconventional Landing

By Tom Hain

I went to Taiwan for R&R in the fall of 1968 with a friend from my unit. We were stationed on the USS Colleton at the time. We had to get back to Dong Tam to catch our plane, and the ships of the MRF were anchored south of Ben Tre the day we were scheduled to leave, which complicated our travel arrangements. We were left to our own inventiveness to get from the ship to Dong Tam, and from there our transportation was all arranged.

The shortest route by water was through an intersection of the 150 foot-wide canal that we would take, and the equally narrow river Song Ba Lai, a place that I'd been through a few times, and every time we did they'd shoot the hell out of us. The "Crossroads," as it was called, was last choice. The safest route was west up the Song Ham Luong to the Song My Tho, then east to Dong Tam, about a 25-mile trip at 6 mph on a Tango boat, if one was going there. There was no direct route there by land, and we didn't want to be stuck somewhere along the way waiting for a truck, or the ferry at My Tho. The best option was going by chopper, if we could make the connection. We checked with battalion supply and found that there was a chopper scheduled to pick-up supplies on one of the LSTs for a company in the field. They would be heading back to Dong Tam when they were finished, and we could hitch a ride with them. All we had to do was make one stop, push the supplies off, and we were on our way to 4 days and 5 nights of rest, relaxation, and clean sheets, in a place where they weren't shooting at us all the time. So, dressed in starched fatigues and polished boots and carrying our class A uniforms, we begged a boat ride from the Navy over to the supply ship to catch the resupply chopper.

The flight started out like all the other Huey rides that I'd been on before. There were no seats, so we sat on the supplies that were stacked in the middle of the floor. There were no doors, so it was windy and noisy, but it was a hot day and the wind felt good. The flight, with the stop in the field, should take about 45 minutes. When we had been in the air for about 5 minutes, I heard a noise unlike anything else I'd ever heard a Huey make before. It was like a growl and a scream and a whine all mixed together. It was one of those "Oh Shit!" noises. I looked up at the pilots but I couldn't tell much from the back of their heads, and I couldn't tell much from looking at the instrument panel either. I noticed that the door gunners were listening intently to their headsets, so I asked one of them what was

happening. He said that they had lost the hydraulics, and that the resupply mission was scrubbed, and we were headed to Dong Tam for repairs. That was fine with me, because to tell the truth, I wasn't too comfortable about landing in the field, unarmed.

What he didn't tell me at first was that without the hydraulics we couldn't land like choppers normally do. We had to land like a fixed-wing aircraft on a runway at flying speed without wheels! It was an operation with a pucker factor of 10. As the flight went on, I became aware that the ride was a lot bumpier than normal, and that the pilots were working a lot harder than they normally did. I got the idea that there was more wrong than I was originally told when the door gunners tied down their machine guns and grabbed their M16s and ammo from where they were strapped to the bulkhead behind them. I asked him again what was happening, and he said that they weren't going to make it to Dong Tam, and we were going to have to land at an unsecured field in the middle of a rice paddy near the hell hole, "Crossroads." I didn't want to go there by boat or helicopter!

He described what was going to happen, and he told us to sit with our backs to the pilots' seats. He said that we had the safest seats for this kind of landing, but I'm sure he was just handing us some bullshit to help ease the tension. Of all the ways to die in Vietnam, I sure as hell didn't want to die in a chopper crash on the way to R&R! Every move the chopper made from then on felt like we were about to fall out of the sky and end up planted in a rice paddy like a tulip bulb!

Every turn we made felt labored, and we were steadily losing altitude. We passed over the airstrip that we were going to land on at about 200 feet in the air. Even from that low altitude it looked like a skid mark on a dirt road. We made a long sweeping turn back upwind towards the runway, all the time losing more altitude. When we straightened out, we were flying just over the top of the trees at about 100 miles an hour. My buddy and I were sitting with our backs to the front of the aircraft, so all we could see was where we had been. As soon as we broke out into the open field, the pilot let the chopper down to about 5 feet off the deck in one quick move that left my stomach up at tree top level. We were still

going at 100 mph, when all of a sudden there was a paved runway under us, followed quickly by a shower of sparks from the landing skids. We started to slow down a little, and for a moment

I was relieved. Then I felt the chopper start to nose over. What could have happened was the rotor blades could hit the ground, knocking the chopper over and throwing us out to be diced up into little pieces by the shattered, but still spinning rotor blade! That thought passed through my head about 2 seconds before it slowly settled back onto its skids, and gradually ground to a stop about 2/3 of the way down the runway.

Having survived an unconventional landing, we were now faced with being a big stationary target in the middle of an open field, and me without a weapon to defend myself. The pilots went about shutting down the aircraft, and the door gunners jumped out to survey the damage. I looked around and saw that we were only a few hundred meters from an ARVN compound at the edge of a wood line. My buddy and I decided that we would be safer there than in the chopper, so we made a beeline for it while the door gunners tied down the rotor blades in preparation for being sling loaded under a Chinook for the last leg of our trip to Dong Tam. We found that we could buy refreshments at the ARVN compound, so we bought a half dozen cold beers and passed them out to the pilots and crew of the chopper as a gesture of thanks for the fine job of not killing us during the landing. The gesture was well received.

The Chinook didn't land when it came to pick us up. They just hovered over the downed Huey and let out a cable from under the belly of the big twin rotor helicopter. One of the door gunners hooked it up to the straps that they already had in place, and we piled back into the Huey as they tightened up the slack in the cable. It was a different flying experience to be slung under another chopper, but no more exciting than the landing that we had just survived. The ride only lasted about 10 minutes, and we were set down only a short walk from where we were to catch our flight to Long Binh. We were there in plenty of time to sit and contemplate our adventure.

The experience of an unconventional landing didn't scare me away from every flying again. It would have been impossible to avoid flying in one form or another in Vietnam. And it didn't scare me away from Hueys either. After all, we survived it! ★

What he didn't tell me at first was that without the hydraulics we couldn't land like choppers normally do. We had to land like a fixed-wing aircraft on a runway at flying speed without wheels!

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

50 Years Ago, Today, October 19, 2018

Larry Schnaubelt

Hueys from the 240th Assault Helicopter Company (Greyhounds) were flying in support of the 9th Infantry Division on October 18 and 19, 1968. A battalion of 3rd Brigade troops were airlifted in six combat assaults into an area NW of Vinh Long near the village of Ap An Tri—north of the Mekong River. During the final assault at about 03:30 a.m. on the 19th, the flight of 10 Greyhound slicks escorted by 4 Mad Dog gunships approached the LZ and had been instructed not to use landing lights because of the proximity of enemy positions. The lead ship was landing to a strobe light that a 9th ID soldier already in the LZ was holding to mark the position where we were to land. Just as we were about to touch down in a rice paddy, all hell broke loose. Despite heavy prep of the LZ by Tac Air, artillery, Spooky, and our Mad Dog gunships, intense enemy fire erupted from a tree line just west of the LZ. All four gunships were hit, as well as 9 of the 10 slicks in the formation. Despite continued suppressive fire from the gunships, the door gunners, and troops on the ground, seven of the Hueys were shot down either as they approached the LZ (or gunships on their gun runs), or while they were hovering above the ground (just seconds), or as they were taking off. It was one of the most memorable missions for me. I have often wondered what happened to the battalion of 3rd Brigade troops that were deployed on that operation. Maybe some members of this group were involved. Army Aviation—Above The Best!



Battle at Doi Ma Creek, April 16-17, 1967

The 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division moved into Long An Province during February and March 1967. Long An is bounded on the north by Saigon, on the west by the Plain of Reeds, on the east by the Saigon River, and on the south by Dinh Tuong and Go Cong Provinces. The most populated province in the Republic of Vietnam, it is the commerce center of the rice-rich Mekong River belt, the portal to Saigon from the south and the location of a series of enemy communication lines to the lower Delta and the capitol, Saigon.

The 3d Brigade was assigned the mission of conducting a consolidation operation throughout Long An Province with emphasis on Rach Kien, Tan Tru, Binh Phuoc Districts, the area around Tan An, the province capital, and to open Highway 4, the main route of commerce between Saigon and the Delta. Code named "Enterprise," the operation was aimed at defeating organized enemy forces, eliminating enemy infrastructure and conducting pacification operations. The enemy traditionally had a strong hold on Long An and moved his guerrilla bands, local and regional force companies, and main force battalions through the area with impunity.

The 3d Battalion, 39th Infantry had been conducting operations in Rach Kien District for a short time prior to the 3d Brigade move and had established a fire support/patrol base (FS/PB) in the village of Rach Kien. In early March, the 2d Battalion, 60th Infantry was moved to Ben Luc, on Highway 4, to temporarily operate in that area until its scheduled move to Tan Tru District, some 14 km to the south, at a later date. During the second week in March, the brigade headquarters moved to the outskirts of Tan An to establish their base near the province capital and the airstrip. On March 15, 1967, the 5th Battalion (Mechanized), 60th Infantry displaced from the 9th Infantry Division forward operational base at Dong Tam to the district of Binh Phuoc which, although the battalion operated throughout the northern Delta, became their primary area of operations.

The 5th Battalion (Mech) was organized as follows:

Headquarters and Headquarters Company

- Reconnaissance Platoon (Mech)
- Heavy (4.2-inch) Mortar Platoon (Mech)
- Antitank (106 mm RR) Platoon
- Ground Surveillance Platoon
- Communication Platoon (Mech)
- Medical Platoon (Mech)
- A Company, 5/60 (Mech) Infantry
- B Company, 5/60 (Mech) Infantry
- C Company, 3/60 Infantry (attached)
- B Battery, 2/4 Artillery (direct support)
- 3d Platoon, C/15 Engineers (direct support)

During the first weeks in Binh Phuoc, the 5th Battalion's operations resulted in many small contacts and two company-size battles. During this period the battalion placed special emphasis on night operations utilizing squad to platoon-size patrols. This brief period soon proved to have been sound training. By mid-April, the battalion's experiences had hardened the troops and tested the commanders, and the morale was high due to several successes the unit had experienced during this period.

On April 16, 1967, the 5th Battalion was conducting limited operations in the vicinity of Binh Phuoc. The attached Company C, 3d Battalion, 60th Infantry was operating southeast of Binh Phuoc village. At 1230 hours the brigade operations officer reported that the 3d Battalion, 39th Infantry had made sharp contact with an estimated enemy battalion in their area of operation near Cau Long Son. He ordered the 5th Battalion to alert one company for airmobile redeployment to reinforce the 3d Battalion. After a quick review of his dispositions, 5th Battalion's CO determined that his Company C, currently committed to a non-critical sweep and reasonably consolidated for pick-up, would be alerted. In addition, since the move was by helicopter, it was more reasonable to commit a straight Infantry company.

A short time later, the brigade command group arrived at the 5th Battalion's CP (Binh Phuoc) with instructions to make the move as soon as the helicopters arrived. Company C, now ready on a PZ, was ordered to conduct an airmobile assault. Their mission was to sweep south through the wood line below the LZ in an effort to make contact with any enemy elements attempting to withdraw to the northwest, and then establish a blocking position in the vicinity of the junction Doi Ma Creek and route 227. The brigade command group coordinated a short artillery preparation of the landing zone and gunships escorted the troop carrying helicopters into the LZ.

After making an unopposed landing, Company C moved south as planned. Minutes later the lead elements made contact with an enemy squad attempting to escape the 3d Battalion's encirclement. Using rapid fire and movement, the

company eliminated the enemy without sustaining any casualties. The company then continued to move south without further contact and reached their blocking position shortly after 1700 hours.

Meanwhile, the 3d Battalion (minus) was still engaged in a violent battle against a frantic enemy who was using all means to break contact, but by 2200 hours the action subsided to only sporadic contacts. The battalion remained in position throughout the night in order to sweep the battle area at sunrise. The remainder of the night was characterized by frequent enemy probes against the friendly positions in what apparently was either an attempt to find a gap in the encirclement or a feint to cover enemy egress in another area.

At approximately 1700 hours the same day, the 5th Battalion was alerted to move to the village of Rach Kien, with one additional rifle company, for prepositioning and quicker reaction for influencing the battle in progress. Company A was left to secure the battalion's fire support base and the Reconnaissance Platoon was to conduct patrol operations around Binh Phuoc. Battery B, 2/4 Artillery (DS) was moved to Ben Luc, to reinforce the artillery fires already within range of

the battle. The battalion (minus) departed their base and closed at Rach Kien at approximately 1900 hours. Upon arrival, Company B coiled in the village while the command group coordinated with the commander and staff of 3d Battalion. During this situation briefing, the CO, 5th Battalion was notified to remain in the village and not to proceed into the battle area until ordered.

However, the 5th's CO thought that an immediate move into the area of contact would greatly assist the 3d Battalion in containing and destroying the enemy, as well as achieving better positioning for subsequent operations. The request for immediate employment was denied because of a known enemy minefield en route to the battle area, the only area through which APCs could move to enter western Rach Kien District. The minefield, plus darkness, would make the move extremely hazardous. Weighing the risk involved against the benefits,

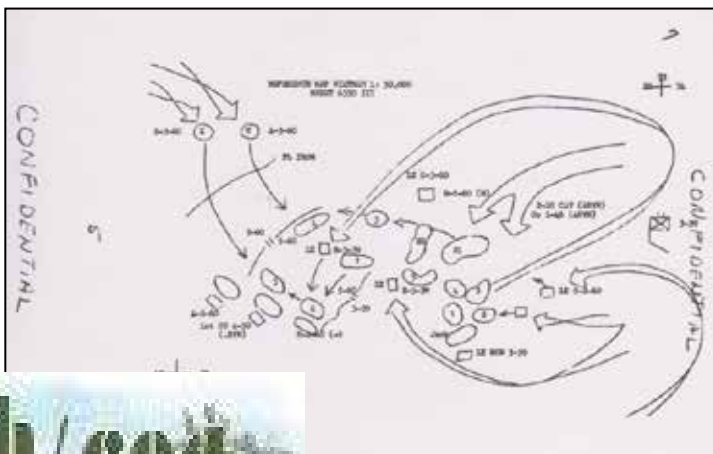
5th Battalion's commander made a second request to deploy into the battle area.

It was now 2100 hours. The 5th Battalion (minus) set out after carefully planning its route through the mined area. The force of one rifle company mounted in 18 M113s and the command group mounted in two M113s and one MS77 set out in single file formation under strict light discipline. By 2200 hours the unit had moved through the minefield without incident. (It is interesting to note that at a later date this battalion sustained APC losses when moving through the same mined area during daylight).

While en route, the battalion commander received instructions to link up with the 3d Battalion and resume control of Company C, 3d Battalion, 60th Infantry. Upon link up, the battalion's mission was to block to the south, patrol aggressively to preclude enemy egress to the north and prepare to conduct a sweep the following morning. After arrival and link-up, the battalion deployed as ordered and began planning for the next day's operation.

On the morning of April 17, the battalion set out to sweep the area west of the previous day's contact. The plan called for Company B, with APCs, to conduct a sweep west-southwest through the wood line and streams near Ap Xom Cau. Simultaneously, Company C minus one platoon was to sweep southwest and turn their sweep northwest upon reaching the southeastern end of Ap Ben Do at route 228. The remaining platoon from Company C was to conduct an airmobile assault into an LZ just northeast of Ap Ray at the same time as Company B's arrival at its start point. The platoon's mission was to conduct a search of the vegetated area north of the Rach Ong Binh and along the Rach Sau. H-hour was set for 0705 hours.

At 0700 hours the helicopters arrived to pick-up the first platoon of Company C. They touched down in the LZ at H-hour without benefit of an artillery preparation. Moments later, as the platoon reorganized for their search, they came under heavy fire. The enemy, located along the Rach Sau, had obviously been surprised. The platoon leader, experienced and in complete control of his unit, used fire and maneuver and attacked into the wood line. Gunships arrived within minutes to support the platoon. Moving directly into the Rach Sau, the platoon swept both



DOI MA CREEK

Continued from previous page

banks and the stream bed itself. In the stream they engaged a frantic squad size enemy force. The enemy was using reeds to breathe below the water's surface while attempting to disengage to the southeast. Within minutes enemy bodies bobbed to the surface of the now red water. The platoon continued southeast in a meticulous search of the wood line and the stream.

Meanwhile, Company B arrived at its start point at H-hour. The company commander's plan was to drop-off the 1st platoon at the start point and have them sweep west along the creek while the 2d platoon was to sweep south along the creek in that area. The 3d platoon and company headquarters was to move to Ap Chua Ba Khai, search that area and then sweep south. The APCs, with drivers and track commanders, were to be used to screen and block along the outer edges of the wood lines. Upon arriving at the start point the 1st platoon dismounted from their APCs and proceeded west into the woods. As they entered the woods, the platoon leader was shot and later died en route to a hospital. The platoon, now under command of the platoon sergeant, attacked the enemy position and destroyed it. After a quick reorganization, the platoon continued west. For this unit, the remainder of the day was typified by brief engagements with small enemy elements. Each time they eliminated the resistance from what appeared to be a series of enemy pickets conducting a delay-type action. By mid afternoon they had reached the stream junction and linked up with the 2d platoon. The 2d platoon searched the wood line and stream throughout the day, with small sporadic contacts. As it was later discovered, their presence in this area forced the enemy into killing zones for the remainder of the company.

Upon reaching Ap Chua Ba Khai and following notification of the 1st platoon's initial contact, the Company B commander turned the APCs of the 3d platoon and Company Headquarters south and headed into the gap between the platoon of Company C operating along the Rach Sau and his 2d platoon in the wood line to the east. As this force headed south, they observed a large cluster of small haystacks. As they closed with them the haystacks began to move. Each stack was an enemy soldier trying to conceal his attempt to break out from the impending encirclement. In the words of the company commander, "It was a hay day." Using the .50 caliber and M60 machine guns mounted on the APCs, the company (minus) conducted a mounted attack directly into the fleeing enemy. Across the open field and paddy dikes they pursued the enemy. After ensuring the destruction of that enemy force and thoroughly searching the area of contact, the 3d platoon and Company Headquarters moved back to Ap Chua Ba Khai and swept that area with no results.

At H-hour of this same day, Charlie Company, minus one platoon, moved out in a sweep of its assigned area. Moving west, the company searched the area along the Rach Ong Ung and by 1000 hours reached route 228 without incident. But, based on the assessment that the battalion's current contact north of the Rach Ong Binh was an enemy unit of company-size, it was determined that C Company should continue its sweep into Ap Ben Do with one platoon moving southwest while the remainder of the company continued south along route 228. The company commander chose to place himself between and to the rear of his two platoons. Making a very deliberate and careful approach, the company began its sweep.

Concurrent with the evolution of events in the Bravo Company sector and following consultation with the 5th Battalion and 3/39 Infantry COs, which was no longer in contact, the brigade commander placed all available artillery and gunships in direct support of the 5th Battalion, requested an air alert of fighter-bomber sorties in close air support of the 5th and moved the 2nd Battalion,

minus one company, into a blocking position southwest of the Yam Co Dong River. The 2d Battalion was to be reinforced and assisted by Vietnamese river assault craft. This blocking force was in position by approximately 1130 hours and by 1400 the 3d Battalion had concluded its sweep along Doi Ma Creek and was extracted to its base at Rach Kien, leaving a small stay-behind force to survey the former battle area.

Around 1100 hours, Company C, now moving southwest towards Ap Ben Do, began receiving heavy fire from the wood line to its front. The enemy was deployed on line in bunkered positions along the north-eastern edge of the wood line. During the initial volley of fire, Charlie Company sustained two casualties and moments later a company medic was killed attempting to reach the wounded. Due to the open terrain and excellent fields of fire afforded the enemy in Ap Ben Do, Charlie Company was unable to maneuver effectively, despite several desperate tries on the part of the company commander. A medical evacuation helicopter attempting to get to the wounded was shot down, adding two additional casualties. The battalion command group landed at Charlie Company to make an on-the-spot assessment. By this time Company C's artillery forward observer, demonstrating great courage, had moved forward and was directing the fire of two batteries of 105-mm artillery on the enemy positions approximately 300 meters to his front. The artillery, firing a linear concentration to cover the target, was only marginally successful in neutralizing the enemy.

Gunships were then used, again with limited success. Two air strikes came on station and met with greater success in silencing the enemy. The battalion requested six more air strikes to attack in succession and divided the linear target in half, directing the aircraft on the southern half while the battalion artillery liaison officer massed all available artillery on the northern half of the target. In this way the artillery was able to concentrate its fires in a smaller area and be more effective. With careful coordination between the artillery, the forward air controller and the fighter pilots, this system proved successful and fire superiority was achieved. At this time a second dust-off was called in and the wounded were evacuated.

Assessing the enemy's firepower and frontage to be that of a dug-in battalion, the 5th Battalion's CO decided to rely on artillery and air support to gain the upper hand and then maneuver against the enemy position. Since the remainder of his battalion was committed to operations in Binh Phuoc, he requested an additional rifle company to assault, the wood line. The request was approved and Company B, 3d Battalion went under the operational control of the 5th Battalion. Realizing the unprotected posture of Company C, the battalion commander ordered B/5 to release four APCs from the 1st platoon. These APCs moved immediately to Company C's position and, upon arrival, came under the control of Charlie Company. The APCs arrived at approximately 1200 hours and elements of Company C, under the control of a platoon leader, mounted the vehicles. Still under fire, this ad hoc mechanized unit assaulted the northern end of the enemy position. With all machine guns firing, they were closed to within 100 meters of the enemy and destroyed several positions. By now, Charlie Company had managed to move its right flank closer to the contact while the left flank remained in its original position, placing small arms fire on the objective. Charlie Company was now running low on ammunition and a re-supply was flown in by helicopter. One of the APCs was disengaged and used to distribute the ammunition along the company line and the few casualties sustained so far were evacuated to a safe PZ for pick-up by dust-off.

By 1400 hours Company B, 3d Battalion was airborne and en route to join the battle. Upon landing they would attack northwest into the wood line. By doing this, the battalion would hit the enemy on a flank and from a different direction. Following a short, violent artillery

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

From the Membership

Note from Albert

Folks the Spring issue of River Currents will be my last as Editor. It has been over 20 years since I took over the position as Editor. I was very fortunate to have had some outstanding people to work with over the years. I remember the first issues were not named River Currents and they were two pagers in Black and White done by George Marthenze who did them at work and ran the copies off on the company's copier and sent them out to the members. We owe George a big thank you for his dedication over the years to the MRFA. He started a newsletter that has become an outstanding publication one we think is one of the better one's out there.

It has been by no means been a one-man show we have had many others who helped along the way. We had a few glitches here and there, but we marched on and got the job done. Now it's time for me to hang it up and pass the torch to someone else. Member Terry Sater will take over as Editor starting with the Summer issue. I don't see where there will be any changes if so they will be in your membership's best interest. In closing I want to thank a few people who have really been the backbone of River Currents for a number of years and been great to work with. River Currents would not be the newsletter it is today without Georgie Ardinger and Robin Bartell. And we can't forget Doug Brown and Brown Printing and Brenda Needs. Bravo Zulu to each of them and a great BIG BRAVO ZULU to you the members who have supported the Association and River Currents for all these years.

As for myself I'll still be around and will help and support the association when and if needed. So to each and all take care of one another and thanks for all the great memories. In Brotherhood Albert

Please change my email from popsaroni@yahoo.com to mrfatango48@gmail.com immediately.

Thank you

Frank Jones

Treasurer/Membership Chairman/Reunion Coordinator

Seeking

Dear Mr. Harris

My second cousin, William "Billy" Van Tassel, served in the B Company, 2nd Battalion, 60th Infantry Regiment, of the 9th Infantry Division. His tour in Vietnam began on the 4th of July, 1968. He was killed on October 7th. I am looking for contact information for anyone who served with him or who remembers him. I am hoping to interview them and find out some information about him for my family. I appreciate your taking the time to read this.

Hopefully,

Michael Oberg, Distinguished Professor,
Department of History
State University of New York, College at Geneseo

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Dredge pipe line going into Dong Tam early 1967



Boats at Dong Tam

Pictures From a Recent Copy of This Week in the History of the Vietnam War

From Member Clarence Shires
Jr. C Co 4th/47th (01/67-01/68)
cshiresjr@verizon.net

Hi this is Clarence Shires (Junior). I want to tell you a little about these two pictures in the MRFA report. The boats in the second picture belonged to the NAVY. They would take us up the rivers of the Mekong Delta or the South China Sea beaches and insert us, stay with us for assistance, help us fight and then in a few days would pick us up, sometimes what was left of us. We usually stayed with the NAVY on ships for about 30 days at a time.

Then we would come back to the base camp for a couple of weeks of R&R. We would pull patrols around the Camp and other security. A few times we pulled security while living on dredges shown in the first picture. They dredged the Song My Tho River and pumped the silt through the pipeline, seen in the picture, into our base camp and filled in the rice paddy to give us firm footing for our camp. While we lived on the dredge, we had to walk on the pipe line at nights to keep the VC from blowing it up. The river was swift and rough and waves bounced

over the pipe. Sometimes the pipe would jump out of the water. One night it was so rough that the Private that I took with me went flying into the air from the jumping pipe and landing on one of the pontoons (that held the pipe above the water). It was raining, and the wind was blowing so hard, that I could hardly see him. After the pipe quit bucking like a bronco, I was able to pull the other soldier to safety. We would walk all the way to shore, rest in a deserted bunker, and then return to the dredge during the wee hours of the night. One day the Staff

Sarge and I were walking the pipe line to get to the Base Camp. We were carrying some mail bags and we were to bring back supplies and mail. We got about a third of the way and met a huge rat that would not let us by. It was determined to get to the dredge. The Staff Sarge swung at the rat several times until he knocked it into the river. I walked the pipe alone sometimes. This was rest and relaxation in 1967 in between our rotations of living on the Navy ships and conducting operations. ★

Fire Base SHAKEY HILL Spruced Up for a Visit

By Henry Kamm June 8, 1970
The New York Times Archives
Page 3

FIRE SUPPORT BASE SHAKEY, Cambodia, June 7—The men of Company A, 5th Battalion of the 60th Infantry, who are manning this muddy base high on a mountaintop northeast of the Fish Hook, wore their hair short and had their faces shaven clean today. Some got new fatigues to replace those that they were wearing 38 days ago when they left the Mekong Delta to go on what they were told would be a 3-day mission.

The last hammer blows were still being struck to complete a new enclosed latrine as seven helicopters bringing President Nixon's

fact-finding mission of Governors and Legislators set down on the pad next to the base, which gets its name from the nickname of a soldier who was killed nearby.

Cake and Cookies Waiting

Layer cake and oatmeal cookies, freshly baked, awaited the guests. The soldiers said they hoped that some would be left over because they have been living on C rations almost all the time.

They were unhappy about losing their beards and long hair, but those who got new fatigues were pleased to get into them and throw away the mud caked and torn ones they had been wearing.

They found some distraction from their dull routine also in a spectacular air strike against a

neighboring hillside that began shortly after the visitors arrived. They said they had not seen one that near before and did not know why the hillside was being attacked.

A colonel of the First Cav Division (Airmobile) said it was undoubtedly "reconnaissance by fire," although air strikes are usually made only against specific targets.

Bombs and Napalm Dropped

Whatever the reason, it was spectacular. A twin fuselage Bronco observation plane first made several passes firing marker rockets, then F-100s swept in low, dropping bombs and napalm on the jungled mountainside.

Finally, the planes made several strafing passes. "If Charlie was in

there," a sergeant said, "he's got a headache now."

A Major then called on a field telephone for the jet fighter-bombers to make a pass over this base, presumably to salute the visitors. They did, twice, so low that they unnerved at least some of the guests.

While the neighboring hillside was being attacked, the Senators, Representatives and Governors were inspecting the manmade caves in the jungle on the slopes of this mountain in which the North Vietnamese Army had stored large quantities of arms, ammunition and other supplies, which are still being removed from here.

Senator George Murphy, Republican of California, at first demurred from climbing down a ladder into the cave, saying, "I swore off the last time I went down a coal mine," but he, too, went to view the stacks of crates of Chinese and Romanian grenades and mortar shells.

The visitors saw large quantities of captured weapons here and in visits to the headquarters of the First Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division at Katum in Vietnam and in a storage depot at Dian base camp north of Saigon, where a spacious warehouse has been filled until it resembles a discount store for captured weapons.

They also received a number of briefings that confirmed their general belief that the American intervention in Cambodia had been useful and justified by the results. ★



Soldiers from B Company, 5th Battalion, 9th Infantry, 1st Air Cavalry Division return wearily to their Fire Support Base, in Shakey's Hill after 2 days of fighting, as American troops entered the Cambodian jungle for the first time. Jim Stack USS Askari ARL-30 (02/68-02/69) stack@wctc.net

In May 1970, the 1st Cavalry Division participated in the Cambodian Incursion, withdrawing from Cambodia on 29 June. Thereafter, the division took a defensive posture while US troops withdrawals continued from Vietnam. On 29 April 1971, the bulk of the division was withdrawn to Fort Hood, Texas, but its 3rd Brigade remained as one of the final two major US ground combat units in Vietnam, departing 29 June 1972. However, its 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, Task Force Garry Owen, remained another 2 months. In the Vietnam War, the First Cavalry Division suffered more casualties than any other Army division: 5,444 men killed in action and 26,592 wounded in action.

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UP004 9th Inf Div (no words)



UP005 9th Inf Div Vietnam



UP006 9th Inf Div Vietnam Veteran



UP007 RAF TF 117



UP008 RAF One



UP009 VCCC (blue)



UP010 VCCC (brown)



UP011 VCCC (silver)



UP012 Combat Boat Captain



UP013 Combat Boat Crewman



UP014 RivRon 9



UP015 RAD 91



UP016 RAD 92



UP017 RAD 111



UP018 RAD 112



UP019 River Squadron 13



UP020 RAD 131



UP021 RAD 132



UP022 RivRon XV



UP023 RAD 152



UP024 Riv Div 153



UP025 MRF 3/47



UP026 3rd/60th Inf



UP027 39th Inf



UP028 47th Inf



UP029 USS Benewah APB-35



UP030 USS Colleton APB-36



UP031 USS Mercer APB-39



UP032 USS Nueces APB-40



UP033 USS Benewah Logo



UP034 USS Mercer Logo



UP035 River Raiders



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UP039 Brown Water Navy



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UP042 RAS 13

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The Dinassaut Boats—French Riverine Craft

As with all aspects of the Indochina War, the river war was fought with an assortment of WW2 surplus equipment used in ways for which it had never been designed. Below is a short description of the various craft that plied the waterways of Indochina.

The Dinassaut (French [dinaso], Division Navale d'Assaut, "Naval Assault Division") was a type of riverine military unit used by the French Navy during the first Indochina War.

The 'Dinassaut' were created by General Leclerc in 1947. Ten groups were created. Each Dinassaut consisted of approximately 12 craft, often American landing craft modified with armour and using tank turrets as weapons. Other craft carried 81-mm mortars to be used as riverine artillery.

LCI (Landing Craft Infantry)

US landing craft designed to carry the second wave's infantry to the beach. They were fitted with increased armament and communications and used as command ships for the Dinassauts. Well liked, these veterans of WW2 were nonetheless quite worn by 1951 when they began to be replaced by more modern LSILs.

Displacement: 380 tonnes
Length: 48.3 m
Width: 7.1 m
Draught: 1.8 m
Machinery: eight Gray Marine 8V 71 diesels
Speed: 14 knots
Cruising range: 4,000 nm at 12 knots
Crew: 29 men
Armament: one 75-mm gun, one 40-mm Bofors, two 20-mm Oerlikons, two 12.7-mm machine guns, two 7.62-mm machine guns and two 81-mm mortars
Transport capacity: 180 men (250 for short distances)



LCM Monitor

Converted from regular LCMs by the Saigon Arsenal when the need for additional firepower became clear,



these craft had their bow ramp removed and turrets from obsolete Coventry armoured cars were fitted in addition to a mortar in a central tub. In order to allow observation over the dikes that

lined most of the rivers, a crow's nest was initially fitted over the stern but quickly removed because the observer's life expectancy in case of ambush was very short! The monitors were mainly used in Tonkin where they provided the Dinassauts with heavy organic fire support. Although powerful and well protected, they were far from immune to the growing Viet Minh firepower. The surviving craft were turned over to the South Vietnamese Navy in 1955. The LCM Command boat was closely related.

Displacement: 47 tonnes
Length: 17.26 m
Width: 4.28 m
Draught: 1.22 m
Machinery: two Gray Marine 64HN9 diesels, 330 hp total
Speed: 8 knots
Cruising range: about 140 nm at 8 knots
Crew: ? men
Armament: one 2 pdr and one 20-mm gun in forward turret, one rear facing 20-mm gun, two 12.7-mm machine guns, four rifle grenade launchers and one 81-mm mortar
Armour: 15 mm max



LCM Command Boat

Another Saigon Arsenal conversion of the LCM hull closely related to the LCM Monitor. These replaced LCIs and LSILs used as Dinassaut command boats in areas inaccessible to the larger craft. Their limited armament was meant for self-defense and indirect fire support and their value lay in the extensive command and control capabilities. Mainly used in Cochinchina, these late additions to the Dinassauts were transferred to the South Vietnamese Navy and saw most of their

service after the First Indochina War.

Displacement: 55 tonnes
Length: 20 m
Width: 4.28 m
Draught: 1.22 m
Machinery: two Gray Marine 64HN9 diesels, 330 hp total
Speed: 8 knots
Cruising range: about 140 nm at 8 knots
Crew: ? men
Armament: two 20-mm guns, four rifle grenade launchers and one 81-mm mortar



LCM 6

An enlarged version of the LCM 3, the LCM 6 was probably the model that was the most heavily modified for use on the rivers. By 1950, a standardized conversion made these boats quite versatile with their combination of large carrying capacity (four of them could carry one battalion), heavy firepower and good protection. Living conditions, however, remained difficult especially on long patrols. Some of these LCMs, were also built from the keel up by the Saigon Arsenal. Usually referred to as "long LCMs" or "heavy LCMs," although the second term was also sometimes used for all armoured LCMs.

Displacement: 52 tonnes
Length: 17.2 m
Width: 4.28 m
Draught: 1.4 m
Machinery: two Gray Marine 64HN9 diesels, 330 hp total
Speed: 8 knots
Cruising range: 140 nm at 8 knots
Crew: ? men
Armament (typical): three 20 mm Oerlikon guns, two 12.7-mm machine guns, two rifle grenade launchers
Transport capacity: 125 men, one medium tank, one truck or 30 tonnes of materiel



LCM 3

True workhorse of the Dinassaut, the LCM was used for transport, patrol and just about any mission that could be given to a boat. Although protection was at first limited to sandbags and the armament to the original two 7.62-mm machine guns, by 1950 a nearly standardized model was starting to emerge with the stern encased in armour and much heavier armament (the photo below shows an interim model lacking the stern 20-mm Oerlikon). The precise breakdown between this model and the LCM 6 is impossible to establish since the French Navy didn't classify them separately. Usually referred to as "short LCMs," they were sometimes described as "light LCMs," although this term could also be used for any unarmoured LCM. ★

Displacement: 30 tonnes
Length: 15.23 m
Width: 4.28 m
Draught: 1.25 m
Machinery: two Gray Marine 64HN9 diesels, 330 hp total
Speed: 8 knots
Cruising range: 140 nm at 8 knots
Crew: ? men
Armament (late): one stern 20-mm Oerlikon gun, two 12.7-mm machine guns, two rifle grenade launchers
Transport capacity: 100 men, one light tank, one truck or 16 tons of material



DOI MA CREEK

Continued from previous page

LZ preparation, Bravo Company, 3d Battalion landed and pushed toward the objective with a two-platoon front. The company walked artillery about 100 meters forward of their point while Charlie Company ceased all small arms fire. Plagued by a maze of booby traps and sustaining casualties, the assaulting company was making slow progress.

Anxious to complete the sweep before dark and having neutralized the enemy, the battalion CO decided to give Company B, 3d Battalion a limit of advance and move Company

C into the northern part of the objective. This attack was executed with minor resistance and by 1700 hours the entire objective had been swept. In Ap Ben Do alone, 73 enemy KIA were found. This fact, coupled with the equal successes of Company B, 5th Battalion and the 1st platoon of Company C to the north of Rach Ong Binh, indicated that a large portion of an enemy battalion had been destroyed. The 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry suffered 11 casualties and consolidated for the night, leaving stay-behind forces in Ap Ben Do and Ap Chua Ba Khai. The night passed without incident. The enemy had been defeated. ★



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.

TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One



Jett

Ronald Jett passed away, November 21, 2018. Ronald served on RivDiv 92 T-92-8 (01/67-01/68). At the time of his passing, he resided in Durant, OK.



McEckron

Past MFRA member **Ronald McEckron** passed away, December 21, 2018. Ron served in B Co. 3rd/60th Infantry (06/68-06/69). He also served with 2nd Plt and was a Squad Leader during 1968-69.

Ron was a nonmember since 2001. If anyone has any questions, contact Ed Eaton, 11b50@embarqmail.com.

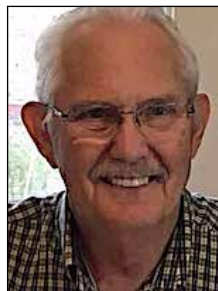
Member **Michael D. Bancroft** passed away, September 22, 2018. While in Vietnam he served with B Co, 1st Platoon, 4th/39th Inf (10/67-10/68). At the time of his passing, he was residing in Tarpon Springs, FL.

Member **Rex Allen Young** passed away, March 1, 2018. While in Vietnam he served with B Co, 3rd/39th Inf (10/66-10/68).



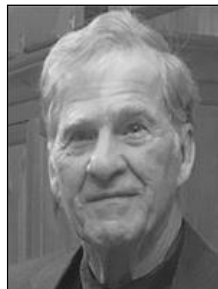
Newcomb

Member **Bennie R. Newcomb** passed away, December 4, 2018. While in Vietnam, he served with 3rd/60th Inf (04/67-04/68).



Lightwine

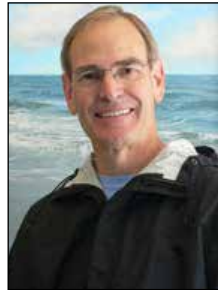
Member **Robert Earl Lightwine** passed away February 11, 2019. While in Vietnam, he served with River Assault Squadron 11 River Assault Division 112 onboard T-112-11 (02/67-03/68). Robert is survived by his wife of 49 years, Esther.



Dedon

Member **Donald Ray Dedon** passed away February 7, 2019. While in Vietnam, he served with River Assault Squadron 9 River Assault Division 92 onboard A-92-8

(11/68-08/69). Donald is survived by his wife of 51 year, Donna.



Nielsen

Member **Thomas Mason Nielsen** passed away, December 10, 2018. Tom served with RAS 13, RAD 132 onboard T-132-6 (06/68-06/69). Tom was a master of fine art. He designed and painted our Mobile Riverine Force Association poster and also designed our Vietnam Combatant-Craft Crewman (VCCC) insignia. Tom is survived by his wife Jan, who is also an accomplished artist.

Member **John Hanttula** recently passed away sometime in 2018. John served on Monitor 112-2 (1/68-2/69). You may contact the family c/o Beckie Hanttula 78 Don Juan Loop, Santa Fe, NM 87508, lifefast@msn.com.



Miller

Member **John LaRoy Miller** passed away January 11, 2019. John served on A-111-5 (06/67-06/68). You may contact the family c/o Suzanne Miller, 675 Overcup St., Westfield, IN 46074, jim675@comcast.net.

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) Wendell Affield for Buddha Ed Thomas, Boat Captain Tango 112-11 (02/68-02/69) William Blausner for Thomas Gaudet, David Land, and Jose Campos our 151 Division brothers that were KIAs

MajGeneral Lucien Bolduc, Jr. USA (Ret) for Guy Tutwiler

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John and Doris Chrzanowski in memory of SP/4 Humberto Ruiz Santiago Jr. Grenadier A Co. 4th Bn 47th Inf. Rgt 9th Inf. Div. Died of wounds 06/27/69, Kien Hoa, South Vietnam (DC Wall Panel 21W Ln 025)

Mike Clark in memory of Laurence Welk (KIA May 1967) and Lydes Gardner (KIA Sept 1967) 4th/39th 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)

From your Brothers B Co. 2nd 39th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division in memory for John Nielsen B Co. 2nd/39th (04/68-04/70)

Nan Fulton for LtGen Bill Fulton Cdr 2nd Bde Asst Div Cdr 9th Inf Div (1966-68)

John W. Gerbing for Noel T. West A Co. 4th/47th KIA 06/19/67

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

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

James Henke and Dave Nelson for James Callan, Sgt Tony Spradling, Sgt Gerald Thurman, Spec James B. Johnson, and all our Brothers lost on June 19, 1967, from A Co. 4th/47th 9th in AP BAC, Long An Province

Gordon Hillesland for Pat Lawson NSA Dong Tam (1967-68)

Joe Hilliard for Joe Benack from Florida and Donald Hartzell from Pennsylvania

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Adam Metts for Donald L. Bruckart T-111-2 KIA 03/31/69

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Roy Moseman for Oscar Santiago C-2 4th/47th (10/67-10/68)

Herman Murphy EN2 for USS Benewah shipmates: John Long EN2, Craig Bronish MR3, and George Schnieder MR2

Major J. D. Nichols III CMDR C Co. 3rd/60th Inf (12/66-11/67) for Alfred Cornejo, Anthony Galeno, Richard Lasher, Rudolph Melendez, Sigfredo Pinto-Pinto, and Garrett Reid KIAs 08/20/67

Jasper Northcutt for SSGT Henry T. Aragon B-2 2nd/47th KIA 08/23/67, SGT James E. Boorman B-2 2nd/47th KIA 08/27/67, SP4 James D. Bronakoski B-2 2nd/47th KIA 04/27/67, SP4 Michael G. Hartnett B-2 2nd/47th KIA 04/27/67, SGT William D. Mize B-2 2nd/47th and 5th/60th KIA 10/28/67, CPL Harold K. Southwick B-2 2nd/47th Inf KIA 03/02/67 (first KIA in B Co. 2nd/47th in Vietnam), and PFC Robert C. Voltz B-1 2nd/47th Inf (Mech) KIA 03/11/67 (first KIA 1st Platoon B Co. 2nd/47th in Vietnam)

Luis Peraza for SSG Michael K. Lewis KIA 06/13/69, SGT Harold H. Hunter KIA 01/27/69, and brothers of D Co 3rd/60th KIA during 1968-69

Claire Siebert for GMG3 Richard Siebert IUWG-1 Unit 3, Qui Nhon (03/67-01/69)

Aaron R. Spurway for Chief Ray

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

Ken Sundberg for Michael David Sheahan 5th/60th KIA 02/25/68, Robert L. Conley 5th/60th KIA 02/01/68, and Glenn Dean Taylor 5th/60th KIA 02/01/68

Robert Sutton for LT James F. Rost Jr. Vin Te Canal Chau Duc KIA 11/69

Okey Toothman in memory of Major General Lucien "Blackie" Bolduc

Okey Toothman in memory of Sgt Dick Arnold A Co. 3rd/47th, Max Delacruz and G. P. Jones C Co. 3rd/47th

Okey Toothman in memory of Judy Wallace

Steven Totcoff for my brother CPL Dennis S. Totcoff B Co 3rd/47th 9th Inf Div KIA 5/2/68

USS Benewah shipmates: John Long EN2, Craig Bronish MR3, and George Schnieder MR2

USS Guide MSO-447 for Shipmate and Brother Harold Foster

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

CPT Steve Williams and MAJ Bob Bischoff in memory of 2LT David George Williams, Co A, 4/47th, KIA 9/21/67

David Wilson 2nd/60th, KIA 08/05/69, Timothy Shelton 4th/39th KIA 06/25/69, Steven

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Mobile Riverine Force Association

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