



River

Currents



A PUBLICATION OF
THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

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WINTER 2020

Message From the Radio Shack



Harry Hahn

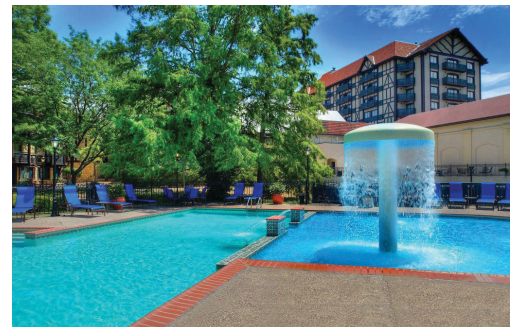
Hello from the Radio Shack: goodbye 2020 and hello 2021!

Never so glad to put a year in the rear view as this one! We had a trying one, with COVID-19. Cancelling our Coronado get together was just one disappointment. We hope to do that trip in a year or so! Let us keep positive. The vaccine is being administered. Hopefully, you are getting notifications from the VA or your county of its availability. I have had my shots (Pfizer) through my Fire Department, where I have volunteered for several years.

By September, our 2021 MRFA Reunion in St. Louis (Westport), we trust that it should not be affected by COVID. We should have reached herd immunity by then and the social gathering regulations should be relaxed. As I stated previously, we will be staying at the Sheraton Westport Chalet. A great venue that will offer shopping, dining, and transportation to and from the airport. Many of you have started to sign up. The main hotel will be the Sheraton Westport CHALET. The backup is the PLAZA hotel, which is just a short walk across the plaza complex. We also will be providing transportation for Mall shopping and scenic downtown St. Louis. An option we will be providing is to see the Missouri National Veteran's Memorial in Perryville, MO. It is a beautiful full-size replicate of the Vietnam Memorial wall in Washington. See our website and this issue, for more details. Please get your hotel reservations and separately, send in your reunion registration to Frank Jones. A form is included with this River Currents.

continued on page 4

Start Planning NOW, for the MRFA Reunion at the Sheraton Westport Chalet! St. Louis, Mo, Sept. 15-19, 2021



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 Chalet 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 ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant 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 charge is charged by the hotel.

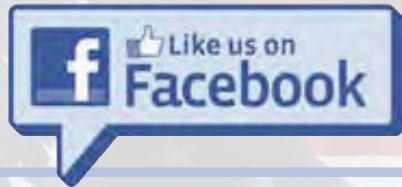
There are plenty of restaurants both on and off property, locally, to have lunches and dinners.

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.

Frank Jones is NOT reserving rooms for you, so you will have to make your own reservation. 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

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



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.

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 _____
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 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

Visit the Missouri National Veteran's Memorial!



There will be optional bus transportation that will take you to the Missouri National Veteran's Memorial in Perryville, Missouri, on Friday at 10am. It is a replica of Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington DC. Please note that there is an additional per person charge when making your bus reservations for the trip. We encourage all people to pre-register using the registration form. No On-Site registration is accepted.

Jim Eddleman, fought valiantly in the Tet Offensive during the Vietnam conflict. He carried several severely wounded – to the medevac helicopter. He made a promise to himself that he would one day honor his comrades if he made it out alive. Jim kept that promise, donating land

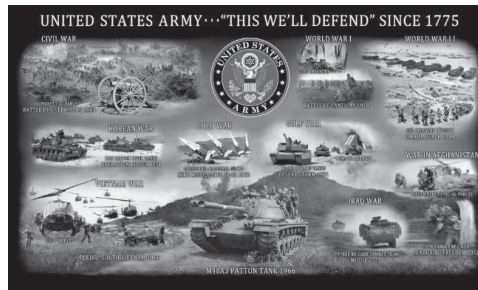


from his family's farm, and financial support, to the building of this memorial. Our president, Harry Hahn, had a nice conversation with Jim Eddleman, at the dedication of the MNVM.

After talking with friends and fellow veterans, he decided that Missouri's National Veterans Memorial would be his way of providing a lasting tribute to America's veterans.

In addition to his significant contribution to the memorial, as well as donating 46 acres of land that has been in his family for three generations, Jim hopes his story will be an inspiration for others to not just support the memorial, but honor those who have served.

Honor Flag Memorial, At The MNVM



The Honor Flag Memorial is a large, concave structure, stretching 49 feet along the Welcome Center's western edge. Each granite section pays homage to America's conflicts and branches of the military, with laser-etched illustrations and typography.

"Missouri's National Veterans Memorial is going to be the most distinguished and fascinating site of its kind in the country. In addition to the black granite Vietnam Memorial Wall, there will be a museum that honors all veterans. Brilliantly conceived and beautifully constructed, this will draw Americans from all over the nation and visitors throughout the world with a single purpose in mind, to honor America's veterans." – William "Jerry" Boykin, Lieutenant General, U.S. Army

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



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:_____

City_____State:_____Zip:_____

Thank you for your participation!

The Officers and Board Members of the
 Mobile Riverine Force Association

Message From the Radio Shack

continued from page 1

News on the documentary. The Arballos have informed me that the first film and slide digitizing is being completed. These are the films and media that you have sent in for our documentary that we will be introducing this year. Once the trailer is released, the Arballos will be looking for additional public funding to produce this film. They were successful with this venture when they did the award winning "Scramble the Seawolves" documentary. That film appeared on over 300 PBS affiliates.

There is one more new addition to the Gear Locker. We have had the Vietnam Combatant-Craft Crewman pin in a 3-inch version for some time. We just added a polished, Bronze colored, 1 ¼ inch lapel pin to the Gear Locker. It is very cool and looks great on your hat or work on a lapel. The detail is great. Please look at the Gear Locker for the VCCC002!

Stay safe and stay well in this new year! We want to see all of you in September.

Harry Hahn, President,
SparksRivRon13@aol.com

Contact the Editor

If you have questions, stories, or comments for "River Currents," please e-mail Terry Sater, at terry.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!

Veterans Day 2020 – Washington, D.C.

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



This year, unlike other years, thanks to COVID-19, very few members of the Mobile Riverine Force Association came together in Washington, D.C., to celebrate Veterans Day at the Wall. COVID-19 reduced our attendance significantly.

However, a small group of hardcore MFRA members and a few family members, led by Ralph Bigelow, met on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on a nasty rainy day and proceeded to the Wall and laid our wreaths. Well done all!



Each year our numbers are fewer as we are in the fourth quarter of our lives, and age and health are taking their toll. However, even with COVID-19 wreaking havoc across the country, a few of our members stood up and made our wreath-laying happen again this year. I am always in awe of the dedication of those that attend our wreath-laying ceremonies at the Wall.

My thanks to each of you who attended and Bravo Zulu to Ralph Bigelow for taking the lead! In closing, I share the following:

War drew us from our homeland in the sunlit springtime of our youth. Those who did not come back alive remain in perpetual springtime – forever young – and a part of them is with us always.

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

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

**FREE
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ON ORDERS OVER \$60

Bumper Stickers

Show your colors with pride. These durable vinyl bumper stickers will look great on your car or truck. Brilliant, bright detail on a weather-resistant vinyl. Help spread the word out about a great organization and maybe find someone right next door! Six great styles to choose from.

\$5.00



B001 MRFA w/ribbons (measures 11.8" x 3.5")



B002 VCCC (measures 12" x 4")



MEMBER
B004 Member
(measures 3" x 4")



B005 9TH Inf Div
(measures 3" x 4")

Coins

Quality crafted pewter coins are 1½" in diameter, with high quality embossing and full color detail. Thank You, Purple Heart, Army, and Navy coins have areas for engraving.

\$10.00



C001 MRFA



C003 Thank You
(2" diameter)



C004 Purple Heart



C005 Army



C006 Navy



C007 Army Hooah

Hat Pins

A great gift for any occasion. These sturdy and colorful pins will make a great addition to that special hat. Makes a great lapel pin and tie tack too! Each is quality hand-crafted pewter and comes complete with clasp. Designed exclusively for the MRFA and not available anywhere else!

\$7.00 ea



P001 MRF



P002 9th Inf Div



P003 RAD 91



P004 RAD 92



P005 RAD 111

VCCC PINS

Designed by Member Tom Nielsen (T-132-6).



VCCC001 VCCC Pin



VCCC002 VCCC PIN

VCCC001 VCCC Pin
Custom made 3" width Vietnam
Combatant Crewman Pin
Silver Insignia on white base..

\$15.00

VCCC002 VCCC Pin
Custom made 1.25" width
Vietnam Combatant Crewman Pin
Antique Bronze Lapel Pin

\$11.00



P006 RAD 112



P007 RAD 131



P008 RAD 132



P009 RivRon XV



P010 RAD 152



P011 Riv Div 153



**P012 USS Benewah
APB-35**



P013 3rd/60th Inf



P014 MRF 3/60



P015 39th Inf



P016 47th Inf



P017 River Raiders



P018 River Rat



P019 Brown Water Navy



P020 White River



P021 U.S. Army



P022 U.S. Navy



P023 Vietnam Svc Medal



P024 Purple Heart

At seventeen, my father was going to move again, because of work. I told him I wasn't moving. He told me, "Oh yes you are." I went to a Navy recruiter, who said his quota was full, and besides, I would need my parent's signature. He told me I

I got my sea duty orders to the USS Intrepid, CVS-11. I Flew to Clark Air base, then traveled to Subic Bay. They flew me to Japan to catch the ship. When I got there, it had already left for Nam. I went back to Subic, got on board the USS Pictor, AF-54. We went to the Tonkin Gulf, and reupped the ships. The next to the last was the

On our way back I volunteered for PBRs, and got it. I went home on leave, and while there, I received a registered package saying my orders had been changed. I was to report to Mare Island, Vallejo, California, for MRF training. I thought, "What in the hell is the MRF?" I found out! I went from small fast boats, to large slow boats. Oh boy! I was a plank owner on T-131-8, RivRon 13, Ras 131. 68-69.

I got out, and went to see my parents, who were now in Michigan, I bought a car, but I was broke then, so I went to work for National Cylinder Gas, as an installer, putting in large oxygen, nitrogen, helium, and argon units for hospitals and companies. I was then accepted by Detroit Edison, now DTE, as a groundman. I became a lineman, and did forty years, and retired.

I looked for reunions to go to when I got, out contacted "Gamewardens Association." They said I could join as an "associate member," I told them, "No, thank you."

I saw that the USS Benewah was having a reunion, in Hickory, N.C. I contacted Albert Moore. He said I was welcome to come. I did, and we talked about what the Gamewardens Association had said. We decided to form our own MRFA. Albert asked, "Who should we let join?" I replied, "Anyone who rode on the boats in Nam, Army included." I wrote up the by-laws and the MRFA was formed.

I'm still around and kicking.

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

Ordering is as easy as 1-2-3.

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.

**Products
Chairman
HARRY HAHN
President**

Name _____

Shipping Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

UPDATED: 08/05/2020

3rd Battalion 34th Artillery

(105mm Howitzer, Towed Riverine)
Arrived Vietnam: 19 Dec 1966
Departed: 26 July 1969
Previous Station: Fort Riley
Strength: 468

The 3rd of the 34th Artillery was a towed 105mm howitzer battalion assigned to the 9th Infantry Division. The battalion was unique in that it was placed on barge firing platforms to provide direct artillery support for the divisions Mobile Riverine Force Operations. It was administratively stationed at Dong Tam, arriving in Vietnam as direct support artillery for the divisions 3rd brigade before its riverine role was undertaken.

3rd-34th Artillery Improved Weapons in the Mekong Delta

Fighting in the Mekong Delta presented myriad difficulties. The entire region is covered with swamp, rivers, streams and canals that severely hampered land movement and placed hardships on ground troops assigned to fight there. Roads were almost nonexistent. The little dry land that did exist was often inhabited by the local population. Setting up viable bases, therefore, usually meant encroaching on their territory—not a popular move in the struggle to win hearts and minds. In order to fight effectively in the Delta and provide the infantry with critical field artillery support, the Army had to learn by trial and error and innovate on the fly. How they came up with a viable and efficient solution to the problem they faced in the Delta is an excellent example of the ingenuity of American soldiers and sailors.

The force thrust into the literal quagmire of the Mekong Delta was the Mobile Riverine Force (sometimes referred to as the Riverine Task Force), consisting of the 2nd Brigade of the U.S. Army's 9th Infantry Division and the U.S. Navy's River Assault Flotilla 1. This unit employed a combination of naval riverine craft, landing craft and helicopters in its missions against the Viet Cong operating in the area. The support of field artillery was as essential in the Delta as in any other area. In order to provide this support, the assigned units went through a series of experiments and trials, culminating in the creation of specialized riverine artillery batteries. These batteries, their cannons mounted on barges, could be moved readily along the various waterways and positioned wherever needed to support the maneuver units on shore. Once emplaced, the guns provided fast, accurate fire. When the mission was over, the guns were moved to their next firing point. It was an efficient, workable answer.

The Mekong Delta's environment hindered both the field artillery operations and the infantrymen who had to slog through its swamps and rice paddies. In the Delta, even ground considered dry is only so in a relative sense because the water table is very high. This in turn makes even dry earth soft. Emplacing artillery in soft ground not only makes firing operations difficult for the crew but also can quickly degrade the accuracy of the guns. Cannon batteries are set up for firing by use of a device called an aiming circle. This instrument ensures that all the guns are pointing in exactly the same direction. The direction is expressed in angular measurements of mils, with 6,400 mils equaling a full 360-degree circle.

Such precision enables the entire battery to shoot accurately over long distances using one set of firing calculations, normally an efficient procedure.

The Delta conditions reduced this accuracy and efficiency. After firing a few rounds, a 2-ton howitzer would begin to sink into the soft ground, making hash of the careful alignment of the sights. When the artillery was firing at targets thousands of meters away, as they almost always were, even a small movement of the cannon was enough to throw the trajectory of the round dozens or even hundreds of meters off target. At best, that reduced the effect of the fire on the enemy; at worst, it caused rounds to land short, killing and wounding American or ARVN troops.

The shifting also made traversing the gun much more difficult. To maintain precision, gun crews had to make almost constant corrections for accuracy, which slowed down their response to calls for fire from the infantry. And, the limited road network made resupply complicated. The few existing roads had to be shared with troops and were vulnerable to ambush.

There were some places where guns could be set up, but there were not enough to provide the amount of fire support needed. The troops' first approach to solving this problem was to create firm ground for themselves using an air-transportable firing platform. This was a 22- by 22-foot square table with four adjustable legs. The legs were detachable so that if they became stuck in the muck, the platform could be lifted back off without them and the legs recovered later. The firing platform was flown in by a CH-47 Chinook helicopter and placed wherever needed. A second helicopter then landed an M-102 105mm howitzer with ammunition directly onto the platform. If a CH-54 helicopter was available, it could lift the cannon, some ammunition and the platform all in one trip.

While the air-transportable platform did provide a solution, it was not a perfect one. Although steady enough to enable accurate fire, it was too small to hold the crew's equipment and all the ammunition needed for extended firing. More important, the crew was essentially sitting on a raised table and exposed to small-arms fire. Gun crews often ringed the platform's edge with sandbags, but a better solution was needed.

The next innovation was to mount the howitzers on watercraft, making them mobile, less vulnerable to enemy fire and easier to resupply. The first vessel adapted for artillery use was the LCM-6 (landing craft, mechanized). This 56-foot-long, steel-hulled boat was adapted by the 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery to carry M-101A1 105mm towed howitzers in the cargo bay, along with 450 rounds of ammunition. Special bracing was added to absorb the shock of the cannon's recoil. The LCM could move under its own power to wherever needed, anchor itself to the riverbank and begin firing. The LCM design worked, but it was still not as stable a platform as the cannon required, and getting the gun into action took time in the cramped space of the cargo bay. The bay was too narrow for the gun's trails to be opened fully, limiting how far the gun could traverse when firing.



The most successful floating artillery platform was a floating barge. It was the brainchild of two officers of the 3rd Battalion, 34th Artillery: Major Daniel Charlton, the battalion operations officer, and Captain John Beiler, the commander of Battery B. They experimented with Navy pontoons to carry howitzers. The first trial used a large pontoon barge, called an Ammi barge, to carry an M-101A1. It worked, but its deep draft hampered movement.

The next experiment was to connect smaller pontoons to create a usable barge with a sufficiently shallow draft. The Navy's standard pontoon was the P-1, a 7-by-5-foot model that could be connected to other P-1s. The artillery barge consisted of enough pontoons to make a barge 90 feet long and just over 28 feet wide. Armor plating was welded around the edges, and in the middle were living quarters for the gun crews. On each side of these quarters were platforms that held 105mm howitzers, and at each end of the barge was storage space for ammunition. An entire six-gun battery could be carried on three such barges. The rest of the support sections of the battery used the LCM-8 landing craft, a larger cousin of the LCM-6. One LCM towed or pushed the gun barges to their firing points, another carried ammunition and the third was the battery's command post and fire direction center. A battalion command post with a helicopter landing pad was also created.

Initially the M-101A1 was the howitzer of choice, but it was soon replaced by the lighter M-102, which sat on a baseplate that enabled it to be quickly traversed through the full 6400 mils. This baseplate was welded to the barge for stability. The M-102 had a range of 11,500 meters and a sustained rate of fire of three rounds per minute, after an initial burst of 10 rounds per minute for three minutes.

The barges were pushed to a selected firing point as close as possible to the supported unit. Being as close as possible to the action meant the guns could range the target with the lowest possible firing charge, which increased the life of the gun barrels. It was preferable to find a section of riverbank clear of vegetation so helicopters could land supplies. The barges were moored on the opposite bank from the battle area to keep the resupply helicopters behind the direction of firing. Winches, mooring lines and grapppling hooks secured the barge. The equipment used to lay and aim the guns, the aiming stakes or collimators and the aiming circle, were put ashore on the bank.

To defend itself, a gun barge could rely on more than the crew's rifles and machine guns. Each gun section carried a number of the lethal "beehive" rounds in case of close enemy contact. These anti-personnel projectiles carried thousands of needle-like flechettes that could shred trees, vegetation and human flesh alike. No attack could continue long in the face of repeated salvos of beehive rounds. When the barges moved as part

continued on next page 9

The MRF and SWCC, Our Proud History Continues!



The Naval Special Warfare Basic Training Command, at Coronado, California, holds a graduation ceremony for those who become today's Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewman, at the Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument, on the Coronado Naval Base. These young warriors are carrying on the proud service and traditions of Vietnam's "Brown Water Navy." The SWCC (Special Warfare Craft Crewman) Code is;

*I serve my Country, my Navy and my Team
with Honor and Integrity.*

*I am responsible for my actions and accountable
to my Teammates both on and off the water.*

*I lead by example; I am the guardian
of the standard.*

*I maintain my craft, my equipment and myself,
to the highest state of readiness.*

ON TIME, ON TARGET, NEVER QUIT!

*I maintain my craft, equipment and myself at
the highest level of combat readiness. I set the
standard and lead by example. I am responsible
for my actions and accountable to my teammates.
I challenge my brothers to perform, as I expect
them to challenge me.*

*I am ready for war. I will close and engage the
enemy with the full combat power of my craft.
My actions will be decisive, yet measured. I will
always complete the mission. I will never quit
and I will leave no one behind.*

***My heritage comes from the Sailors who
operated the PT boats of WWII and the
combatant craft of Vietnam. The legacy
of these warriors guides my actions. I will
always remember the courage, perseverance
and sacrifices made to guarantee our nation's
freedom. I uphold the honor of those who
have fought before me and will do nothing to
disgrace my proud heritage.***

Vietnam Combat-Craft Crewman



The latest copy of "River Currents" is always available to all who visit the Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument, on the Coronado Naval Base.



The SWCC Creed is;

*In our nation's time of need, an elite brotherhood
of Sailors stands ready off distant shores and on
shallow rivers. Defending freedom, they serve
with honor and distinction. I am proud to be one
of these Sailors.*

*I am a Special Warfare Combatant-Craft
Crewman; a quiet professional; tried, tested and
dedicated to achieving excellence in maritime
special operations. I am a disciplined, confident
and highly motivated warrior.*

*My honor and integrity are beyond reproach, my
commitment unquestioned and my word trusted.
The American people depend on me to carry out
my mission in a professional manner.*

"Why Our Stories Matter"

By Wendell Affield

BEMIDJI -- Nearly four years after Wendell Affield wrote a blog post about the deaths of six U.S. soldiers in a muddy Vietnamese river, he received an emotional email from North Carolina.

It was from Kathleen Wigglesworth Perdue, whose older brother Ernest "Skip" Wigglesworth Jr. was one of the men who died on March 14, 1968.

Kathleen was 13 years old when her brother was killed. The patrol boat he was on hit a mine on the Cua Viet River, a major waterway for delivering supplies to the front lines in the bloody Vietnam War.

Affield was on another boat 50 yards behind. The Bemidji man first wrote about it in his 2012 memoir, "Muddy Jungle Rivers." But it was that blog post from 2017 that found its way to Kathleen and affirmed Affield's understanding of how important it is for veterans to share their stories.

"When she e-mailed I just really reflected right back to the morning it happened," Affield said. "I know how important it is (for veterans to write about their stories), and this lady discovering about her brother really drove that message home."

Here is Affield's account of the email exchange with Kathleen:

Over the past 20 years, I have become a strong believer in writing our stories. Less than 10% of the population has served in the military, so each story is unique — whether peacetime or war. If you are a veteran, I encourage you to share your story. It is a gift to your family — children and grandchildren, and it is a page of our collective history. Three years ago, I wrote a memorial post on my blog at wendellaffield.com titled, 'March 14, 1968. Remembering Tango 7.'

An excerpt:

"As I write this from my loft in northern Minnesota, it's already March 14 in Vietnam. While patrolling the Cua Viet River just south of the DMZ, Armor Troop Carrier 112-7 (Tango 7) was mined. I was driving our boat about 50 yards astern Tango 7. In my Memoir, Muddy Jungle Rivers, I wrote, 'Suddenly Tango 7 was out of the water, sun glittering on the red-brown bottom of the wet hull, her propellers still spinning. A geyser of water shot skyward, the boat hidden for an instant. In a slow-motion ballet, Tango 7 became visible as she flipped upside down, the bow lifting up over the stern, the capsized boat returning to earth, settling to the river bottom.' Six sailors

continued on next page

"Why Our Stories Matter" *continued from page 8*

died in that instant and I listed their names in my blog post.

Last week, on Nov. 3, 2020, I received this email message; an excerpt:

"Just wanted to thank you for your personal insight regarding ATC-112-7. My brother Ernest W. Wiglesworth Jr. (aka "Skip") was the boatswain's mate on that sweeper. Our hearts were broken when the uniformed men came to our home and informed our parents that he had been killed. Although it has now been 52 years the heartache remains. I was 13 at the time but was very close to Skip. He was the oldest of six kids. I wrote to him often and each letter he wrote to me always asked that I help our mom and to please write to his young wife. They were just weeks away from meeting in Hawaii for R&R. Our parents were very proud of him of course, but the loss of their 22-year-old son was great. In closing I just want to thank you for the remembrance and thank you for YOUR service. We honor you and we will NEVER FORGET! Sincerely, Kathleen"

My reply:

"Hi Kathleen, I received your message yesterday evening and have been reflecting on it. I did not know Ernest personally, only as a member of

another boat crew. When we were up on the Cua Viet River (where Ernest was killed) all the boat crews would gather in the evening in a Marine beer hooch to unwind. I'm sure I shared a beer or two with your brother. It must have been very traumatic for you as a 13-year-old to lose your brother. You mention that the heartache remains after 52 years; yes, I know the feeling all too well. My younger brother was killed in a Naval airplane crash in 1978 and I lost my son in 2015 — yes, the heartache is always there.

"Five months after Ernest died, I was wounded in an ambush and medevacked home. I was diagnosed with PTSD in the early 1990s and for me, a significant issue is survivor guilt — why I lived when so many others died. Over the years, I've learned many things about coping with trauma; helping others is redemptive; I discovered that in writing my 'memory stories' I was able to make some sense of my Vietnam experience — there is a term for it — Written Exposure Therapy.

"Your family has a compelling patriotic legacy with both your parents, WWII veterans and your brother paying the supreme price for our country. On this Veterans Day, remember Ernest as that happy young man who loved his little sister."

A message for all veterans

"Holidays and anniversary dates always bring trauma memories to the forefront," Affield said. "For me to remember her brother, lightened the grief a 13-year-old girl was burdened with. Our stories do matter. My story touched a total stranger."

To all veterans, have a peaceful reflective Veterans Day and think about sharing your stories over the next year."

To MRFA members who remember Ernest "Skip" Wiglesworth, his sister Kathleen would love to hear from you, at kaywig@gmail.com

3rd Battalion 34th Artillery *continued from page 7*

of a convoy, the howitzers were pointed toward shore, with beehive, white phosphorus and high-explosive rounds at the ready.

Thus armed, the 3-34th Artillery fought in the Mekong Delta. Initially, Battery A used the airborne platforms while Batteries B and C were carried in barges. All the batteries occasionally traveled by road, barge or air as well as using conventional firebases as the situation allowed. The battalion had to move constantly to keep up with the relatively fast-paced infantry operations executed by the 2nd Brigade and the ARVN and South Vietnamese Marine Corps units also in the Mekong Delta.

When the Tet Offensive began in January 1968, the Riverine Force was sent to the My Tho area, where three Viet Cong battalions were trying to capture the provincial capital of Vinh Long. The 3-34th fired 8,158 rounds during the fight to support the infantry. General William Westmoreland later credited the Riverine Force with saving the Delta. After Tet, the 3-34th traveled the various waterways of the Mekong, taking part in numerous fire missions. Occasionally helicopters lifted the howitzers off their barges to be emplaced inland. In September 1968, the batteries suffered three mortar attacks, an ambush and a mine attack.

The air-transportable platforms and artillery barges gave the soldiers fighting in the Mekong Delta the ability to use field artillery against the enemy. Artillery was more responsive and usually more readily available than close air support, and it provided more firepower than the infantry's mortars or the guns aboard the Navy riverine craft.

Although they have received little attention for it, the artillerymen of the Mobile Riverine Force used their creative ingenuity to invent an entirely new weapons system, adapted to meet the challenging requirements of war in the Mekong Delta. The American and ARVN grunts who suffered and fought there would have been much more hard-pressed if they had not had the support of the 105mm guns of the 3-34th Artillery.

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.

Wendell Affield for Buddha Ed Thomas, Boat Captain Tango 112-11 (02/68-02/69)
Ron Baker, in memory of BM@ William Comer KIA 2/68
Col. Dennis A. Bassett, for Lt. Leland McCants, III
Bill Befort, in memory of Burroughs, Hilgart & Henke B Co 4/47 5/67
Bill Buffie, in memory of Lyle Parin USS Floyd County LST-762 (Vietnam)
John and Doris Chrzanowski, in memory of SP/4 Humberto Ruiz Santiago Jr. Grenadier A Co. 4th Bn 47th Inf. Rgt. 9th Inf. Div. Died of wounds 06/27/69, Kien Hoa, South Vietnam (DC Wall Panel 21W Ln 025)
John and Doris Chrzanowski, for B Co. 6th/31st 9th Inf. Div. Troopers. KIA, B-40 Rocket, 12/13/69, Gary M. Gryzen (DC Wall Panel W15, Line 54) David A. McIntyre (DC Wall Panel W15, Line 54) and Gary T. Phillips (DC Wall Panel W15, Line 54)
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
Orville "Lee" Daley, for Marvin Marks, WWII, USS Askari ARL-30
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Robert Flaige, for SFC Fernando Quintero, KIA 02/27/68, and SP4 Robert "Bob" Jenks, E Co. 3rd/60th, KIA 03/03/68
Bill Frede, for BM1 Guy Dail, BM3 Johnny Maness, and SN David Flabburis, T-112-2, 1967
Thomas M. Freeland, Jr., USS Tutuila, ARG-4 (03/68-02/69)
Tony Garvey, for Wes Sade, Billy Olsen, and Staff Sgt. James Williams, C Co. 4th/47th 9th Inf
Regina Gooden, for Sgt Lloyd Earl Valentine, B Co 3rd/47th, KIA September 5, 1968
Susan Hanmer, for SFC Michael Hanmer, RivRon 13 and 153 (07/69-02/71)
Gordon Hillesland, for Pat Lawson, NSA Dong Tam, (67-68) & Mike Mosey, NSA Dong Tam (67-68)
Joe Hilliard, for Joe Benack, from Florida, and Donald Hartzell, from Pennsylvania
Bruce Jensen, in memory of Frederic Peers Webb, A-111-4 KIA 12/21/67
Bruce L. Johnson, C Co. 2nd Plat., 4th/47th (8/67-3/68)
J. R. Johnson, 3rd/47th 9th "Recon" (05/66-01/68), in memory of Walker, Gotch, Paredez, Nelson, Hayes, Howard, King, Twitchell and Chesnoski
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Kaye Marten, Travis Marten, and Tristen Marten, in memory of Monte Marten (husband, father, and grandfather), B Co. 2nd/39th 9th Inf. Div. (1968-69)
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)
Robert Stumpf, in memory of John Sperry & Joseph Rees
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 Gary E. McCabe A Co. 3rd/47th
Okey Toothman, in memory of Major General Lucien "Blackie" Bolduc
Okey Toothman, in memory of Judy Wallace
Okey Toothman, in memory of Sgt Dick Arnold A Co. 3rd/47th, Max Delacruz and G. P. Jones C Co. 3rd/47th
Nancy VanDruff, in memory of Robert E. VanDruff, T-91-5/T92-4 (11/68-11/69)
Henry Velez, for my fallen brothers, B Co. 2nd/39th Inf From your Brothers B Co. 2nd 39th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division, in memory for John Nielsen, B Co. 2nd/39th (04/68-04/70)

TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One

Member Robert Eugene "Bob" VanDruff passed away on December 22, 2020 after experiencing many health complications over the past 6 months. While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Squadron 9, Division 91 & 92, onboard T-91-5 & T-92-4, from November 1968, to November 1969. Bob is survived by Nancy, his wife of 50 years. - "He's one of the "originals" in the MRFA, having been around back when Albert thought he was just going to put together a reunion for the USS Benewah." - George Marthenze



John is survived by his longtime wife Gloria "Jeannie" Baldwin.

Member SFC James Joseph Shippey (US Army Ret.) passed away on November 3, 2020. While in Vietnam he served with Recon, E Company, 4th Battalion, 47th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division from September 1967 to September 1968. James retired with over 23 years in the U.S. Army. He is survived by his wife Diana.



Member Nick Motto passed away on October 10, 2020. While in Vietnam he served

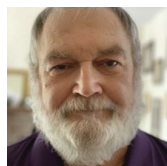
as a Quartermaster 3rd Class onboard the USS Clarion River (LSMR-409) and the USS Washtenaw County (LST-1166) from December 1967 to December 1969. Then he served with Assault Craft Unit 1 in Coronado, California from January 1970 to July 1971. Nick is survived by his Patti Siegfried



Member BM1 William Robert "Bill" Posey (USN Ret.) passed away on September 28, 2020. Bill served two tours of duty in Vietnam and retired with 20 years of service. Nine of those years on tugboats. While with the MRF he served onboard the tug YTB-785 in 1967-68. Bill is survived by his wife Bobbie.



Member Russell Floyd "Doodle" Meadows passed away on September 23, 2020 due to Covid-19 related complications after a lengthy hospital stay. While in Vietnam he served with Headquarters & Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 60th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division from June 1968 to September 1970. He is survived by his spouse Linda.



BMC David L. Paust (USN Ret.) passed away on March 17, 2020. He served three tours in Vietnam to include one with River Assault Squadron 13 – River Assault Division 131 as Boat Captain of M-131-1 from March 1969 to March 1970.

Glyn Dennis Singleton passed away on February 7, 2020 at the Missouri Veterans Home in Mexico, MO. While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Squadron 15 – River Assault Division 151 onboard T-151-11 in 1968-69. Dennis is survived by his wife Pamela.



"Operation Concordia," June 19-21 1967



"Concordia," was an operation conducted by the U.S. Mobile Riverine Force in conjunction with the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) from 19-21 June 1967 against the Viet Cong (VC). It resulted in a US/ARVN victory.

Cần Giuộc District in Long An Province was a VC stronghold in the Mekong Delta.[1]:104 The operation plan called for the deployment of five Companies of the 3rd and 4th Battalions, 47th Infantry Regiment into the operations area by assault craft and sweep south towards the ARVN 2nd Battalion, 46th Infantry blocking positions near the town of Ap Bac in Tien Giang Province. Company C, 3/47th Infantry would act as reserve.

On the morning of 19 June 3 Companies of the 4/47th Infantry were landed 4 km southeast of Cần Giuộc, 2 Companies of the 3/47th Infantry were landed 1.6 km south of Cần Giuộc while the ARVN 2/46th Infantry was landed near Ap Bac.

At 10:00 U.S. intelligence learned that a battalion size VC force was located east of the ARVN blocking position. Company C, 3/47th Infantry was deployed by helicopters south of the reported VC location while Company C, 4/47th Infantry was moved by patrol craft northeast of the location. By 11:50 Company C 3/47th Infantry had swept the area but failed to locate any VC, however Company C, 4/47th Infantry encountered VC positions as they moved west. At the same time Company A, 4/47th Infantry moving south towards Company C, 4/47th Infantry walked into an L-shaped ambush from well-entrenched VC; exposed on open rice paddies the Company sustained heavy casualties. Artillery and air support could not be used initially due to confusion over the location of the 4/47th Platoons, but from 12:00 helicopter gunship and artillery fire began to supplement the fire from small arms and nearby patrol craft.

Company B, 4/47th Infantry was moved behind Company A while Company C, 3/47th Infantry was deployed north and then began to assault towards the east joining up with Companies A and B approaching from the northwest. Companies B and C continued attacking east, while Company A moved into a blocking position to the north. By 20:00 darkness and enemy fire stopped the assault with Companies B and C, 3/47th Infantry, still some 600 meters west of the ambush site.

With nightfall the casualties of Company A, 4/47th Infantry were able to be evacuated, while most of the VC were able to escape through gaps in the U.S. positions. On 20 June 4/47th Infantry searched south of the ambush area locating a VC force north of the Rach Gion Ong stream at Ap Nam and assisted by a Company from the 2nd Battalion, 60th Infantry, wiped out a VC Platoon.

Aftermath

The operation concluded on 21 June, U.S. casualties were 46 killed and 15 sailors wounded, while claiming VC losses of 255 killed. Due to its location east of a town called Ap Bac, the 19 June ambush is sometimes referred to as Second Ap Bac after the disastrous Battle of Ap Bac on 2 January 1963, however that battle took place approximately 40 km further west.

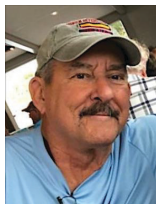
Member Joe Poc's Passed away December 12, 2020 after a lengthy illness. Joe served as a RM2 on the USS Guide MSO 447. 1957-1960. Joe was residing in Blissfield, MI when he passed. He is survived by his wife Sally.



Thomas A. Ellingson passed away on December 10, 2020. While in Vietnam, he served in served on APL-21 from December 1967 to December 1968.



Member Robert Daniel Pawlicki passed away on December 2, 2020 after fighting multiple medical complications. While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Squadron 11 - River Assault Division 111 onboard T-111-11 from March to December 1967. Robert is survived by Linda, his wife of 40 years.



Dr. John Nelson Baldwin passed away on November 21, 2020 at the age of 86 following a long illness.



While in Vietnam he served as an Army Major and surgeon at the 24th Evacuation Hospital in Long Ninh where he operated on nearly 2,000 wounded servicemen during his tour of duty.



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



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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

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

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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.

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Lt. Frank Moran, B Co., 4th/47th Inf. (11/67-10/68)
William C. Nesmith, 2nd/4th Arty. C Btry., (04/68-04/70)
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)
James Ortega, C Co., 3rd/47th (02/67-02/68)
Charles Ostrov, HHC, 2nd/47th Mech. Inf. (01/68-12/68)
John Oxley, 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 Vietnam 1967 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" 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. Shutters, 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, CS1 USN (Ret.) 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)
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)