



River Currents

A PUBLICATION OF
THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 29, NUMBER 3
FALL 2020

Message From the Radio Shack



Harry Hahn

**Hello from the Radio Shack:
your MRFA folks
have been busy.
Let me give you an update**

We now are announcing and accepting reservations for the 2021 MRFA Reunion in St. Louis (Westport). We will be staying at the Sheraton Westport Plaza. A great venue that will offer shopping, dining and transportation to and from the airport. We also will be providing transportation for Mall shopping and scenic downtown St. Louis. There is a casino nearby and if they will supply bus service, we will offer this. Also, for those interested, an option to see the Missouri National Veteran's Memorial in Perryville, MO will be offered. I have been there, and it is a beautiful full-size replication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall in Washington. See our website for more details.

Thanks to all that have and will contribute to our MRF documentary project. I have just returned from the initial filming

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MRFA Reunion at the Sheraton Westport Plaza St. Louis, MO Sept. 15-19, 2021

**Start planning now, for the 2021
MRFA Reunion in St. Louis, MO!**

Registration will start on Thursday Sept. 16th and the reunion will end on Sunday Sept. 19th (check out). You will be able to start making reservations on Oct. 1, 2020. The number to call for reservations is 888-627-7066, Monday thru Friday. Please make sure to reference the MRFA when making your reservations. The cutoff date for reservations is August 25th, 2021. The room rate for all rooms will be \$134. All registered guests also will receive a great continental breakfast with three hot items every morning at the hotel. As this is included with the room it is only available for registered guests for free.

The hotel will run a free daily shuttle service from the airport. The shuttle stops at both terminals at the hotel shuttle pickup every half hour, 5:30 am, to 11:00 pm, daily. This regular airport shuttle is not ADA approved. The Sheraton Westport is ten miles, or about 18 minutes away. A flight form is included here for those who need an ADA approved bus for airport transportation. PLEASE SEND THAT FORM TO FRANK JONES for co-ordination.

We have also arranged for a bus to transport our guests to the St. Louis Downtown area, and the Mall. This bus is NOT ADA accessible. The bus will run Friday from 10 am to 4 pm, and Saturday from 1pm to 5pm. There will be an optional bus that will take you to the Missouri National Veteran's Memorial in Perryville, MO on Friday at 10 am. Please note that there is an additional per person charge when making your bus reservations for the Missouri National Veteran's Memorial. We encourage all people to pre-register using the registration form. No On-Site registration is accepted for the Missouri National Veteran's Memorial bus. An ON-SITE upcharge for not pre-registering for the reunion will be charged for those who decide to wait. Those who pre-register and request a refund prior to two-weeks before the event, will receive a full refund. There will be no refunds after that.



The hotel is Dog Friendly. A onetime cleaning fee is charged by the hotel.

There are plenty of restaurants both on and off property, locally, to have lunches and dinners.

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

We are hoping this will be the best reunion yet! More information to come.

Any questions contact Frank Jones at 314-303-2730 or MRFAatango48@gmail.com

From the Editor

On a personal note, I am so happy our reunion is coming to St. Louis! The Sheraton Westport is three miles from my boyhood home. Judi and I had our daughter, Dina's reception at the Sheraton Westport, and it was terrific. My high school held one of our reunions at the Sheraton. During my career, I held many meetings there, including a large trade show. My niece and nephew's band performed at the Westport Social, a nightclub, located within the Westport complex. The location is a safe environment, centrally located, and easy to get to. My wife and I have spent many wonderful evenings at Westport Plaza. You're going to love it!

Terry Sater

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



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

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☐ *Army Member*
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☐ *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

Message From the Radio Shack

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of interviews on the west coast. We also will be doing some filming during our trip to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in DC on Veteran's Day. There is a form for contributions in this newsletter. If you have not donated yet, please consider doing so now. In addition to our normal reunion scheduled events, there will be a screening of the "sizzle reel" for the documentary.

Many of you know that one of my other duties is to maintain the MRFA Gear Locker. Lately I have had my challenges with suppliers during the COVID-19 outbreak. However, we continue to stock and ship those items that are carried on our web page and also here in the River Currents. We added one new hat that has a Helo landing on a Tango boat. This new hat will interest some of you guys I am sure. I have had a couple people ask about adding an MRF Flag. I have looked at 3x5 flags and have some ideas. The cost would be around \$100 for one. If we decide to undertake this, I would only take orders and not stock them. If you have any interest, don't send money, but please send me an email, or drop a note in the snail mail! I will let you know the outcome of my findings.

I am planning to be at the Wall in DC for the annual trip there. I will see you there!

Harry Hahn, President
SparksRivRon13@aol.com

Veterans Day 2020 Washington, D.C.

The MRFA and 9th Infantry Division will be placing wreaths at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. on Veterans Day, Wednesday, November 11, 2020. We will be gathering at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial at 8:30 A.M. on the 11th, and proceed to The Wall at 9:00 A.M.

We have blocked 40 rooms at the Arlington Court Suites, a Clarion Collection Hotel, in Arlington, Virginia for November 8th - 11th (check out on 11/12). Room rates are \$130.00 (plus tax) per night.

For reservations, call 1-703-524-4000 ext. "0". Please state our group name as "MRFA" and give your dates of arrival and departure. If you plan to attend, you must make your reservations under our group code prior to the cutoff date of October 11, 2020.

The Arlington Court Suites, a Clarion Collection Hotel, is located at 1200 N Courthouse Rd, Arlington, Virginia 22201. More information is available at <http://www.arlingtoncourthotel.com/>

The MRFA and 9th Infantry Division will have a hospitality room available on November 8th - 11th.

Come join us as we honor our fallen Brothers on Veterans Day 2020.

We look forward to seeing you in D.C.

For more information, you may contact:
 Bob (Doc) Pries, Vice President
 Phone: (513) 659-4974
 Email: pries247@gmail.com

Contact Changes

Please send Frank Jones any changes in address, phone number or e-mail addresses so that he can keep our database updated.

His address is:

9 San Marino Parkway, Fenton, MO 63026

Frank's e-mail address is
mrfatango48@gmail.com

Introducing Your Board of Directors

We are going to provide a brief biography of our Board of Directors, with every issue, until you, the members, are introduced to each of them.

Bob “Doc” Pries, MRFA Vice-President.

Bob joined the Army in 1968 and soon found himself in school training to be a combat medic.

“Doc” Pries arrived in Vietnam and was assigned to the 2nd Battalion 47th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division as a Platoon Medic for Bravo Company and then Senior Medic for the Company. He remained with the 2-47th for close to 18 months until the 3rd Brigade was withdrawn and was then reassigned to the 1st Battalion 5th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division to finish his final tour in Nam.

Although Bob “Doc” Pries left both the Army and Vietnam in 1970, he never left the men with whom he served and never forgot those who gave their lives in Vietnam. He has fought for Veterans’ rights and has attended every Veterans Day ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, “The Wall,” in Washington D.C. since its dedication in 1982. He has dedicated many long hours of his own time to locate Vietnam Veterans throughout the Country and bring them to “The Wall” so they may begin their healing process.

After leaving the Army, “Doc” embarked on a 35-year career with The Procter & Gamble Company, (P&G), retiring in 2008 as a member of the Senior Leadership Team for P&G’s Global Chemicals and Perfumes businesses with responsibility for Human Resources throughout North America, Europe, and Asia.

In retirement, “Doc” joined Team Rubicon and is a member of their Incident Management Team.

Doc is a husband, a father, a grandfather, a Vietnam Veteran, a retired P&G executive, a Team Rubicon Greyshirt, and a proud member of the Mobile Riverine Force Association.

“Doc” Pries resides in Medina, Ohio, with his wife Debbie, who is also a proud Veteran of the United States Army.

Dave Lull, Executive Board Member, representing the 9th Infantry Division.

I was raised in southern Arizona, graduated high school from Buena High School in Sierra Vista, Az. In 1966. I attended junior college in Douglas, Az. for two years. I was drafted into the army October 10, 1968 in Phoenix, Az. I went to



A Heartfelt Tribute and Donation

Frank Jones received this wonderful letter about the MRFA and 9th Infantry, along with a generous donation towards our Arballo Entertainment produced documentary. We thought the members would appreciate it.

“June 24, 2020

Frank,

I was a member of the 2/39th, in 1968. I am making this donation out of a sense of Profound respect for all the Army and Navy men who served in the MRFA.

I spent a couple of days with the MRFA in May, 1968, as an observer. The 9th Division was considering moving the 2/39th to the MRFA. The operation I went on was hard to describe—“crazy,” “insane,” ridiculous,” and I was used to Eagle Flights, daily and ambush patrols, at night. But this MRFA operation was truly “over the top.”

I returned to my unit and reported in to the battalion XO. The first words I said to him were – “You can take your battalion to the MRFA boats, but I ain’t going” (I wasn’t the brightest bulb on the tree!). But I figured what could he do? I was already in Vietnam. He got pretty mad, but then calmed down and told me that the replacement was cancelled.

I thought I got a huge reprieve. And then we ended up in the Plain of Reeds, a few weeks later, but that’s another story.

When I think of the MRFA, I think of all the “mini-Normandy landings that went on, almost daily. I salute you and keep you in my prayers.

Tom Bogner. “

basic and A.I.T. training at Ft. Ord, California. I stepped off of a climate-controlled plane into the hot, muggy, stinky air of South Vietnam at Tan Son Nhut airport on March 22, 1969. I was assigned to the 9th Infantry Division and sent to Dong Tam. A memorable flight on a Caribou cargo plane. It landed on a dirt strip outside of Dong Tam, as it turned at the end of the runway to take off all of the soldiers on board, about 20, rushed to get down the end ramp to deplane as the plane started to leave. We were alone on a dirt airstrip with jungle all around. After about 30 minutes a truck arrived to take us into Dong Tam. After some in country training, I was assigned to the 2nd Battalion 47th Infantry Regiment. A mechanized unit. I reported into the battalion and Bravo company on April 1, 1969 as a private E-2. The unit operated mostly in Long An province and the Plain of Reeds out of base camp at Binh Phouc. The unit left Binh Phouc April 1, 1970 first to Bear Cat then to Tay Ninh and in late April to Katum before crossing into Cambodia on May 1, 1970. I left the unit May 14, 1970 to go home, back to the world and discharged from the army May 15, 1970 at Oakland Army Base. An eye opening and sadly disappointing trip back to southern Arizona. War protesters at San Francisco airport harassing returning troops. I went to work for a home builder in Tucson and in 1972 went to work for Tucson Electric Power Co., then known as Tucson Gas and Electric. I worked in the power plants in Tucson until 1982 and then transferred to Springerville, Az. to a new power plant, retiring from there in 2003 after 31+

years. I have enjoyed my retirement and try to attend veteran’s reunions every year. The MRFA reunions and the 47th Infantry reunions are special and my top priority is to attend the Veterans Day ceremonies and placing wreaths at the Wall in Washington D.C. every year. I still live in Springerville, Az. with a few dogs and a pasture where I raise black angus cattle.

Roy Moseman, Board Member, Charlie Co., 4/47th.

I was born in Athens, Ga. In 1947, and have lived here for my entire life. I entered the Army in May of 1967. I took basic training at Ft. Benning, Ga., and Advanced infantry training at Ft. McClellan, Ala. I arrived in Vietnam in October, 1967, and was assigned to Charlie Co. 4/47th Infantry. While serving with the 9th division I received three purple hearts and the Silver Star. I returned home October, 1968. I spent six months at Ft. Lewis Washington as a drill sergeant and left the Army in May of 1969.

I am married to Lynne Gilbert Moseman and have been for fifty years. We have one son, Michael and a grandson, Bailey. I have worked in the electrical contracting business all my adult life and owned my own commercial electrical contracting company before retiring in 1995.

We will have more Board Member Biographies in our next issue!



Mobile Riverine Force Association
www.mrfa.org



**My Contribution to the development of a Documentary Film
Mobile Riverine Force - Vietnam**

The following Donation Levels are available for your financial contribution to the development of a Documentary Movie on the Mobile Riverine Force – Vietnam.....please choose one!

- ☐ **Bronze Level** - \$25 "Thank You Letter" as well as Name in Credits on the DVD
- ☐ **Silver Level** - \$100 "Thank You Letter", Name in Credits on DVD, and a Copy of DVD
- ☐ **Gold Level** - \$250 "Thank You Letter", Name in Credits on DVD, Copy of DVD and a MRFA Challenge Coin
- ☐ **Platinum Level** - \$1000 plus "Thank You Letter", Name in Credits on DVD, Copy of DVD, a MRFA Challenge Coin and a Signed Movie Poster.

Please make your check payable to **MRFA**. Then mail this form and your check to:

Frank Jones
9 San Marino Parkway
Fenton, MO 63026-7513

Amount_____

Your donation is tax deductible as the MRFA is a 501 (c) corporation

Name:_____

Unit:_____

Address:_____

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Thank you for your participation!

The Officers and Board Members of the
Mobile Riverine Force Association

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Cotton Hats

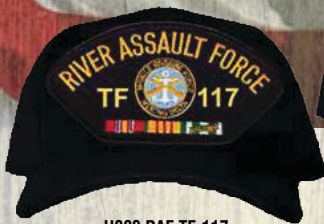
Cotton hats with embroidered patch on front. Adjustable back.
\$20.00



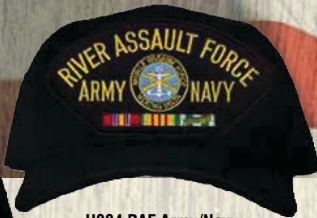
H001 MRFA Vietnam



H002 9th Inf Div Vietnam



H003 RAF TF-117



H004 RAF Army/Navy



H005 Old Reliables
9th Inf Div Vietnam



H006 USS Benewah Patch



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



H022 Silver Star
w/black 6"x3" patch
on mesh back
black cap



H021 U.S. Navy Corpsman Vietnam



H014 9th Inf. Div PUC



H015 9th Inf. Div. Vietnam
SVC Ribbon



H016 MRF CAR Vietnam

NEW



H007 Tango w/ Helo



H023 Bronze Star
w/black 6"x3" patch on mesh back
black cap

Service Award Hats

Service Award hats are available in five styles on an olive drab base.
All cotton, washable with pewter finish clasp.

\$20.00



H012 MRF PUC



H013 MRF Svc Ribbon



Riv Ron 15, M-6, RM3

It's odd, I can't remember eating C Rations while in training for 3 months. It was a new experience for me for sure. I quickly found out how not to warm up a can of beans and meatballs on the monitor's starboard exhaust manifold without a hole in the can first. I had seen the other guys on the crew put their cans of food there to warm them up but I missed the part about a vent hole. Needless to say, when my can exploded it made a huge mess all over that clean engine! Our enginemen Gary was not impressed with the FNG and I had quite a time cleaning up all that mess in that hot engine room with rags and water. Beans and Meatballs became my favorite meal. We had a kerosene stove on the aft end of the boat and a frying pan. I would dump two cans of beans and meatballs into the pan after first cutting the meat balls in two. When the beans and meat got hot, I would open a can of cheese and stir that into the mix with Tabasco Sauce.

The longest I had to eat C Rations was when we moved to Tuyen Nhon from repairs in Dong Tam, in late August 1970. We were there about 3 months and we never left the boat where it was stationed along the Grand Channel for indirect fire support.

When I got out and worked on forest fires with the US Forest Service, they used to give us cases

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	Shipping (If order is over \$60, Shipping is FREE)			\$ 8.00
	Grand Total			\$

1. Indicate your choice of item number (be sure to include size, if applicable), with quantity, and total amount. Add amounts for grand total to enclose.
2. Make check or money order payable to: MRFA. The MRFA does not take credit cards.
3. Mail Gear Locker Order Form and check to MRFA, PO Box 271, Lake Villa, IL 60046.
Email Harry Hahn at SparksRivRon13@aol.com for questions.

HARRY HAHN
President

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UPDATED: 05/27/2020

of C Rations and I knew exactly what I wanted. I still have an old case out in the garage just to look at. I mailed the Beans and Meatball meal to our Engineman Gary Vandeloo a few years ago. He said he forgives me.

By Ron Linville - USS Mazama (AE-9) Westpac 1969/Yankee Station; Naval Advisor with River Assault & Interdiction Division (RAID) 75, ATF-211, TF-21.

1. C-Ration Survey: Who had C-Rat's? We occasionally received a few K-rats/Korean War, but, primarily relied on barter and catch. Worked well enough until all waterborne traffic was restricted in Ca Mau AO. NVA Sappers! Shoot anything on water near ARVN 32nd artillery CP. No questions asked.

2. Memory of coming home that stood out: A PO1 in Great Lakes was berating us about some watch we supposedly missed. We weren't living

on base. As Larry and I kept looking at each other, about to jump him, he said he'd let his chief handle this. His chief turned out to be a chief that had served briefly in our RAID. The PO1 explained the situation. Chief told PO1 to go on and he'd handle us. No sooner had PO1 turned around than Chief was shaking our hands, asking how we were doing. Glad the chief showed up when he did as we were about to go to the brig instead of being separated. Never knew if the PO1 and Chief cooked this up or if it was for real. If an act, PO1 could have won an Oscar.

3. Nickname: During WestPac/Yankee Station in 1969: Snipes got little deck time. During “holiday rootie tootie” I’d get a bit sunburnt so some of the guys called me Pinky. In-Country in 1970-71: Vietnamese that I advised pronounced my last name like, “Windmill”. I think they had issues with Ls and Vs. Since I was the youngest advisor, the senior advisor started referring to me as “The Kid”. It stuck.



2021 MRFA & 9th Infantry Division Reunion
9/16/21 TO 9/19/21
Registration Form
(PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY)
Must be received by 9/1/2021



2021 MRFA & 9th Infantry Division
Reunion
Flight Information
September 16 - September 19, 2021



ONLY FILL OUT THIS FORM IF YOU NEED AN ADA ACCESSIBLE SHUTTLE TO THE HOTEL. THE HOTEL SHUTTLE WILL PICK UP ALL OTHERS EVERY 15 TO 30 MINUTES

Name _____

Unit in Vietnam (one unit only) _____ Dates _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Name(s): Spouse/Girlfriend or 1st Guest _____ City _____ State _____

Name(s): Additional Guest(s) _____ City _____ State _____

Send my registration form to me by e-mail Yes ☐ No ☐ First reunion ☐

Registration includes member and 1 guest (Does not cover lodging, food, bus trips)
MRFA Member Registration \$75 Nonmember Registration \$100

\$75 or \$100

Late registration fee at the hotel for members: (\$100) Non-Member (\$125)

Total number of other guest(s) _____ x \$ 25 ea. Guests under 12 are free \$ _____

Bus trip to Vietnam Memorial Wall in Perryville _____ x \$25 each \$ _____

(Must sign up in advance for bus. No sign up at the reunion)

Grand Total Enclosed \$ _____

Shuttle to Gateway Arch, St. Louis Aquarium/Wheel and West County Mall on a first come, first serve basis.

Please send this form with your check or money order payable to the MRFA. Mail to MRFA 2021 Reunion, C/O Frank Jones, 9 San Marino Parkway, Fenton, MO 63026 before 9/1/2021.

Full refund for cancellations will be made until 9/1/21. After this date NO REFUNDS will be made. Returned checks will be charged a \$25 processing fee.

Note: You will still have to check in at the registration desk to receive your name tag. There will be no admission to hospitality room without your lanyard/name tag. NO EXCEPTIONS! REGISTRATION WILL BE OPEN ON THURSDAY, SEPT. 16, 9AM TO 5PM AND FRIDAY, SEPT. 17, 9 AM TO NOON.

ONLY SEND THE FLIGHT FORM IF YOU NEED ADA TRANSPORTATION!
 Please fill out the 2021 MRFA Reunion Flight Form and send to Frank Jones

Name(s): _____

Home Address: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Arrival Date	Airline	Flight Number Info St. Louis Airport	Arrival time Info St. Louis Airport	# of People Needing Ride

Departure Date	Airline	Flight Number From St. Louis Airport	Departure time From St. Louis Airport	# of People Needing Ride

NOTE: FLIGHT INFO IS DUE NO LATER THAN 9/1/21 TO GET ADA TRANSPORTATION. Send this form back to Frank Jones at 9 San Marino Parkway, Fenton, MO 63026 or e-mail mrfatang048@gmail.com

Unconventional Warfare, on Unconventional Boats!

By M. B. Connolly

There is nothing pretty about a Tango boat. In fact, most of the River Assault Craft (RAC) lacked the lines and appearance of a classic boat. Early on, the unaware tagged our group as McHale's Navy. It took a good while for the boats and their crews to dispel the pre-formed opinions of the rest of the Navy in Vietnam. The early riverine operations were done with professionalism, courage and with virtually no fanfare. Hence, only we knew what we did and we took great pride and satisfaction in our accomplishments.

In early 1969, when troop lifts and major operations were waning in anticipation of the withdrawal of the Ninth Infantry, river assault craft began to be deployed to other Navy op-areas, namely Giant Slingshot and other interdiction operations. These op-areas were manned primarily with PBRs and commanded by PBR officers. The "big ugly RACs" didn't fit the public relations image of the sleek and speedy PBR and in some cases, we were not really welcomed with open arms. Likewise, with standing military procedure that the senior officer in the op-area was in command, care was taken at first to ensure that the River Assault Division officer was not senior to the commander of the op-area. Heaven forbid that a RAC officer would have command over a group of PBRs! That was one of the reasons that our boats were moved around so frequently on our early deployments out of Dong Tam.

The integration of all of our boats into the general Navy interdiction and surveillance effort in III and IV Corps was successful because of the amazing capabilities of the boats and the ingenuity and extraordinary efforts of the boat crews and support personnel. Gunfire support, psyops, helo and medcap platforms, river patrols, VN troop lifts and ambush operations became common for river assault craft after mid-1969. Try hiding a Tango in a rice paddy for night ambush! Add the use of the Zippo (flamethrower), Douche (water cannon), the Monitors, Alphas and the ubiquitous Tango for just about any imaginable operation and it can be argued that they became the backbone of the Navy inshore efforts in 1969 and 1970.

WATERBORNE GUARD POST (WBGp) or AMBUSH

The use of RAC in some of the interdiction operations was hampered by a lack of speed, but the defensive capabilities of the boats made them perfect for ambush operations. The large number of boats available made it feasible to station craft every 500 meters on many waterways that were crossed by enemy personnel entering the Republic of Vietnam from Cambodia. While it is hard to hide a Tango boat, the flight deck provided a

high vantage point and its defensive capabilities were such that it could stand and fight.

Consider that the plain old Tango boat had two 20-MM cannons, one Mk-19 grenade launcher, an improvised bank of as many as six machine guns and an array of hand-held weapons. With the exception of artillery, this was more fire power than that of the average VN outpost on the border. Add a 105-Howitzer monitor and air support, and the lone Tango in ambush became a fortress.

The "stand and fight" *modus operandi* required that the boats in ambush have perimeter security against both waterborne and landborne sapper squads. RAC crews used some very unique measures to effect perimeter security. Claymore mines, PSID sensors and concussion grenades were used to advantage. Early in the deployment of RACs to Operation Giant Slingshot, the Navy in Tra Cu was trained in the use of Claymore mines for base defense. An Army major "expert" demonstrated how to set them up for maximum effectiveness in protecting the perimeter. His first test firing injured two sailors and scared the hell out of all the rest of us. We learned respect for the Claymore mine. Later, on the Vinh Te canal, Tangos in WBGp protected their perimeter from attack by mounting two command-detonated Claymores on the ramp. Visual sighting or PSID alert from sensors placed ashore near the boat could be responded to by detonating the Claymores. They are a wicked weapon and if improperly secured can be dangerous. The three-ton ramp of the Tango was a solid base for the Claymore. One PBR, tried mounting two Claymores on the bow and ended up blowing the whole bow off the boat. The best defense for swimmer attack was having concussion grenades hanging on the reinforcing rods around the superstructure of the boats where they were readily accessible to all hands topside. The 105 Monitor perimeter defense utilized Beehive rounds with no delay setting.

In ambush, two Night Observation Devices at each Water Borne Guard Post (WBGp) were essential to cover upstream and downstream. Near the Cambodian border scanning the rice paddies was also necessary. On the Vinh Te canal, we placed a large combination infrared/search light on the flight deck of one of the Tangos. The power source was a jeep which we backed into well deck. Both were courtesy of the Army and even came with a Sergeant to service the light and drive the jeep. The infrared search function located targets which were then illuminated with the search light. All of the boats that could bring guns to bear and air support could fire down the beam of light. It was incredibly successful in thwarting numerous attempts to cross into Viet Nam. The platform light sitting on the flight deck was pretty obvious and the enemy often

concentrated their attacks on that boat when it was moving into ambush position for the night. On one occasion, a B-40 round got into the well deck and showered the jeep with shrapnel. Our CASREP reported "four flat tires" but the next echelon of command did not find any humor in our levity. The enemy continued to punish that Tango and late in October of 69, the sergeant was killed in action and the Army retrieved their light and jeep.

A technique that was perfected on the Vinh Te canal was the use of the Mk-19 grenade launcher for indirect fire spotted by another boat in ambush. Often, ambush sites had limited distance vision due to tree lines or low brush lines. By elevating the grenade launcher, a boat that could see the target could talk the fire in by such exact terminology as "up a little, down a little, come left a little," etc. Combined with the infrared spotter, it was an effective device in stopping many crossings out of Cambodia.

UNCONVENTIONAL UNDERWAY OPERATIONS

Just as the RAC proved versatile in static operations, their utility was exercised with success in underway operations as well. Interdiction, "float ops," and transportation services were amongst those operations.

On the Vam Co Tay and Vam Co Dong rivers, sitting in ambush was a dicey proposition so the RAC usually stayed underway and joined the interdiction efforts of the PBRs in attempting to stop infiltration out of the Parrot's Beak into South Vietnam. The slow RAC had the advantage of being able to stand and fight if fired upon and had weapons that could be used without spraying the whole countryside with ammunition. Enemy fire from a hooch could be addressed with the Zippo or possibly a bee-hive 105 round (set with no delay) without wiping out a whole village or spraying the neighboring province with 50 cal. rounds. When underway, the RAC were loud and made their presence known at some distance. Enemy units attempting to cross the river often squatted down in the brush on the shoreline and waited for the boat to pass and then slipped across in a sampan. They had learned early-on what the profile of the Zippo looked like and did not fire on that boat. We had some success in floating a Tango downstream making a lot of noise and having the Zippo hang back and wait for the enemy to fire at the Tango. When Charley ducked into his spider hole to avoid the Tango's response, the Zippo moved in and filled the spider hole with napalm. The enemy in the Delta was NOT a slow learner. They figured that out pretty quickly and we all became bored with just floating down the river every night knowing that

continued on next page

Unconventional Warfare, on Unconventional Boats!

continued from page 8

they were crossing despite our efforts. Finally, we devised a technique that nobody believed. We sent the Douche Boat (appropriately named Irma) out at night floating and hosing down the bank closest to the Cambodian Border. When the enemy got a blast of water that could knock a hooch down, he often responded by firing his weapon . . . and the Zippo was right behind Irma!

We got information from the Army intel folks that the interruption of supplies out of the Parrot's Beak had caused the enemy to try using a heavy-duty rope across the river to "high-line" supplies. It was lowered when boats passed. We began to troll the river with our minesweeping gear. It was a simple chain with angle iron welded to it at a forty-five-degree angle. On the first night, the trolling boat caught a rope and pulled somebody who was hand tending it into the water. Next success was hooking a rope that had been secured to a tree, pulling the tree into the river.

One Tango boat had the large Psyops speakers onboard. The psychological warfare group gave us some cassette tapes of Chinese funeral music and Vietnamese text about horrible things that had befallen the enemies of Saigon. It was recorded with electronic distortion and contained graphic details of dismemberment and a poor soul doomed to roam the earth looking for his missing body parts to enter heaven. Some of the young Vietnamese sailors assigned for training would hide below when we played it. Apparently, the enemy was more perturbed by country music which was also played. The boat was fired at more when it was playing Willy Nelson than when they used the tapes provided.

UNCONVENTIONAL LIFE STYLE

Living on the boats in remote areas did give rise to some inventive thinking. We towed a fuel barge around with us and somehow liberated a stainless steel PBR fuel tank that we placed on the fuel barge and filled with fresh water when we got alongside a ship or YRBM. There were no shower facilities at most of the sites so we were able to rig the 671 engine water-cooling system to discharge into a shower head on deck. Revving the engine produced a reasonable facsimile of a shower which was surprisingly warm. The single problem in the small canals was, that while showering, it was prudent to watch the intake to make sure that large pieces of contamination were not entering it. In Vinh Gia, our "base" was just downstream for the town privy. I can remember showering with soap in my eyes and never losing sight of the intake.

Boats in the far reaches of the Delta were at the very tag-end of the Navy supply system. It

was difficult to establish just exactly who was responsible for our support. We were eligible at times for a "five finger discount" on certain military and repair items. We traded with the Army for uniforms and 105 Willie Peter and beehive ammunition which the Navy never seemed to have. We were able to order submarine deck shoes (Keds) and got them. They filled an order in triplicate giving us a wonderful trading cache. Probably one of the most shameful practices that occurred was when a boat was at the YRBM when a supply ship showed up, the crew would dress in dungarees and join the working party and walk right through the YRBM and deposit desirable food items on their boat. Even Navy canned hot dogs and dried lyonnaise potatoes were a break from C-rats and LRPs. This unique supply source ended when one of our group filched a box destined for the ship's store that contained closely controlled items. The boat didn't get halfway home before it was recalled and the hospitality of the YRBM was severely curtailed. The ceramic installed toilets in the boats rarely worked and "portapotties" (buckets with a toilet seat) were devised. On deck, they were often blown over the side or lost so visits to our support ships served as an opportunity to replace the toilet seats.

One ship had been raided so often that they stationed guards in the heads to prevent pilferage.

The difficulties and dangers of the assignments and the courage and inventiveness of the boat crews and their support personnel were the fibers that produced a stellar combat record and knitted the proud brotherhood that we have today. In Lynchburg, Virginia there is a monument stairway that honors the veterans of all wars. An inscription there reads:

"I stood up, I showed up.

I stepped forward,

I raised my right hand.

I stood in the gap,

I walked in the fire.

I did not dodge,

I did not evade.

Consequently,

I have nothing to prove,

No one to convince.

Those who matter already know.

Those who don't, never will."

Author unknown

In Memory Of

This section is for members who wish to sponsor the MRFA by placing a notice in memory of one of their fallen comrades. In some instances, the name of the sponsor will precede the name of the person who was KIA, or has passed on since Vietnam. It's \$25 for four issues.

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 David Wilson, 2nd/60th, KIA, 08/05/69, Timothy Shelton, 4th/39th, KIA 06/25/69, Steven Murray, 4th/39th, KIA 05/26/69, Harvey Crabtree, 2nd/4th Arty, KIA 06/19/69, and Dennis Mattox 1st/501st, 101st Abn, KIA 08/23/69
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 Adam Metts, for Donald L. Bruckart, T-111-2 KIA 3/31/69
 Adam Metts, for Donald L. Bruckart, T-111-2 KIA 3/31/69
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 Sfc. Claud Onley, A Co. 3rd/47th Inf., KIA 5/66
 All the USN and USA KIAs of the MRF (67-70)
 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
 Okey Toothman, in memory of Judy Wallace
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 Okey Toothman, in memory of Major General Lucien "Blackie" Bolduc
 Okey Toothman, in memory of Gary E. McCabe, A Co., 3rd/47th.
 Henry Velez, for my fallen brothers, B Co. 2nd/39th Inf.
 From your Brothers, B Co., 2nd/ 39th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division in memory of John Nielsen, B Co., 2nd/39th, (04/68-04/70)

Member Steven Ray Olsen passed away on August 6, 2020. While in Vietnam he served onboard the USS Mark (AKL-12) as Leading Seaman, Cook, Hatch Captain and Helmsman from March 1970 to July 1971. Steven was living in Wisconsin and is survived by his wife Laurie, daughter Abbie and son Bryan.



Chief Daniel E. Peckham (USCG Ret.) passed away on August 5, 2020. While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Squadron 9 - Division 91 onboard C-91-1 and A-91-8 from November 1967 to December 1968. Dan was Boat Captain of A-91-8. After his Naval enlistment he joined the United States Coast Guard retiring as a Boatswain's Mate Chief. Dan is survived by his wife Cheryl.



Member Robert Lee McDevitt passed away on July 8, 2020. While in Vietnam he served with River Division 595/River Assault Division 153 onboard A-6854. This was a joint PBR and ASPB division that primarily operated in the Rung Sat Special Zone. After his tour on the boats he served with Commander Naval Forces, Vietnam with Security Detachment, Naval Headquarters, Saigon, Vietnam. Robert's dates in-country were May 1969 to December 1970. He is survived by his wife Joanne.

James "Jim" C. Binder, 70, Eau Claire, gracefully waltzed out of this world on the evening of Friday, July 24, 2020 at the home that he built surrounded by his family.

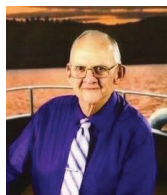


Jim was born on August 11, 1949 in Marshfield, Wisconsin to John and Ruth (Wagner) Binder. He married his high school sweetheart, Patricia Weber, on June 16, 1973, and they had two daughters, Jessica and Allison.

Jim enlisted with the United States Navy Reserve in 1967 and deployed to Vietnam in 1968. During his one-year tour in Vietnam he served as a Gunners Mate Petty Officer 3rd class. He heroically patrolled the inland waterways of Vietnam with what is known as the "Brown-Water Navy". In 1973 he was honorably discharged.

TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One

Member BMC John L. Smith (USN Ret.) passed away on July 10, 2020. After a 3 year enlistment in the U.S. Army from 1954-57, John joined the U.S. Navy in 1960. While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Squadron 13 - Division 131 as Boat Captain of T-131-1 and T-131-10 from March 1968 to March 1969. Of all of his honorable years of service John was most proud of serving with the Mobile Riverine Force (Task Force 117). He is survived by his wife Sandy.



Member Marvin Paul Huck passed away on July 2, 2020.



While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Squadron 13 - River Assault Division 131 onboard T-131-13 from March 1969 to March 1970. Marvin was residing in O'Fallon, Missouri at the time of his passing.

Member Commander Charles J. Cox (USN Ret.) passed away on April 4, 2020 after a long illness. While in Vietnam he served as Commanding Officer of River Assault Division 111 from December 1967 to December 1968. As a Lieutenant Charles received the Navy Cross Medal for his actions on September 15 & 16, 1968. LT Cox also earned the Silver Star Medal and Bronze Star Medal with combat V device. He was living in Ventura, CA at the time of his passing.



"The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Cross to Lieutenant Charles John Cox (NSN: 0-641594), United States Navy, for extraordinary heroism on the morning of 15 September 1968 while serving with United States forces engaged in riverine assault operations against communist aggressor forces in the Republic of Vietnam. As Commander of River Assault Division 111, River Squadron 5, Task Force 117 (TF-117), Lieutenant Cox was leading a column of assault craft down the Ben Tre River in Kien Hoa Province when the column was ambushed by a Viet Cong unit. After ordering return fire from all weapons, Lieutenant Cox exposed himself to fierce enemy fire while evaluating the tactical situation and marking beach sites for his boats. Although painfully wounded at the outset by exploding rocket fragments, he continued to issue orders and maintain tight control over his division, landing embarked troops on both enemy flanks. In order to ensure the safe arrival of the medical aid boat to attend to his numerous casualties, he ordered a monitor at the aid boat's location to provide fire support, and then directed his boat and another monitor back through the ambush. As the front and rear

units met in a hail of enemy fire, Lieutenant Cox ordered his two monitors to reverse course and, while running the ambush for the third time, led all four boats to a position of relative safety. He then supervised the treatment or evacuation of his wounded before submitting to much-needed attention for his own injuries. Because of his rare tactical brilliance, the infantry units were landed at optimal positions to assault the enemy from both flanks and inflict serious damage while sustaining little themselves. During two subsequent, intense engagements on 15 and 16 September 1968, Lieutenant Cox led his men with the same high degree of courage and competence. His exemplary performance of duty with consistent disregard for his own safety or his painful wounds throughout two days was instrumental in the success of an operation which inflicted numerous enemy casualties. By his inspiring leadership, great personal valor, and selfless devotion to duty, Lieutenant Cox upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Member Andrew Carden Jr. (GMC USN Ret.) passed away on November 1, 2019. While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Squadron 9 - River Assault Division 92 onboard M-92-1 from November 1968 to November 1969. Andrew continued his Naval service for 20 years and retired as a Gunnersmate Chief Petty Officer.



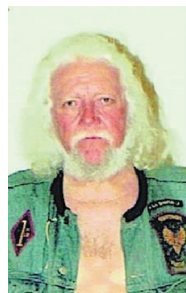
Member Morgan Joseph "Butch" Sincok passed away suddenly on August 31, 2019. He graduated from Officers Candidate School as a 2nd Lieutenant. While in Vietnam he served with the 25th Infantry Division - Mobile Advisory Team III-84 from November 1968 to May 1969. When discharged he was a Captain. Butch is survived by his wife Judith.

Member Alfred "Fred" R. Stryz passed away of cancer related to Agent Orange on June 4, 2019. While in Vietnam he served with Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 60th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division from March 1969 to March 1970. Fred is survived by his wife Shari.



Member Charles "Charlie" E. Sykes passed on August 15, 2018. While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Squadron 15 onboard T-46. Then he was transferred to Coastal Division 13 to finish his tour of duty. Charlie's in-country dates were May 1969 to May 1970. He is survived by his long-time wife Lisa.

Member Thomas Freeland Jr. passed away on March 1, 2019. While in Vietnam he served aboard the USS Tutuila (ARG-4) repairing riverboats from March 1968 to February 1969. Thomas is survived by his wife Cindy.



Return to Vietnam

By Ralph H. Bigelow, T-131-8, '68/'69

I Received a call from my daughter and she asked me a question. Would it bother me to go back to Vietnam on vacation? I watch a lot of shows on the Discovery Channel and saw one on Vietnam and how nice it was now, so I asked her if she had been watching TV. She had watched the same show. She asked about her, my boy, and myself going there. I answered no it wouldn't bother me; I liked the people and the country is beautiful and now that no one is shooting at me it would probably be fun.

So, in February 2020 the three of us left Detroit for Hanoi. It was a 14-hour flight with one stop in Korea. We were met at the airport by our guide and taken to our hotel which was very nice and could compete with any 4-star hotel in the states. The service, accommodations, food, and drinks were great.

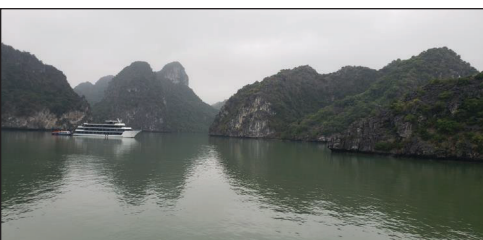
In the morning we went to the old presidential palace, museum, and toured Hanoi. All was very interesting; I wasn't interested in seeing old war relics but they show them a lot. The kids (both in their 40s) found it very informative. It's one thing to see it on TV it's another to see it in real life.



From Hanoi we went to the tunnels at Cu Chi it was very interesting and no I didn't go down in one. I'm too tall to get my fat ass down there even if they did enlarge some for us fat Americans.

From Cu Chi we went to Ho Chi Minh City or as we knew it Saigon. It's a beautiful city now. Again, we had great hotel and service. We did a lot of site seeing.

The white building is where the helo evacuated personnel from the rooftop after the fall of Saigon.



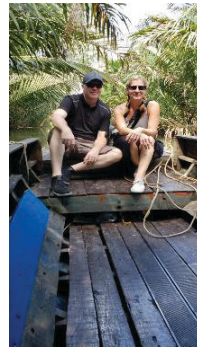
We went on a tour of the harbor it was a beautiful.

We went down to the Delta. Had to do it we went to Dong Tam. You can't go on the old base its now an act army base. But across the street is the snake farm and zoo. Very interesting.



We took a sampan ride down one of canals and out to the Mekong river. Was a little eerie at first. Ralph (Buddy) and Michelle, my son and daughter

We had a great trip to Vietnam; Audley Travel did



tricity all over, and paved roads.

Mike Connolly, River Assault Division 132

"Have you been back to Vietnam for a tour?" I have not been back. At the early reunions I never bought a raffle ticket for the Vietnam Tour as I was afraid I might win.

"Did your Vietnam experience have any positive effects on your life?" Definitely, yes! As a young Navy lieutenant living on a Charlie boat in a remote location with eight enlisted men and in the company of 100 sailors in green, I learned a life's lesson that served me well in my Navy and subsequent career. Respect is a two-way street. I would have gone anywhere with them or for them. I still hold them in the highest regard, shipmates, every one.

Contact the Editor

If you have questions, stories, or comments for "River Currents," please e-mail Terry Sater, at s8er@yahoo.com Not all stories can be published. All must be family friendly. We want a good balance of Army and Navy stories, so please participate!



a great job. We had our own guide the whole time so we went where I asked him. The people were very friendly we had lunch at a private home on the Mekong it was great. I talked to his father he remembered the boats going down the canals. We each had a Tiger beer and reminisced a bit. It's really changed a lot, there are now bridges crossing the Mekong, houses are concrete, elec-



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James H. MacDonald, B Co. 3rd/60th Inf.(11/67-03/68)
Robert Marburger, C Co. 2nd/60th Inf. (11/68-11/69)
Michael A. Marquez, A Co., 3rd Plt. 3rd/60th Inf. (07/68-07/69)
Frank O. Martinolich, A Co., 3rd/60th 9th Inf. Div. (03/68-03/69)
James Masters, USS Askari, ARL-30 (09/69-08/70)
Vincent Matura, YRBM 152, (10/69-07/70) "Suffolk 24"
Paul A. Mayne, YRBM-16 (01/67-02/68)
Randall McComas, E Co.15th Combat Eng. (10/68-08/69)
Crisis McLaughlin, D Co., 3rd/47th, 9th Inf. Div. (09/68-07/69)
Kenneth McLean, B Co., 4th/47th (11/68-01/69)
Cyril "Bud" McQuillan Jr., E Co., 2nd/39th, HHC (02/68-02/69)
Adam Metts, T-111-2 (08/68-10/69)
Terry Metzner, C-4, 3rd/60th Infantry 12/66-11/67
Nick Miller, COS, RivDiv 152 (07/68-06/69)
Nickola Mitschkowetz, BM2, APL-30 (11/68-11/69)
Capt. Lawrence K. Monahan, USNR (Ret.), YRBM-20 (1970-71)
A. R. "Monti" Montillo, B Co. 3rd/60th Inf (04/68-09/68)
Joe Moore, USS Colleton, APB-36 (10/66-08/67)
J. Russell and Alice Moore, T-91-5, (11/68-06/69)
Lt. Frank Morran, B Co., 4th/47th Inf. (11/67-10/68)
Thanks Artillery
Daryl Newell, USS Benewah, APB-35, 4/70-2/71
James Noyes, C Btry., 3rd/34th Arty (06/67-06/68)
Gary O'Brien, MM3, USS Mercer, APB-39 (04/68-12/69)
Christopher Olsen, T-131-8 (05/68-05/69)
Charles Ostrow, HHC, 2nd/47th Mech. Inf. (01/68-12/68)
John Oxyre, Recon, E Co., 3rd/47th Inf. (11/65-11/67)
Ed Paananen, HQ., 3rd/47th 9th Inf. (05/66-06/68)
BM3 Charles C. Page, USS White River, LSMR-536 (04/69-05/70)
Capt. Jerry Pape USN (Ret), Staff, COMRIVFLOT ONE (01/68-12/68)
John Wayne Parrish Jr., Co. A, 4th/47th Inf. (01/68-01/69)
Dwayne Parsons, M-111-1, (Zippo 1) (11/67-11/68)
Anthony L. Perez, USS Iredell County, LST-839 (11/69-07/70)
John "Ron" Perry, T-132-11 (06/68-06/69)
Michael Howard Phillips, D Co., 15th Combat Engineers, 9th Inf. (08/68-06/69)

Paul Ray, M-151-5 (06/69-07/70)
David Raybell, Monitor 111-3 (11/66-02/68)
Col. Henly "Ed" Reed, HHC, 2nd/60th Infantry
Capt. William Renton, USS Askari, ARL-30 (10/68-09/69)
Jerry Ross, T-131-1 (08/69-08/70)
Pieter A. Ruig, 3rd/47th, 9th Inf. Div., (12/67-07/68)
Loren Salzman, E Co. 4th/47th, (12/67-12/68)
Billy Sanders, RivRon 11, RAD 112, T-112-1 and CCB-112-1 Vietnam1967 plankowner
Norman Saunders, B Co., 3rd/39th Inf. (01/69-08/69)
Duane Schinn, Z-111-7, and M-111-2 (12/67-06/68)
Robert "Bob" and Betty A. Schrader, D Co., 9th Med Bn. (07/68-07/69)
F. George Schuster, LTJG, USS Indra, ARL-37 (1968-69)
COL Sam Schutte, Co. B, 4th/47th Infantry (03/66-12/67)
George Schwemmer, C Co., 6th/31st Inf. (1968-69)
Thomas D. Scott, USS Colleton, APB-36 (12/66-04/68)
Jerry Shearer, C Co. 3rd/60th 9th Inf. (04/67-04/68)
Joseph W. Shedlock, A-152-4 (10/68-07/69)
CDR. William D. Shuttters, USN (Ret), Boat Captain, T-111-1 (9/67-8/68)
Bill Slover, XO, USS Colleton APB-36
Marc Spilberg, 4th/47th Inf. (01-68-01/69)
Chet "Gunner" Stanley, C-111-1, and M-111-3 (1966-68)
Thomas Stuart, USS Benewah, APB-35 (1966-67)
John Sturtz, T-151-9 (06/68-06/69)
Bryan Swisher, B Co., 3rd/47th Inf. (12/68-6/69)
Albert L. Taylor, RivDiv 93, R-92-1 (11/68-6/69)
Bernard Thewes, EN3, USS Askari, (ARL-30) 01/69-01/70
Charles Thompson, 9th Admin Co. (02/66-11/67)
Harley Timmerman, T-132-10 (06/68-06/69)
Milton Turnage, M-151-1 (07/68-06/69)
Roger Valentine, USS Askari, ARL-30 (07/67-05/68)
GMGI Ricky Vice, USN (Ret.), T-131-7 (03/68-05/69) & NAG (01/71-06/72)
David J. Vicknair, USS Washtenaw County, LST-1166 (1968-1970)
Ron Wallace, B Co. 3rd Plat. 3rd/47th Inf. (05/66-08/67)
Bill Weidman, T-111-12 (02/67-02/68)
Gary Weisz, A-91-4 (10/67-07/68)
David H. White, USN (Ret), USS Satyr, ARL-23 (08/69-08/70)
Wm. "Whit" Whitworth, Lighthouse 5D Troop, 3rd/5th Cav. (9th Inf. Div.) (03/68-04/69)
Rhett Wise, A Co. 3rd/47th Inf. (03/67-04/68)
Jeffrey L. Withers, RivRon 11, A-112-8, and M-112-12 (06/68-06/69)
John Woronicak, APB-35, USS Benenwah
William H. Ziebarth, 9th Signal 3rd/34th Arty. (05/66-12/67)
James Zieminski, EN2, Boat Captain, RivDiv 153, ASPB 6854 (04/69-04/70)
Robert Zimmer, XO, USS Mercer, APB-39 (02/68-07/69)