



River

Currents



A PUBLICATION OF
THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 31, NUMBER 2
Summer, 2022

Message From the Radio Shack



Harry Hahn

Hello from the
Radio Shack!

Very soon it
will be Sep-
tember, and
we will be in
Coronado for
the Mini-Re-
union, there.
By the time

this reaches you, we will no longer be accepting new registrations. There is NO ONSITE registration. An agenda is included in this River Currents, but basically Wednesday is a visit to the Vietnam Unit Memorial on the Coronado Amphibious base, which leaves Thursday and Friday for four Swift boat rides. The reunion is basically a get together and there is no formal program except that of the memorial service at the VUMMF site.

The MRF documentary will not be completed by the mini-reunion. The Arballo's have a separate announcement within this issue so I won't elaborate. As much of a disappointment as it may be, we want the movie to be done correctly.

Our two-year reunion, held in September 2023 will be again in St Louis, MO. You will be hearing more in coming issues about it, but the site, the Sheraton Chalet Westport, has been secured.

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San Diego Mini-Reunion Agenda

Tuesday, September 6th; Arrivals and get badges in suite. Gathering room is on bayside see hotel for directions

Wednesday Sept 7th; Vietnam Unit Memorial Visit. 1:30 p.m. busses depart for memorial. 2:00 p.m. Memorial service at memorial wall. Remainder of time is spent boarding boats and visiting wall. 3:30 p.m. first bus returns to Lowes. 3:45 p.m. last bus returns to Lowes.



Thursday Sept 8th; First Swift boat run: 7:30 a.m. Check in at dock. 7:45 a.m. Coast Guard Safety talk. 8:00 a.m. Departure. Return: approximately 10:30 a.m. Second run: 11:00 a.m. check in. 11:15 a.m. Coast Guard Safety talk. 11:30 a.m. departure. Return: approximately 2:00 p.m.

Friday Sept 9th; First Swift boat run: 7:30 a.m. Check in at dock. 7:45 a.m. Coast Guard Safety talk. 8:00 a.m. Departure. Return: approximately 10:30 a.m. Second run: 11:00 a.m. check in. 11:15 a.m. Coast Guard Safety talk. 11:30 a.m. departure. Return: approximately 2:00 p.m. Enjoy facility / meet and greet.

Ride a Swift Boat, in San Diego! Mark II Patrol Craft Fast Swift Boat



SWIFT BOAT FEEL THE HISTORY & POWER OF THE TWIN 12 CYLINDER DETROIT DIESELS



The U.S. Navy officially called them Patrol Craft Fast – PCFs for short, but the men who served on them during Vietnam have always known them as Swift Boat.

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

Message From The Radio Shack

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Lastly, a reminder that the gear locker “T” shirts are to a point that we will be discontinuing them as they go out of stock. The remaining types, sizes and quantities will be updated as the stock is depleted. An up to date, as accurate as possible, inventory will be on line, on our web site.

Harry Hahn, President
SparksRivRon13@aol.com

Ride a Swift Boat, in San Diego!

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In 1971, the US Navy donated two Swift Boats to the newly formed Republic of Malta’s Maritime Squadron. After forty years of coastguard duty, Malta retired these boats from service. In 2011, Malta’s Minister of Defense donated a Swift Boat to the Maritime Museum of San Diego with our promise to preserve her history and to pay tribute to all Swift Boat Sailors from both countries.

The Swift Boat Sailors Association brought this Swift Boat to the Maritime Museum of San Diego to be restored and operated on San Diego Bay. Museum visitors will have the opportunity to experience the sound and throbbing vibration from two V12 diesels delivering 980 horsepower for high-speed runs through the Bay while retired Swift Boat Sailors and docents talk about what it was like to be a crewman in Vietnam, serving as a Quartermaster, Gunner’s Mate, Engineman, Radarman, Bosun’s Mate or Skipper.

The Navy first used them on coastal patrol as a part of Operation Market Time to interdict seaborne supplies on their way to the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army in South Vietnam. Later, the boats moved into the rivers and canals of the Mekong Delta and the Ca Mau peninsula to conduct special operations: gunfire support, troop insertion and evacuation, and raids into enemy territory. To the U.S. Navy, Swift Boats were weapons of war. For the officers who commanded them, Swift Boats were a chance at independent duty at a young age – most men were under twenty-five years old. For the sailors who crewed them, Swift Boats were an opportunity to abandon big-ship confusion and bureaucracy for a small combatant, where every man counted and where every man could trust his shipmates and befriend them like family.

Their performance was so successful that the North stopped trying. In 1968 Swift Boats became a part of the Brown Water Navy, joining PBRs (Patrol Boat River) and the Mobile Riverine Force, patrolling rivers and canals of the Mekong Delta. This was Admiral Zumwalt’s successful interdiction strategy, called Operation Sea Lords, to disrupt the Viet Cong’s mobility and to make villages safe for the South Vietnamese to return to their homes.



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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- ☐ 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

Message From Arballo Entertainment



Hello!

Jeff and I hope this update finds you and yours healthy, hopeful, and enjoying the first few weeks of summer. We wanted to be sure to extend an update on the production of The Mobile Riverine Force Documentary.

First, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to each of you that have contributed to the production of the film. Producing a feature length documentary can be a costly undertaking and is only possible through the generosity and support of others who share in the same vision and commitment. So, thank you for your generosity and support.

Secondly, we are immensely proud to share with all of you that we have won a Telly Award for the editing of the trailer of the film. Wow! We feel so very honored to receive such a prestigious award and recognition, especially considering the film is still in production. We truly are committed to producing the highest quality film and tell a fantastic story, the story you have shared with us. We hope to honor each Sailor and Soldier of the Mobile Riverine Force and the tremendous personal sacrifice of the brave men who laid down their lives in service to their Country and Brother, so long ago in that land far away. So, to get this type of exposure for the story of the Mobile Riverine Force this soon is a great thing!

Third, as many of you know, we were really hoping to have the film completed by the mini reunion in San Diego this September, but unfortunately it simply will not be done by then. We are so very sorry as we know that this is disappoint-

MRFA Memories



Memorial Services held at 2011 Reunion



Sandy Weiss, Sue Walker, and Raffle Queen Mable "Thelma" Springer



Sue Timmerman, Linda Jones, Lyn Blankenship, Lynne Moseman, Georginia Ardinger, Madelynn Peat, Raffle Queen Mable "Thelma" Springer

ing to some of you. While we feel a sense of urgency in completing the film quickly as we know you are losing quite a few of your brothers, we would never want to do you a disservice by trying to rush the completion and the result not be exactly how we or you had envisioned. As you know, this is an enormous story with both Army and Navy, so not only do we want to get it right, but we also want to be sure that the finished film captivates the audience.

With that said, still have a long road ahead of us and are still actively seeking CORPORATE SPONSORS. Secur-

ing CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP is imperative and especially important to our progression through production and post-production over the coming months. This really is a HUGE opportunity for Business Owners and Corporations, so, please do not hesitate to reach out to us directly to discuss the details.

Thank you for entrusting us with your story. The best truly is yet to come!!

Take care,
Jeff and Shannon Arballo
Arballo Entertainment

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!



Survey Question; *“How has your membership in the MRFA, or attendance at our reunions, effected your life?”*

Bruce Jensen. T-111-3, September, '67 - September, '68. Since I joined the MRFA in 1993, I have reconnected with three other crew members from my boat. I went to several reunions, and thoroughly enjoyed every one of them. Unfortunately health issues keep me from going to them now, but I still make it down to Florida once a year to visit with Dan Danford. Seeing each other helps keep the PTSD at bay as we can relate to issues and talk through them, and that is the best therapy any of us can have.

David Sniff, HM2, at discharge. I enjoy the newsletter and I am a lifetime MRFA member, but have only attended one reunion way back when it was held in Chattanooga, TN. I found NO-ONE I knew from my term, of April, '66-April, '67. I spent most of my time aboard the USS TUTUILA, ARG-4 as a corpsman.

The “Tut” (toot) TUTUILA is rarely mentioned as having served in the harbor at Vung Tau, maybe twice as I recall, but other tenders are mentioned often, e.g., BENEWAH. We repaired a lot of shot up and needy maintenance of swift boats and other vessels of that type at times having a dozen or more tied up alongside. Our crew could repair anything. It was an outstanding bunch of sailors.

Our sick bay unit with five corpsmen, a physician, dentist and two dental techs did some off-site treatment of villagers from time to time. Chieu Hoi, it was termed, but that term was also used by the VC to recruit villagers, so we would come in and treat patients and the VC would come in and erase some of the good we did with either mental cruelty or recruitment of villagers.

Occasionally, we would get a wounded

choppered into us and fortunately our doc was a Surgeon so hopefully we saved a few.

For the most part we Nam veterans are now thanked for our service and can wear our hats, insignias, patches, pins, with pride whereas when I came home in April of '67 you got out of your uniform as quickly as possible and didn't tell anyone you knew socially you had served. Only a few family members and close friends knew. It was that way for thousands of us then. Twenty-two months after my return, I was discharged, October 1969. How times have changed.

I owe my education and career choice to the Navy and am a retired Hospital CEO and Consultant after 40+ years.

Brian Mahin. GMG2, T-132-9/Mk 19, May 68-May 69. The web site, River Currents and now the email list are wonderful...comfortable and familiar in a special way. Your book, “The Nightmare of the Mekong,” and Wendell Affield's book, “Muddy Jungle Rivers,” are helpful in stirring memories as well. It Was a very interesting year!

Rob Schlegel, FTG3, USS Pitkin County, LST 1082, 3/70 to 5/71. I really felt the need to respond to this question and maybe too long a response to use in River Currents. However, I appreciate you asking this question.

As with most Vietnam vets, I got home, didn't dare tell anyone I was a vet and got on with my life. Went back to college, finished my accounting degree, got a job, got married, had kids etc. etc.

LST crews were small in number so most of us just scattered and lost contact with each other. That may have also been the case with MRF members had

it not been for the foresight of Harry, Albert and others who saw the need for the group to have a place to call home.

I just happened to stumble on the MRFA website one day not so many years ago and it was the first time I realized there was an organized group of others who served on the brown waters of the Mekong and Bassac rivers. All the other Navy sites were primarily dealing with the blue water guys. Since I was not in the MRF I was not sure you would accept me as a full member. My first contact with the membership chairman was an email asking if you would even accept me as a member. I knew I could never be “one of the guys” since I wasn't assigned to the MRF. I just wanted a place to call home after all these years so I was and still am grateful that you did accept me for membership. I cannot wear a MRF hat or patch but I very proudly wear my MRFA hat.

I arrived in March of 1970 after the MRF had disbanded, the 9th had gone home and those of us still working the delta were under Operation Sealords. Through 1970, the turnover of assets to the Vietnamese progressed but the Navy's job in the Delta went on. There were still attacks and loss of life. Shortly after our last resupply of YRBM 21 near the Cambodian border during Christmas 1970, they were attacked with loss of life. The MRF did a lot of the early heavy lifting but the Delta was still a dangerous place to be a “Large Slow Target” with tons of rockets and ammunition in our belly.

All this is to say the MRFA filled a very empty hole for me. Nobody understood what we did in Vietnam, especially the blue water Navy guys and virtually none

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Survey Question

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of the other services. I finally can say to them if you want to know what the Navy did in the Delta of Vietnam go to MRFA. org. We did a job that had never been done by the Navy before and I am very thankful that you let me occupy a small spot in your organization.

I have never attended a reunion because I was not in the MRF and I do not want to do anything that even hints that I want any of the recognition that belongs to those who were. It is enough for me to have you accept me as a member of this great group of patriots.

John Ellis. MRFA, this group, and our comments here help us remember our individual experiences and trials, as well as feel pride and honor for our service, whatever it was. Everyone has a different story that's been important to them since then. Sharing those stories is a big part of healing and comfort for me.

Herschel Hughes, Jr., CDR, MSC, USNR Membership in the MRFA has helped me integrate my wartime experiences and feel a camaraderie with all my MRFA shipmates (Navy and Army) and take infinitely more pride in my Vietnam War service. As a capital ship (Colleton) officer, it has helped me understand the roles, nearly always much more dangerous than mine, that

the assault boat crews and the embarked Army soldiers experienced. I was fortunate to have the GQ assignment of OOD on the Colleton for the year I was embarked (June '68-June '69). In that role, I conned the ship whenever we transited because all transits were at GQ.

I also took my turn on the nightly re-anchoring drills. Consequently, through MRFA membership, reading River Currents stories, talking with folks at the two reunions I have attended and especially revisiting my memories of navigating the Colleton through the Mekong currents and shifting sandbars (and who knows what lurking along the shore), I have come to feel a greater kinship with the boat captains in the River Divisions on the basis of the ship handling, if not the close and heavy combat aspects. Because of my pride in service to the MRF, I have been instrumental in participating in the VW 50th Anniversary Commemorative Program run out of the pentagon. My high school lost thirty students to the Vietnam War. Through the Commemorative Program we were able to honor those thirty men (one of which was an Army member of MRF) and 13 of their living relatives, plus seven widows of deceased Vietnam War veterans. In addition, I have been motivated to support the National Vietnam War Museum in Weatherford,

TX. I have stopped by there twice to check the museum out, and to volunteer work to help them prepare for their grand opening scheduled for later this month.

So, in conclusion, MRFA has been a game changer in helping me heal from the terrible loss the South Vietnamese suffered after we pulled out and to know unequivocally that our generation served every bit as honorably as all other generations served this country. In large part because of the MRFA I feel the brotherhood of all Vietnam War vets deep in my bones. God bless all of you that have carried the load for all of the activities MRFA sponsors. I will be in San Diego. Herschel Hughes, Jr., CDR, MSC, USNR (Ret.)

Dale Renbjor. NSA Saigon. LCM-920. 1970. I live on the West Central Coast of Florida. 6 out of 10 reunions had a hurricane in motion on that weekend. I spent a lot of time in the hotel business center watching the radar and plot data. Thank goodness my home was never in jeopardy while I was away.

My membership in the MRFA has allowed me to re-connect with people/brothers who impacted my development from teenage boy to teenage man. I found this to be of great value later in my life. I have to thank Joe McClister for finding me and convincing me to join the Association.

Survey Question;

“What did letters from home mean to you? Was there a particular letter that stands out?”



Bruce Peters, D Company, 4/39th, 9th Inf. Div. January 3, 1969 to March 25, 1969. B Company, 9th S&T. March 25th, to August 18th, 1969. After I'd been in country for a couple of months, I received a letter from my new bride (we were married 10 days when I left). The letter explained that she was pregnant and was looking forward to telling me what we were having, a boy or a girl. She apologized that she had been careless with birth control because we didn't plan to have any kids until I got back. She included a picture of herself, very large, indeed, because she had stuffed a pillow in front of her tummy and looked like she was about to deliver! Before I realized the time, I'd been gone didn't add up to her being 9 months pregnant, I noticed the date. April 1. April Fool's Day on me. We have been married for 53 years. We had three sons, homemade and one daughter hand me down....adopted. We have ten grandkids. Having a great autumn of our lives, spending half a year in Minnesota and the other half in Florida.

Nick Miller. CSO for RivDiv 152 from early July, 1968, to mid-June 1969. We were the last of the RivDiv's to be commissioned, picking up our boats and outfitting them in Vung Tau through mid-August and then transiting to the MRF at Dong Tam.

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Survey Question

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My wife and I were married May 4, 1968 and we lived in a short term in Vallejo for the six weeks of NIOTC training.

When I flew out to Vietnam, Sylvia returned for her last year of college in the Kansas City area.

We decided jointly that the best thing to help both of us deal with the separation, anxiety and drama of Vietnam would be "full disclosure" of what was going on. And we promised to write every day.

In fact, we did so. But with the delays in APO, most letters going both ways arrived about 2 weeks after being written. So that took some of the drama out of my letters to Sylvia, since any bad news would reach her before the relevant letter.

The daily letters were such a gift. Nothing, nothing replaced the pure joy of coming in from an operation and having a stack of letters from her. And frequently, Captain Now or another senior Navy officer flew into the AO by helo, with an entire bag of mail for all the boats.

Two events stand out. I sent Sylvia a complete set of the charts covering the Delta and I would send her the coordinates of our movements so she could actually "pin" our location. She said she hung those eight charts and they covered one entire wall of her bedroom--no need for painting or wall paper. (I don't remember how I dealt with the censors--but somehow it worked.)

The second thing -- I was thinking of maybe using the letters as a diary either to write a book or to just hold onto the day-by-day experiences and memories, particularly of the guys I was serving with, and the weirdness of watching AF TV news covering the war we were fighting as well as the US domestic home front. Sylvia had different ideas. As soon as she heard I was safely in the air leaving Saigon for CONUS, she burned the entire stack of letters!

James Wollner. 2nd Airboat Plt. 15th Engineer Bn., 9th Inf. Div. I had a very funny letter from my mom. I was in country for two months and my mom got a letter from the Army requesting if she knew where I was as I failed to report for induction. Sitting in my

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From the Membership

Members Harley and Sue Timmerman Attend Ship Commissioning!

On May 21, 2022, longtime member **Harley Timmerman (T-132-10)** and his wife, Sue attended the first ever commissioning of a United States Naval Ship, the Freedom Class Littoral Combat Ship USS Minneapolis - St. Paul, in Duluth, MN harbor.



Harley was happy to have been chosen from the 5000 applications from the public and proud to unofficially represent the MRFA. There were many VFW and American Legion members in attendance in addition to crew members families and the general public.

Once they arrived at the prescribed pickup location, their credentials were checked and they boarded a bus to the harbor. As they rode to the ceremony, Harley spoke with a fellow in his dress blues who was a retired aircraft mechanic. On the way back, he talked with a fellow who had worked to build the ship in Marinette, WI. Security was very tight, armed men and women patrolled the entire site and everyone (except the dignitaries) went through a metal detector upon arrival. There was only one point of entry and that was guarded by both police and military.

The ceremony started right on time with a 21-gun civil war cannon salute. (It really riled up the harbor's sea gulls!). The Navy played several selections and a sailor sang the National Anthem with the respect and dignity it deserves. The crew was polished to perfection. Speakers included the Minnesota Governor, a US Senator, a US Representative, the Mayors from Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth, representatives from Lockheed Martin and Fincantieri Marinette Marine and the Undersecretary of the Navy (who was accompanied by a lot of Naval Brass). The speeches were short and to the point which was much appreciated as it was cold, cloudy, and windy with off and on showers.

Harley and his wife were seated near the back where the crew stood at attention until the watch was set and the command to man the ship was given whereupon the men and women ran in a spaced, orderly manner to the gang plank and assumed formation. Harley was struck by the different ways they wore their white hats. He never saw so many petty officers in his (short) naval career. Harley and Sue were able to mingle and greet crew members after the ceremony. One fellow they talked with was a Sonar Specialist whose job it is to find and destroy submarines. You can be assured that your Navy is in the very capable hands of professional sailors.

PS: For those of you wondering, the ship can run at 50 mph in the open sea, powered by Rolls Royce diesel and gas turbines with steerable water jet propulsion - the world's biggest jet ski! Overall length is 387 feet with draft of 14.1 feet. It operates with a crew of 50 and has accommodations for 98. The USS Minneapolis St. Paul is based in Florida. There is much more information on the internet that is easily accessed.

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T001 MRF ASPB
only 8 XL 3 2xl 4 M and 8 3xl left



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T004 MRF CCB



T005 MRF Tango Ragtop
only 1 L, 6 XL, 11 XXL,
and 12 3XL left



T006 MRF VCCC
8 M, 6, L, 3 XXL,
and 13 3X left



**T016 Brown Water Navy
Vietnam**
only 6 M, 7 3XL left



T018 9th Inf Div Vietnam
only 5 M, 16 L, 20 3x left

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hooch at Tan Tru, thinking the wound I just received was probably just a figment of my imagination. Gotta love the Army!

Phil Ziegler. NILO. My Tho. 1971. I remember my wife's letters really well - but only in memory. The reason was because I was an intelligence type, and my wife was pregnant in San Francisco with many connections to S.F. State. Our Army NILO instructor (we had a 13-week training course before being posted) highly recommended avoiding any home front hassles, by disposing of all letters after reading. The NVA were known to exploit our mail! I got a lot of letters from home, but my wife felt safer if I didn't leave any around for the VN staff to find, and use. I burned them all behind the compound I was in. Just one of the benefits of being a Vietnam vet.

Richard P. Hawkins, COMNAVFORV/CHNAVADVGRP. Your request struck a note with me. During my time in VN (Dec. 69, to Dec., 70) I sent at least 57 letters to my parents and future wife. We first met as we were on the same flight out of Logan Airport as I was heading to the west coast for additional VN training. They saved them all these years. Perhaps there were more, but all we can find are the 57. That year I was a Hai Quan Trung Uy stationed at VN Navy Headquarters in Saigon and traveled to some 15 Navy Logistics bases and was responsible for some 8,000 VN sailors to replace US sailors at those bases. This responsibility resulted in my survivor guilt status.

Were it not for them retaining those letters, I would have no recollection of some specific events, as my memory has failed for most of that year.

1. I traveled with the VN Navy head (CNO), ADM Tran Van Chon to at least several bases along with ADM Zumwalt's successor, ADM Jerome King. Chon died in California at age 99 in May of 2019. That was a sad day as I had great respect for him and his staff, who worked closely with me for that year.

2. I had to escort a Pentagon Official who was going to recommend educational/training initiatives for the VN Navy as we flew from a high altitude to wave skipping to fly safely to Nha Trang to avoid being shot down.

3. One Huey pilot said that we were “*di mauing*” out of there when he noted tracers heading toward us.

4. I had the use of a Jeep and visited many places in the Saigon area including the Bien Hoa ARVN cemetery where my friend's first husband was buried. That location has been bulldozed sometime after 1975 and left to the ravages of the elements, sadly.

Veterans Day 2022 - 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, Friday, November 11, 2022. 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 forty (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 \$114.00 (plus tax) for a single and \$124.00 (plus tax) for double a 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 stay at this hotel, you must make your reservations under our group code prior to the cutoff date of October 11, 2022.

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 2022.

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

[illegible]

From the Membership

The Men in The Boats

Written by Lt. General Johnnie Corns, U.S. Army (Ret.)

The mist of the morning cools and softens the air
As the last of the soldiers heads down the steel stair.

He crossed the barge tied alongside the ship
And boarded the craft, making sure not to slip.

The assault craft and boats are now well underway
Executing the plan which was briefed yesterday
The boats flow out smoothly, moving into the line
From the air their formation looks dark, serpentine.
Up the brown, muddy river they move with the tide
Some enjoying the scenery on this their first ride.

Others seem not to care, unaware of the beauty
Their thoughts are focused on performing their duty.

These are the veterans who have been here before
Who've lived through the fire fights, not anxious for more.

But should one occur, these brave men are good
Their valor and skill is well understood.

The likes of this force is seldom seen.

They fight from the water and are called riverine.

Grant used them at Vicksburg in the great Civil War
And the French proved the concept on the Red River shore.

When the power was combined of Army and Navy
The first thoughts generated were just short of cagey.

But these didn't prevail when it came to a fight
Both soldiers and sailors knew what was right.

Soldiers saw water like moats 'round a castle
An unwelcome obstacle when it came to a battle.

But sailors saw water like the Daytona track
A way to get in and a way to get back.

Attacks from the water were new to their foe
Who aimed at the highways where troops usually go.

But for riverine troopers, this was the way
To attack with surprise at the first light of day.

And this was the plan they would follow today
To spring their attack, the riverine way.

Some early doubts for the plan soon arose
When they learned they'd be running right by Snoopy's Nose.

An elaborate plan that would probably work well
But for boat crews and platoons it was difficult to tell.

Artillery was firing, of this they'd been told

A battalion in choppers found the first LZ cold.

But what was that pounding on the side of the craft
Shaking the boat from forward to aft.

An antitank rocket had exploded top side
But in spite of hot shrapnel, the platoon has survived.

There's a monitor turning to a stream up ahead
No one at the wheel, the helmsman is dead.

The assault craft turns wildly, rams into the bank
A split-second decision before the craft sank.

The infantry platoon along with the crew
Scramble ashore where the artillery blew.

Their foe is retreating, crawling over a dike
That's getting chewed up by a boat's forty mike.
There's plenty of action, new troops have their fill
The artillery's pounding, the jets screaming shrill.

The time is at hand, it's good against evil
Death goes ashore through cordite and diesel.

But the noise of the battle slowly passes away
There are men to be cared for, there's time now to pray.

The enemy is pursued by chopper and boat.

Medics work wonders with lumps in their throats.

It seems like forever, but they're back on the ship
Some slightly wounded—broken finger, bruised hip.

But thoughts are of Willy who made them all laugh
And of Jose and Bob who did not make it back.

They laugh at Frank's letter that he got from back home
The candy from his wife has been missent to Nome.

The box will be forwarded, though mangled and tattered
But Frank didn't care; it's the letter that mattered.

They laughed and they joked and played lots of pranks
And made a few jokes about those with some rank.

And every face beamed as the brass just announced
It was a main force enemy that they had just trounced.

That kind of news would be in their letters
But what mattered most was they had fought even better.
There was a deep sense of pride when facing great danger

Of meeting a test, risking life for a stranger.

Most pictured the stranger as a small Asian child

Who'd suffered so much in such a short while.

And the main thing, of course, that most of them feared
Was continuing to live being homeless and scared.

Many years have passed since the days of these battles.
For each old Raider and Rat the memories still rattle.

A few of these warriors have even gone back

In search of something they feel that they lack.

Not to recall the carnage or view the rubble

But to see once again, those they helped when in trouble.

They're warmed by the smiles of kids three or four

But in the old USA they have even more.

And the main experience that gives them a chill

Is to fly over the land, lush, green and now still.

To feel tears sting their eyes looking down at the moats
And feel their chests swell for the Men in the Boats.

TAPS Tribute to a Fallen One

Stanley Cierlik passed away on June 22, 2022. While in Vietnam he served with Charlie Company, 4th Battalion, 47th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division in 1968. He was seriously wounded on August 12th. Stanley's wife, Karlyn, preceded him in death. He is survived by his four children



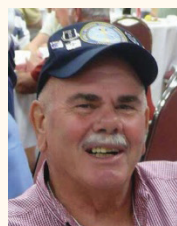
Robert W. Phillips passed away on June 7, 2022. While in Vietnam he served on boats and then was transferred to a staff position with Coastal Division 11 at An Thoi from June 1969 to June 1970. Robert is survived by his wife Gerry.



Member **Rodney Den Hollander** passed away on June 6, 2022. While in Vietnam he served with Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 47th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division from December 1968 to October 1969. Rodney is survived by his wife Beverly



Member **Loyless T. "Tom" Wright** (US Army Ret.) passed away on June 1, 2022. While in Vietnam he served with Delta Company, 3rd Battalion, 60th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division in 1968-69. Tom is survived by his wife Brenda.



Former Member LTJG **James Christopher Sprehe** passed away on May 31, 2022. While in Vietnam he served as Chief Staff Officer and Operations Officer with River Assault Division 153 from June 1969 to June 1970. He was a Task Unit Commander in the Rung Sat Special Zone. James is survived by his wife Donna.



Member **John R. "Jack" Balliet III** passed away on May 27, 2022. While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Division 153 onboard A-54 from April 1969 to October 1970. John is survived by his wife Sandra.



Member **Lawrence "Larry" Henry Dudley** passed away due to Agent Orange related disabilities on April 16, 2022. While in Vietnam he served with Bravo Company, 4th Battalion, 47th Infantry from May to October 1969. Then he was transferred to Charlie Company, 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry for the remainder of his tour. Sadly,

Larry lost his wife of many years, Carolyn, 14 months earlier due to a sudden heart attack. – ***"Larry was wounded twice and was awarded an Army Commendation Medal for Valor, a Bronze Star for Valor as well as a Silver Star Medal."*** – Fellow soldier Bruce Hierstein

Member **Michael R. Holcomb** passed away suddenly at his home on May 5, 2022. While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Squadron 9 – River Assault Division 91 onboard T-91-5, the "Delta Queen", as a Plankowner from October 1966 to December 1967.



Former Member **Patrick F. "Pat" Ryan** (USN Ret.) passed away on April 25, 2022. While in Vietnam he served with River Assault Squadron 11 – Division 112 onboard T-112-10 & 11 in 1967. Pat served 20 years in the U.S. Navy and is survived by his spouse Charlotte



Member **Stanley H. Lambert** passed away March 15, 2022. While in Vietnam he served onboard the USS Mark (AKL-12) as a Yeoman and 20mm gunner from October 1970 to July 1971. Stan was preceded in death by his beloved wife Lena.



Former Member **Ronald W. Ramsey** passed away in February 2022. While in Vietnam he served onboard the USS White River (LSMR-536) as a LTJG Weapons Officer from October 1965 to August 1967. He is survived by his wife Marilyn.

Member **Captain Wade Tesar** (USN Ret.) passed away on February 12, 2022. While in Vietnam he served with Naval Support Activity, Danang from June 1968 to June 1969. Wade is survived by his wife of 29 years Denise

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



A Picture Tells and Shows a Lot

(Info By Bryan Swisher)

The people in the picture are (far left) **Charles Hess**, from Glenville, WV. Just to his right, is **Ron Gerkin**, from Red Wing, MN, and the one to his right is me, **Jimmy Davis**, from Sharon, TN. We were all in White platoon, B Co 3/47. (Reprinted from Spring, 2016 River Currents)

The Mobile Riverine Force and 9th Infantry Division Vietnam



Find us on Facebook

Hey Brothers, check out our Facebook page, "The Mobile Riverine Force and 9th Infantry Division Vietnam" Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/>

Our Facebook Group is dedicated to all Army and Navy men who served with pride and distinction in a place called the Mekong Delta. Be it on water or land, they all served their country. Whether they were on a Monitor or making a helo assault, setting an ambush on a lonely, quiet, dark night, walking through waist-deep water in a rice paddy, riding a tango boat up a narrow canal, or at anchor in the middle of a brown-water river for long hot hours. Places like Dong Tam, Tay Ninh, Snoopy's Nose, the Cross Roads, Ambush Alley, My Tho, Rach Kien, Plain of Reeds, Parrot's Beak, Tan An, Nha Be or Ben Tre and names like Colleton, Washtenaw, Windham, Benewah, Westchester, Satyr, Askari, PBR, and Swiftboat are names and places we'll never forget.

This group is to preserve a living memory of all those who served in the Mobile Riverine Force and 9th Infantry Division Vietnam.

Many friendships from days past have been renewed because of our group page. It is a great place to make connections with others who served with the Mobile Riverine Force and 9th Infantry Division.

A few rules are in place to keep order in the group. They are:

1. Politics and religion are the fastest way to start an argument and cause hard feelings and absolutely have no place on this page.
2. We expect members to treat each other with respect.

We hope you enjoy the group.

In Brotherhood,
Doc Pries - MRFA Vice President and Group Admin

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)

Leo Alvarez, for GM C John Louis Green, USN RAD 111, ATC 111-8 (1967-1968)

Ron Baker, In memory of BM2 William Comer KIA 2/68

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Bill Buffie, in memory of Lyle Parin, USS Floyd County, LST-762
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

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

Flamburis, T-112-2, 1967

Tony Garvey, for Wes Sade, Billy Olsen, and Staff Sgt. James Williams, C Co. 4th/47th 9th Inf

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

Susan Hanmer, for SFC Michael Hanmer, RivRon 13, and 153 (07/69-02/71)

Joe Hilliard, for Joe Benack, from Florida and Donald Hartzell, from Pennsylvania KIA 1970

Bruce Jensen, in memory of Frederic Peers Webb, A-111-4, KIA 12/21/67

J. R. Johnson, 3rd/47th, 9th "Recon" (05/66-01/68), in memory of Walker, Gotch, Paredes, Nelson, Hayes, Howard, King, Twitchell, and Chesnoski

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Stan Melton, in Memory of Gary Speckman, and Dick Hewitt, ATC-91-5 Plank Owners

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A.R. "Monty" Montillo, in memory of John Sperry

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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)



Mobile Riverine Force Association

9 San Marino Parkway

Fenton, MO 63026

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