



Sponson BOX

*Voice of
the USMC
Vietnam Tankers
Association*

Ensuring Our Legacy Through Reunion, Renewal & Remembrance™



Featuring

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GG Sweet to the Great Tank Park in the Sky

Legendary tanker, Captain G. G. Sweet, USMC, Retired, a Mustang who served in many enlisted and warrant officer ranks, who served in WWII and in Korea in 1950 - '51, passed away at his home on June 18th, 2010 in Pahrump, Nevada. Captain Sweet was born in South Chicago and served in the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1938 and retired in 1958.

He was burned and received severe wounds while serving as an 0311 gun captain on the USS Nevada at Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941. (note: the USS Nevada was the only battleship to get underway that fateful morning drawing every Japanese plane over the harbor to stop her; she was beached after several bomb and torpedo hits). The Corps sought to survey him out to sell War Bonds but he convinced them he could still perform his duties and was assigned to tanks.

He earned the Silver Star, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with combat V and a Purple Heart. He took part in tank operations at Bougainville, Peleliu, Guam and Iwo Jima. While in route to Iwo onboard LST 477, a Japanese Kamikaze crashed into the starboard side troop quarters; she was beached as Marines helped to save the ship.

During the Korean War he earned a second Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with V while serving as a platoon leader with tanks in Korea. After Korea he had a great influence upon all USMC tankers that followed; every Marine tanker that served in Vietnam was somehow touched and affected by his training and leadership examples that were passed down through those men that became our instructors.

After his retirement from the Corps he became a prominent businessman in Wisconsin and for many years in Pahrump, Nevada in the late '90's. He was a generous contributor to the John Cornelius Scholarship Fund. He was interned in the private veteran's park bearing his name on Memorial Day, 2011 in Pahrump.

G.G. Sweet honored at Montana reunion

A mini reunion was held by Gunner Bob Embesi at his home in Montana on July 8-10 and GG Sweet was a major topic of discussion; glasses were held up in his honor. Bob Embesi and "RB" English shared stories about Captain Sweet and the impact and influence he had upon Vietnam tankers through the instructors and lifers most of us served under.

The reunion was made up of three groups of people that served with Bob. Two of the groups were made up of tankers from Bob's first and second Vietnam tours. The third group was an interesting group of Distinguished Shooters that shot with Bob on the USMC Rifle & Pistol Team for 12 years; they had been all over the world competing against the world's top shooters.

Bob's home is situated in the Bitterroot Valley in western Montana which is gorgeous country. The three day event took members to the Big Hole National Battlefield, site of the Nez-Perce Indian and U.S. Army engagement and then on to Bannack, a former mining town back in the 1890's and Montana's first capital, which is now a ghost town.

It was the first time in 42 years since many of us had seen our platoon leader, Mike Gilman from 2nd Platoon, Bravo Co., 5th Tanks as well as Gerry Hearne who was the TC on B-24 of 5th Tanks.



Left to right: Bob Peavey, Harris Himes, Jarrett, Steve Edminston, Roger Brown, Anthony Embesi, Bob Embesi, Alica Peavey, Mike Gilman, Ginnie Schlitzer, "RB" English and Gerry Hearne.

Also attending but not making the group picture were: Joseph Landaker, Jim Sausoman, Harvey Robinson, Gary Gibson, Herb Steigelman, M/M Greg Martin, Gary Crutchlow, Randall Conrad, Audie Bromley, M/M Paul Emmitt, Jimmy Dorsey, Doug Scheptt, Richard Oswald, Matt Schroeder, and M/M Gene Pendland.

Letter from the President

I am a member of the University of Denver Alumni Association and twice a year I get their alumni news magazine. This most current issue had a letter from the school's Chancellor. I'd like to quote him on one subject.

"We are living in interesting times. After years of war on terror, a series of natural disasters of historic magnitude, a great recession and the abrupt rise of new culture driven by technology and demographics, the sense of global upheaval and imminent broad and deep change in America is almost tactile. It feels as though our nation and the world are once again passing through a time when things are turned upside down, when pressures built up over generations produce a sudden wave that changes much of the life and culture that we've known and expect to continue indefinitely. There have been a number of such periods in our national past: The Civil War and Reconstruction, the Great Depression and New Deal, two world wars, the rise of the nuclear age, the civil rights movement and the collapse of the Soviet Union."

I do not want to elude that changes in our own organization are as "earth shattering" as some of the events outlined in the above letter but as they say, the more things change, the more they (seem to) stay the same. The USMC Vietnam Tankers Association is changing (for the better) and you certainly can tell if you just look around.

Take a look at the Sponson Box news magazine and note how it has become (at least for me & many other VTA members) a collector's item. Take a look at our reunions. They just keep getting better & better with more and more attendees enjoying the brotherhood. Now please take a good look at our brand new website. WOW!!! The Board of Directors spent several years researching and discussing the importance of our association's website. Did you know that over half of our new membership quotes that the VTA website was the first contact with the association? To me that is a startling figure. In our quest for increasing our membership, we did research on running paid advertisements in many different veterans magazines. We discovered that this form of paid publicity was very cost prohibitive, especially when we figure that our target audience is perhaps a grand total of 5,000 Vietnam tanker veterans.

The Board of Directors feels that as the Association changes, so should all aspects of who we are and what we do. With that in mind, during the next reunion, we are going to have our regular biennial association business meeting and during that meeting we will be presenting and voting on a USMC Vietnam Tankers Association Student Scholarship Program whereby sons, daughters and grand children of our association members may compete to become eligible for financial aid for their future schooling. The "official" announcement will be made in the 2011 - 1st issue of the Sponson Box. We are also discussing the possibility of a memorial or monument of some kind dedicated to all USMC Vietnam Tankers. This is not change for change sake but improvements in our association and the best is yet to come.

Speaking of reunions, this issue of the Sponson Box is chock full of information on our next reunion which will be in San Diego (August 17 - 21, 2011). It will be our seventh get together since we first met in Washington, DC, over the July 4th weekend in 1999. We will be celebrating our 12th year as an organization. Our sincere thanks go out to Dick Carey's foresight and tenacity because I am sure that you agree that we have morphed into one heck of a great organization.

On a different but similar note, would you please go through your old Vietnam photos and any of your old keepsake mementos to try to piece together a story or two about your time in Vietnam? It is our goal to be able to gather up humorous, not-so-humorous and down right intense personal stories of our time in Vietnam so we can share them with our membership. I've heard a discouraging word or two about some of the current stories in the Sponson Box news magazine. The complaint is that there are too many stories about things other than Marine tanks in Vietnam. Well, no \$hit Sherlock!!! We do not get enough participation from the membership to be able to feature strictly stories about our time in that \$hithole country. Those of you that want more Marine tanker stories, get off your lazy asses and write something down. It does not have to be pretty, or even make a lot of sense. The editors of the Sponson Box will fix it and make it sound great. We just need you to put it into writing. We also want to also record all of our own personal histories with the Vietnam Tankers Historical Foundation for future generations of Marine tankers to learn & to understand our successes and not-so successes of the past. This task needs to be done before we are either too old to remember or before we head to "The Great Tank Park in the Sky." Take this to heart and get working on this today!!!

Semper Fidelis,

John

I have found the best way to give advice to your children is to find out what they want and then advise them to do it.

Harry S. Truman (1884 - 1972)

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Tuyen Pham – Layout and Design

Sandra Coan – Proofing

Printed in the USA



ON THE COVER: Platoon Leader 1st Lt. Pete Rich brings beer out to one of his tank crews on the road up to Con Thien in June of 1969. Left to Right: Pete Ritch, Bob Haley, Fred Janneck, Bill Eaves & Andy Anderson.

New Members for 2010 – 3rd Sponson Box

Andrew N Anderson (Andy)

1030 E Miles Street
Tucson, AZ 85719-6140
(520) 275-9761

tiburondeolas@gmail.com

C & B Cos, 3rd Tanks, '68 – '69

MOS: 1811 / 2141

DOB: 6/1/49

Recruited by: Chris Vargo

Bobby Joe Blythe

989 Robin Court
Hanford, CA 93230

(559) 584-9315

cfiblythe@aol.com

H&S Co, 3rd Tanks, '68 – '69

MOS: 2141

Wife: Jeannie

DOB: 7/22/46

Recruited by: Bob Vaxter

Epifanio Bustamante (Epie)

700 N 14th
Artesia, NM 88210-1168
(575) 746-2466

epiebusta66@hotmail.com

B Co, 5th Tanks, '68

C Co, 3rd Tanks, '68 – '69

MOS: 1811

Wife: Irene

DOB: 1/12/47

Recruited by: Bob Vaxter

Mike L Cervera

22302 – 36th Ave W
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043-4264
(425) 640-2545

carolplasmike@comcast.net

C Co, 3rd Tanks, '68 – '69

MOS: 1811

Wife: Carol

DOB: 9/8/47

Recruited by: Website

Stephen H Christensen

1627 E 8th Street
Des Moines, IA 50316-2233
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h20bro1@aol.com

H&S Co, 1st Tanks, '66

MOS: 3371

DOB: 9/27/45

Recruited by: John Wear

Please note: Most of these new members were recruited through a joint effort. The recruiters called or emailed John Wear or "Robbie" Robinson and the perspective member had a membership packet sent to them. The packet that was mailed included a sample of the Sponson Box news magazine, a membership application and a letter asking them to join. Anyone who knows a perspective member, please alert either Robbie or John.

Tomas F Fenerty (Tom)

40 N Westview Ave
Feasterville, PA 19053-4160
(215) 357-1031

tomfenerty@comcast.net

F Co, 2/9, '67 – '68

MOS: 0311

DOB: 10/19/47

Recruited by: John Wear

Gerald E Hearne, Jr (Jerry)

1307 Nightingale Rd
Wapato, WA 98951-9674
(509) 877-2745

gerry@gerryhearn.com

A - B Co, 1st Tanks '65 – '66

B Co, 5th Tanks, '68

MOS: 1811

DOB: 6/27/47

Recruited by: Bob Peavey

OJ Leddy

145 N 200 East
Monroe, UT 84754-4255
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ojleddy@yahoo.com

H&S – C Cos, 3rd Tanks, '67, '68, '69

MOS: 2141

Wife: Leanne

DOB: 6/26/46

Recruited by: Bob Vaxter

Kristine Murdock

390 W 350 South
Layton, UT 84081
(801) 719-9812

krissym2@q.com

Widow of Larry Staats

Recruited by: Robbie Robinson

Ladis L Santos

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H&S Co, 1st Tanks, '64 – '67

MOS: 1811/5611

DOB: 4/26/40

Recruited by: John Barstusevics

Herb L Whittington

2102 Brookhill Road
Dothan, AL 36301-4108
(334) 793-6811

alarocks@graceba.net

C Co, 3rd Tanks, '66 – '68

MOS: 1811

Recruited by: John Wear

Meet Your Board of Directors

A feature that provides some history about one of your Board members.

David "Doc" Forsyth



I was born in U.S. Naval Hospital Long Beach, California on the 18th of September, 1947. My father was a Marine fighter pilot who retired from the Corps in 1961 as a Lieutenant Col. and my mother a Navy nurse who, had she remained in the Navy, would have outranked my father.

Being a 'military' family we moved around the country quite a bit and to this day I harbor fond memories of sharing a jury-rigged bunk bed with my brother, built into the back of the family Studebaker. It was composed of a fold out cot that was a little wider than the car laid sideways through the rear windows above the back seat. Air conditioning for cars hadn't been invented yet so open windows was the coolest way to go and we were "styling" with our bunk arrangement. We criss-crossed the Mohave desert several times using this technique and were happy to have such luxury and in order to avoid the "I have to go to the bathroom," cry from the back seat, my dad just drilled a hole in the floor board, cut a length of garden hose, attached a funnel to one end and we were "good to go!"

After my father retired from his beloved Corps after twenty two years of service, we

moved to Florida where I rose to the heights of scholastic... underachievement. I was not a good student. However, I did manage to graduate from high school in 1966 and start college the following September. The war in Vietnam was heating up and I was becoming disgruntled with the anti - military protests on campuses throughout the country. So, with a year and a half of college under my belt and after having giving it all of about two minutes contemplation, I decided to get out, see the world, do my duty and enlist. But this decision presented me with a dilemma. I needed a way to honor my parents military service. Which would I choose, Navy or Marine Corps? (There were no other considerations) When the solution came to me, I realized there was a way to honor both and in April, 1967 I was off to Navy boot camp in San Diego. Upon graduation I requested and was accepted to Class-A Corps school, after which I spent a year at USNH Yokosuka, Japan. In three months I became senior Corpsman of ward 3-A where, among other duties, I was charged with the responsibility of setting up a minor surgery clinic where I performed surgical debridement of wounds. Our hospital was

a 512 bed facility in which we housed up to 1200 patients at any given time. 1967 forward into 1968 we had patients in bunk beds. Needless to say we were very busy and 18 to 20 hour days were common.

It was in Yokosuka that I put into action the second phase of my plan to honor my parents. I began submitting requests for transfer to FMF. Request after request were denied but persistence paid off and after seven requests, I received orders to Camp Pendleton, CA for Field Med School. When I completed training at Pendleton, I was assigned to 9th MAB, 1st Mar Div, RVN. But first I would attend counter-guerilla warfare school, Okinawa.

I loved the training! We ran all the time, everywhere. We learned about evasive tactics, booby-traps, all kinds of explosives and best of all, we got to blow shit up! After training I was to be shipped out but there was a problem, it seems that no one knew exactly where 9th MAB was. So I had to wait in Okinawa until things could be sorted out. But rather than just sit and wait

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Membership Information Changes for 2010 – 3rd Sponson Box

Joe Balleweg

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eballeweg@verizon.net

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24 Tarkka Lane
North East, MD 21901
(763) 616-0754
C Co, 1st Tanks

Tony Wills

1075 Eagle Landing Drive
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Olin C. Norman, Jr.

Last issue had the name reversed.
Our apologies to Mr. Norman.

Letter to the Editor

In keeping with the old Marine Corps adage that "Marines take care of their own," the VTA was recently involved in preparing and sending some care packages to K/3/1 Marines in Afghanistan. My daughter is the local fire chief's secretary. When she learned that a former Marine fire captain who had once served with K/3/1 was asking other former Marine fire fighters here to help put together some care packages, she volunteered that her dad and the VTA had done that for a tank unit in Iraq a few years ago.

I agreed to help Captain Wilcox cut through some red tape and meet his mailing expenses. We also contacted a local group of women who sew and knit items for our troops overseas. They donated 100 neck coolers. Some local merchants donated items such as paperbacks and magazines. The VTA threw in a few food items and also paid the mailing costs. I thought our membership would like to know.

Semper Fidelis!

Jim Coan
Sierra Vista, Arizona

Hey Nags,

I also read the "Chico" article too. I remember her well. Found several 2d Plt photos of her when we were down at Hoi An in 1966. Think Gunny "Cowboy" Smith originally found and "owned"



her. I recall one night during Operation Macon (when Chico who was riding in my tank) as we drove through a line bamboo and then suddenly fell - heads down - into a ravine. All shit broke loose in the turret w/ Chico screaming and running around inside. To boot, a nest of freaking tree biting ants fell on our turret and we started jumping all around inside too. This was around 0100, and it took two other tanks to pull us out and back to flat ground.

I also recall another night back at An Hoa when Chico nestled beside my head and neck on my rack, and then pissed all over my neck and shoulders. She was horny little shit. One day our local Special Forces team brought their young rock ape named "Munk" down for a visit. Chico got all excited running in circles pulling his tail up and down and then pulling her tail up and pushing her butt into his face. Guess she wanted to get laid - that's the best we could figure. But Munk just sat there - taking it all in - without doing anything. Chico went wild and started to beat him on his head and back until we had to separate them. I left in late Sep '66 to go back to BN, so I don't know what happened to her after that date.

Semper Fi,

Bill (Lurch) Lochridge
fiskeinc@aol.com

Hi Bill (Lockridge),

I enjoyed the photo and accompanying article in the new issue about you and your grandson. You are looking well. I also recognize "Chico," the monkey on page 23. The information is correct, Chico was an ornery little mammal!

I am involved with our city's Marine unit adoption committee. Laguna Hill's has adopted 3/5 from Camp Pendleton. The battalion is currently deployed but will be retuning in September. Keeps me somewhat in touch with today's

Marine Corps.
Dick Nagle
Bravo 1
rnagle74@cox.net

Gentlemen,

As you know, John, I was raised a 'mud' Marine grunt and happy to be one.

Having had the good fortune, however, of being assigned to Charlie Company, Third Tanks in July of 1968, I am more than proud to consider myself also as much a 'tanker' as a 'grunt.' My tank company boys trained me in the aspects of what it meant to be one of them, and I learned the hard way just what those traits were. I did, however, become qualified as somewhat of a trained tanker so don't go bad-mouthing me about that fact.

I am going to render high praise to all of you who are responsible for this issue of The Sponson Box. It is a fabulous magazine and I enjoyed every article. I was particularly fond of the picture of the Charlie Company Marines on page 38. Unfortunately, that was before my time with them. I also thoroughly enjoyed the "Beware The Gunny" article and, at first, thought you were writing about me as I was a 'gunny' at the time I joined Charlie Company, but I did have my 9999 MOS!! To be explicit, I am too humble to mention my most endearing characteristic, which is "Modesty." Oops, ...

Seriously, you gentlemen did do one hell of a good job and can be proud of the magazine you produce. I know you are, anyway, as I can see it in the effort you make to produce it.

Semper Fidelis,

James L. Langford
1stSgt, USMC (Ret)

In my recent Vietnam Tankers Association newsletter there was an article re: the subject matter. It was a real eye opener for me to find that several of the veteran's charities to which I have donated over the years do not have a very good track record re: money spent for charitable purposes vs money collected!

There is an outstanding web site which sets forth ratings for various groups:

<http://www.military-money-matters.com/charities-ratings.html>

When you bring up the site, click on "AIP veterans charity watchdog report & veterans charities ratings." The highest rating, A+, was only achieved by Air Force Aid Society, Army Emergency Relief, Fisher House Foundation and Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society.

I know I have revised my charitable

donation activity based on the information given in this report.

Lt.Col. Everette L. Tunget,
USMC (Ret.)

Editor's Note: It is rewarding to know that we put some light on this subject and that it has raised awareness.

Thanks for featuring Jim Guffey's fish story in the last issue of the Sponson Box. I also read about the guy from the motor pool not making the run to Chu Lai and the 6x6s that hit the mines. Well I was on one of those mine-hitting trucks! And after that they never let us make those "booze runs." Of course the reason the trucks were taken out to be "checked out" for the run was that we said that we needed "tank parts"...but when the trucks were pulled back to the compound, all they found was beer.

Also please put a thank you note in the magazine that I thank everyone for the prayers and the "Buddy Fund" get-well flowers when I was in the hospital. The flowers were beautiful and they outlasted any other flowers that I received. Someone has good taste.

Semper Fidelis,

"Doc" Jake Keasling
Phone: (423) 422-4366

Email: jakekeasling@hotmail.com

Editor's Note: Doc was the individual featured in the fish story who ate the live fish.

Today I got an email from one of our most esteemed & beloved FMF Corpsmen asking me not to divulge the below question: **"Don't let anyone know I asked this question, but I have forgotten what the Sponson Box is. Send me the answer."**



My reply was this:

No \$hit Doc!!!! Actually being a corpsman, it is not wonder you ask the question. Heck! I have had tankers ask me the same thing trying to let him off the hook a little. Take a look at the attached photo of skinny, young & gullible (stupid) me and my brand new tank back on the Tank Ramp at Dong Ha.

The tank's serial number is painted on the side of a sponson box. The "sponson" is the fender (or platform) that projects off the side of the tank's hull that keeps someone's body parts off of the moving tank tracks (the tracks are located under the fender... or sponson). The box-like things that are bolted to the sponson (or fenders) are sponson boxes. The boxes hold "stuff" like tank repair tools, spare parts, pioneer tools (shovels, picks, etc) and other very essential gear. My American College Dictionary has one definition for a sponson as: "... A platform for handling gear."

That should now make you an expert on Sponson Boxes hence the name of our magazine.

S/F

John Wear

Dear Bob,

I am a relatively new member to the VTA having only paid dues for two years. This is just a short note which I have been meaning to write for a while now to commend the fine job of keeping the communications flowing. I am also a life member of the VFW, the Marine Corps League and the American Legion and it is obvious we are becoming a time endangered group. A few generations from now we will only be remembered by the plaques and awards presented.

I first felt a shiver when I realized that my old outfit, 3rd Tanks, had been dissolved. I was a field radio operator with them for two years in I Corps, RVN. Although not a crewman, I spent many a day and night on or under an M48. I made some great friends that I hold dear to my heart.

I really enjoy the Sponson Box and look forward to it every 14 weeks. At our monthly VVA meetings we are constantly reminded of our dwindling numbers. Your magazine is like a shot of adrenaline.

It is wonderful how it keeps in touch with family members on a nation wide level. The reunion news and photo exchanges combined with the memories of things we've experienced; it makes us all a little prouder to have served.

Once again, thanks for a great job. Keep up the good wok.

Sincerely,

Fred N. Goger
Vietnam Veterans of America
Bayshore Chapter 721
Keyport, N.J.

Korean War Tankers

I attended an event yesterday that recognized the 60th anniversary of the Korean War. At the event I was told that the government of the Republic of Korea wants to thank every American Korean War Veteran still living for their sacrifice. We have some Korean War tankers in our organization; maybe we could post the form on our new website.

Semper Fi,

Belmo

Editor's Note: We have posted this form on our new website under NEWS. The form is a JPG and can be printed off on a home computer. Thank Belmo for providing us with the form and info.

Hey John,

I was a Corpsman with Kilo 3/9 on that Operation which encircled Con Thien. We started it on 7Jul68 from the SW corner of Con Thien, moving NNE to the Ben Hai River and circling back to Con Thien through the Trace to the east of Con Thien (Between Gio Linh and Con Thien. Mean, hot and angry place. We had so many go down from heat stroke. No water but what was available in stagnant B-52 craters full of body parts. I don't have any good things to say about the place then. Now it's quite different when I returned in 2003. I went down to the Ben Hai river to cool off and not worry about being sniped. There are 10,000 North Vietnamese graves just north of the Ben Hai River within a few thousand meters of Con Thien. Most we put there over the years of 1965 to 1975. A good part of the surrounding area of Con

(Continued on page 9)

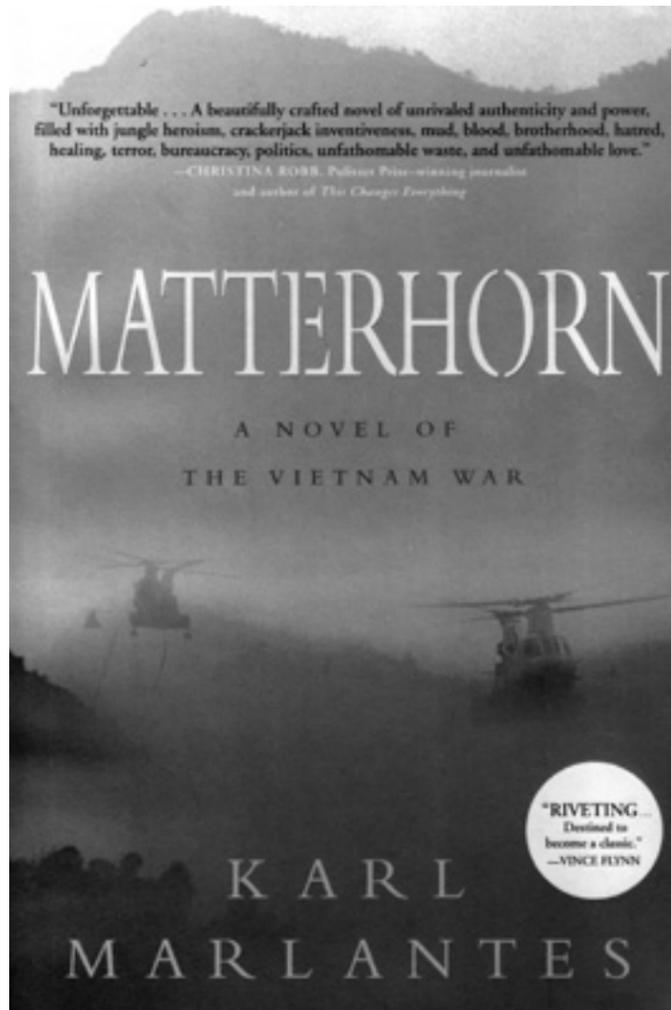
Finally!

A BOOK REVIEW BY
ROBERT PEAVEY

They say every war has its great novel— WWI had *A Farewell To Arms*, WWII had *The Naked and the Dead*, *The Thin Red Line* and *Catch 22* and the Korean War had *The Bridges of Toko-Ri*. All of these novels came out within 20 years after their respective war was over. Forty years after our war, we have yet to see the great Vietnam novel. And yet our war has had more nonfiction books written about it than any other war— over 3,500. Finally a book has hit the New York Times Best Seller List that will become the epic novel of our war—Matterhorn by Karl Marlantes. This is the book we have been waiting for. Its author is a Yale graduate and Rhodes Scholar who earned the Navy Cross, Bronze Star, two Navy Commendation medals for valor and two Purple Hearts as a Marine infantry platoon leader in Vietnam. Credibility like that makes for realism that will transfer you back 40 years. Reading the book brought slang and terms that had long ago left my conscious mind, like the saying that explained everything, “There it is.” The racial tension within units comes up often and fits the book’s timeframe of 1969. It fairly presents both sides and their views and how it was handled or ignored by leaders; it is a minor but important part of the story.

The book starts with a young “butter bar” straight out of an Ivy League college and into Marine officers’ training (Basic School). He is assigned as a platoon leader of 40 men who are all hard corps veterans, many of them being short-timers. I have always been curious what it was like for a young inexperienced 2nd lieutenant to walk into a group of veterans and be taken seriously. It must have been a very difficult and awkward position having no combat experience facing a group of worn veterans. It is a fascinating transformation the main character goes through. You come to learn that most officers coming into the 3rd Marine Division had to serve 6 months as a platoon leader regardless of his MOS. Consequently, 6 months later, just as he has become a fully competent platoon leader, he is transferred to his MOS job. The tragedy of this policy becomes all too apparent when a weak Motor-T second lieutenant, who can’t read a map, is forced to lead a rifle platoon.

If you want to know what the Vietnam War was really like for the grunts, there is no better book. The author creates the smells and sights with his unique writing style. The only flaw I could find with this novel is the title, for I must have passed the book several times in my local bookstore never thinking it was the great Vietnam War novel that it is. I had just finished, *Into Thin Air*, and I was not interested in reading another



mountain climbing book. I think the book would have come out faster if the author had added the word “Firebase” in front of Matterhorn. Nevertheless, the book has been on the New York Times best seller list for weeks after 20 years of trying to sell the manuscript with little interest shown by publishers. The author not only creates a firebase on the DMZ but also borrows a Marine regiment (24th Marines) that never deployed to RVN. I think he wanted to keep the story as pure as possible without intruding upon actual history, locations and commands. He therefore gives the RVN veteran a book that reads extremely real without encroaching on famous places, actual units and real people.

The political intrigue between company, battalion and regimental commands is something foreign to most of us and we probably never gave it a thought. But whenever personalities and egos are brought together, be it the civilian corporate world or that of the military, there is bound to be intrigue and one-upmanship. Learning how an over ambitious battalion S-3 can make life pure hell for men in the field was something many of us would never be aware of. This particular S-3 had little concern for the men in the field and was more interested in advancement

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Letter to the Editor (Continued from page 7)

Thien is, once more, planted in Rubber Trees. They are milked and the liquid



collected by many villagers, of all ages, pouring five gallon pails into a good sized truck that had a huge tank on it.

Thanks to the VTA for the thoughtful gift of the fresh cut flowers. Elsie really appreciated them and they are beautiful. Just another example of Marines caring for and taking care of other Marines!

Semper Fi My Friend,

Elsie & Ev Tunget
Phone: (360) 331-3559
Email: eltmet@whidbey.com

One of your members who I frequently exchange emails with, Armando Moreno, a former Ontos Marine and Vietnam vet, sent me a scanned article that appeared in the June/July/August 2010 issue of “The Sponson Box” magazine. It was from an email that I sent to someone or posted somewhere not that long ago. Can’t remember right now; will have to look at my Sent folder. The article in the Sponson Box is titled “An Ontos Story” “by Scott Berry”. I was surprised and honored that someone would think it was worthy of publication in their magazine. Thank you.

Semper Fi,

R. Scott Berry
5914 Post Rd.
Montague, Michigan 49437
rscottberry@charter.net

Hi John,

The two “Sponson Box” magazines and USMCVTA membership application arrived safely. Thank you so much. Nice magazine; I was surprised to see how much content there is inside. Good job in putting that magazine together.

Many people don’t realize how difficult it is to keep an organization’s magazine going. The first few issues you have a lot of information and stories to put in, but after that, you really have to dig. Reading the story about the frustrated Marine that was calling for a medevac chopper during a firefight, for two critically wounded Marines, where he was sent an Army medevac chopper, and the Army pilot refused to come in for a pickup because he was too chicken, really got my blood boiling. If that had been a Marine pilot, he would have come in for the pickup, even if he had to fly through a hail of enemy fire.

I will be sending you a check along with the completed membership application, but I have to lay my hands on my DD-214, which is among my batches of documents and records. It is starting to look a little worn after forty years of existence, so it probably would be a smart idea to send away for a replacement. I will make a copy of the old one, and include it with the membership application. Thanks again.

Semper Fi,

Scott Berry
rscottberry@charter.net

John,

It seems like from what you are saying; that we’ll all benefit from my paying my yearly dues on time, w/ a secondary donation to the association. The only reason that I offered this was that Chris encouraged me to do this.

Since I joined in July; and my membership fees are due in Dec; I’ll just add as much as I can to the check, and trust you to put the funds to their best use, as you see fit. You and the USMCVTA have made an incredible difference in my life, such as it is, and I’ll show you what I mean by this in the form of helping out however you need me to (within reason...)

After reading those back issues of S-Box cover to cover; I’m still coming to grips with just what a great thing that you, Bob, and the rest have accomplished. With all the crap out there, S-Box truly stands head and shoulders above.

S F, and God Bless,

Andy Anderson
Dickweed / The Dooder / Andy
tiburondeolas@gmail.com

Dear John,

My daughter and I wish to thank you and all of the members of the VTA for the beautiful basket of mixed flowers. I am sorry it has taken me so long to sit down and write notes but Jim’s passing took all of us by complete surprise. One minute he was here and the next he was gone. Even though he was in pain, he was already making plans for the next reunion in San Diego next year. If it is possible, when it is time to renew memberships, I would like to do that so I can continue to receive the Sponson Box and keep up with what’s going on.

San Diego, 2011, Jim may not be there in body but (he) will definitely be there in spirit.

Semper Fi,

Linda Guffey
2405 Carriage Creek Rd
Midlothian, VA 23112

Editor’s note: Jim & Linda Guffey attended the first VTA reunion in Washington, DC, in July 1999 and they had perfect reunion attendance ever since.

We will greatly miss Jim and his selfless dedication to the Jerry Clark Memorial Buddy Fund. We are still looking for his replacement to carry on the management of the program.

Hey John!

Thanks a lot USMC VTA for the beautiful flowers I received while in the VA hospital! They meant an awful lot to me. Although I was trying to pinpoint Louis Ryle’s location and date of his emergency surgery to remove shrapnel moving closer to his spinal chord that he received on Bravo 25 during Operation Hastings in 1967. He reminded me of January 13, 1968, and the ambush on Route 9. He and George Kassick fired about 6 – 8 canister rounds so fast, to cover a 360 degrees that they traversed a little too far and blew the searchlight clean off of Yax’s tank that was behind them.

Due to the lack of experience, my wife gave away my position to Dick Carey... so thanks a lot to two great former tank commanders and everyone of you Marines!

(Continued on page 46)

Above & Beyond

We are extremely grateful to the following members who reached deep into their pockets and made a financial contribution to the USMC VTA this year. Thank you very much. It is through generous donations as these that permit us to upgrade the Sponson Box magazine and develop a new website. Again, thank you.

Andy Anderson
 Mark Anderson
 Jack Arena
 Mike Belmessieri
 Sammy Binion
 Bill Bisbee
 Eddie Blanchette
 Robert Bonderud
 Frank Box
 Max Brazeau
 Joe Brusha
 Mike Burnett
 John Byrne
 Silvano Camardese
 Richard Carmer
 Rene Cerda
 Steven Christiansen
 Al Christy
 Tom Clary
 Jim Coan
 Ron Colucci
 Richard Coulter
 Charles Cummings
 Gary Cummings
 Steve Curti
 Ken Dahl
 Lee Dale
 Ron Davidson
 Bill Dutg
 RB English
 Edgar Evans

Guy Everest
 Dan Farrell
 Fritz Firing
 Michael Fischer
 George Flaviani
 Warren Frankerburger
 Sid Ferguson
 Dan Galusha
 Don Gehl
 Robert Gilbranson
 Jeffrey Griffith
 Fred Groger
 Jim Guffey
 Garry Hall
 Rhza Hambright
 John Hancock
 John Harper
 John Heffernan
 Tedd Hildabrand
 Gordon Holister
 John Hughes
 Alanzo Jacobs
 Fid Jarnot
 John Jaurez
 Fred Kellogg
 Clyde Knox
 Ed Kusz
 Rick Lewis
 Pete Limanek
 Otis Martin
 Greg Martin

John Maxwell
 Gary McClery
 John McGuire
 Gary Mefford
 Armando Moreno
 Rick Oswood
 David Owen
 Bob Peavy
 Richard Peksens
 Dow Peters
 Dover Randolph
 Pete Rich
 Jim Roberts
 Chester Ruby
 Ladis Santos
 George Search
 Jerry Sesar
 Michael Shaw
 Robert Skzels
 Steve Skinner
 David Thompson
 Ed Tierney
 Ev Tunget
 Bruce Van Apeldoorn
 Patrick Vinton
 Jerry Wahl
 David Walters
 Charles West
 Ken Whitehead
 Herb Whittington
 Dan Wokaty
 Anonymous

If we inadvertently missed someone who participated in the financial well being of our organization, we humbly apologize for the omission and ask that you please notify us of our oversight.

Looking For

HILL 55 – AUGUST 4-5, 1967

This past week I got a phone call from a Vietnam Marine grunt who had been with Delta, 1/7 in Vietnam. He had been looking for tank crewmen of a specific tank that had been on Hill 55 (outside of Da Nang) on August 5, 1967, when the base was overrun by gook sappers. The scuttlebutt was that the tank's TC had switched on their infrared searchlight and had spotted gook sappers in the perimeter wire. The tank crew loaded up a flechette round into the main gun and called in to the CP seeking permission to fire. Evidently the grunt skipper denied them permission to fire since no one else on the line had reported movement in the wire. The gook sappers blew the wire and poured into the perimeter killing a number of unsuspecting Marines before they were repulsed. The story goes that the grunt skipper was given a courts marshal and the tank commander had testified...but the caller did not have any more to report. He had been seeking the tank commander for a number of years and had found out that the hapless Marine TC had recently passed away. He had also located one of the crewman of the tank but he wanted to see if he could find more eye witnesses.

Tanker found: Pat Vinton

Tank Commander who passed away: James Noise

I believe it was Bravo Company, Third herd, I am told by Patrick Vinton who was a tank retriever with the 7th Marines. I do know that the tank was #USMC217810 that was on the Hill 55 above the bridge.

Thanks again.

Contact: George Schneider

Phone: (931) 739-3335

Email: GJSchneider2@blomand.net

1ST LT. DONALD J. "BUCKY" EGAN, JR.

He was an Ontos platoon commander for Battalion Landing Team 3/26 and

was killed on Feb. 12, 1967 in the Thua Thien Province during the TET lunar truce period. I'm pretty sure he was in the 3rd Marine Division but not certain. Supposedly his Ontos ran over a booby-trapped 1000lb. bomb and several men we're killed, I believe they were: Cpl. Allen Leroy Butler, Capt. Steve Lewis Camby, L/Cpl Casimir Sylwa Sylwawanowicz, PFC Roger Lyle Niemi, and PFC Bernardino Santiago-Vazquez.

I feel I've been given only part of the story or perhaps someone in your group might know more. I was also serving in the USMC when he was killed and I had my orders for Viet Nam but was reassigned to Beaufort, SC. I was in the MAC5 Air Wing.



I appreciate whatever you might be able to do. My phone is 949-542-7875 in San Clemente. Hey! Right next door and bordering Camp Pendleton!

Semper Fi

Tim Egan
 (949) 542-7875
 timegan1@cox.net

RICHARDS

First Name: ?

Last Name: Richards

E-3 or E-4

B Co., 5th Tanks

He was the driver of Bravo 24 Gerry

Hearne was the TC and S/Sgt Bob Embesi was our platoon sergeant and acting TC on Allen Brook.

Last seen after Operation Allen Brook
 Contact: Gerry Hearne, 509-834-9992 PST

See picture below



WHO IS HE?

Can anyone ID the Corpsman on the right? The guy on the left is Sgt. John Beck. Photo was taken at Bravo 1st Tanks CP that was either Hill 41 or 55. Sgt Beck was with the third platoon. Photo was taken in 1966.

Contact: Gene Hackemack,
 979-551-0581 CST



(Continued on page 46)

What Members are Doing

Major Gene Duncan

In the last edition we reported that retired Major and noted Marine Corps philosopher, Major Gene Duncan, author of Green Side out and (ten other) related books, was in ill health. He has rallied considerably and is now residing in an assisted living arrangement in Indiana. His address follows for those who would like to drop him their best wishes for his continued improvement:

Major Gene Duncan, USMC (Ret)
New Haven Care and Rehabilitation Center
1201 Daly Dr.
New Haven, IN 46774
Phone: (260) 749 0413

Gene ("Dunc") would greatly appreciate your calls, cards, letters. He's a great warrior and friend.

Tanker's Wife

Hey everyone, I must brag on my wife, Singha, who worked extremely hard the first year on her way to becoming an RN. It is quite an accomplishment for someone whose first language is not English. She achieved an A average which boiled down to a 4.0 GPA.

Hope everyone is doing fine.
God Bless

"Gene"

Kenneth Whitehead
kewusmc@hotmail.com

Vietnam Memorial

Jan "Turtle" Wendling is a retired



police officer from Mansfield, Ohio. He and his two Vietnam Marine veteran brothers got very involved with the design and construction of the Richland County (Ohio) Viet Nam Memorial. It is dedicated to the 40 KIAs from the county.

Vietnam Trip

Frank "Tree" Remkiewicz recently returned to Vietnam after a 42 year hiatus. Having served 2nd platoon, in Alpha Company, 3rd Tanks, from 1968 through 1969 he spent most of my time at Con Thien, C-2, the Washout and Leatherneck Square to name a few places.



Even out of focus, Razorback is easily recognized.

This time we flew into Ho Chi Minh City, travelled to Qui Nhon, An Khe, Na Trang, Da Nang, Hoi An, Hue and Hanoi. It was very different and, as with each person, experiences vary with people. Frank was fascinated by the bead work on a motorcycle he came across.



Grand Pa Langford

"My princess" says Grand Pa Jim Langford, former 1st Sgt. Charlie Co., 3rd Tanks.



Respect Rendered

As some of you know, I recently returned from attending the funeral services of my older brother. He was a WWII veteran, having served in a B-17 squadron of the 8th Air Force in England, earning 3 battle stars on his ETO ribbon. Knowing the graveside services were to be conducted with military honors, I wore my uniform also.

To avoid having to check any luggage, I wore my uniform for my flight out of Seattle. As I was waiting in a rather long line to pass through the security screening, a TSA agent came out to me and asked if I was traveling alone. When I said I was, she said please follow me and escorted me to a screening station apparently reserved for special purposes. I was immediately passed through and, as usual, set off the metal detector alarm due to my knee replacement. The TSA agent called to check me out was extremely courteous and said he was going to dispense with the normal "wand check" and gave me a cursory "pat down" instead. He even gave me a shoe horn to help get my shoes back on after he cleared me!

On the plane and in the terminal at Ontario a few people took the time to say, "Thank you for your service". Unfortunately, there are a vast number of people who don't have the foggiest notion what that service often entails. To put an exclamation point on what it means to be a veteran, I believe the

following says it all: "A veteran is someone who, at one point in his life, wrote a blank check made payable to 'The United States of America for an amount up to and including my life'. THAT is Honor, and there are way too many people in this country who no longer understand it!"

May God continue to bless America and those who have served and continue to serve to keep her free.

Semper Fidelis from one who is proud to have served.

Ev Tunget

HISTORIC EVENT AT LANDS END

The arrival of the Russian ship Varyag marked the first time a Russian War ship had entered San Francisco Bay since about 1849, of course that date was prior to the city becoming "The People's Democratic Republic of San Francisco." How things have changed. The presentation event was one in which the Russians wanted to honor the Sailors and Marines of the USS San Francisco who were killed in action when the ship was engaging enemy warships in support of our Marine brothers who were on Guadalcanal engaging enemy forces.

Vice Mike Belmessieri also presented the Varyag's captain, Eduard Moskalenko, and senior officers and enlisted with detachment coins. Admiral Vladimir Kasatonov accepted a lead crystal obelisk with the USMC logo embedded in it from Belmo as the detachment's gift to the ship and her crew.



Mike "Belmo" Belmessieri making presentation to Russian Admiral Vladimir Kasatonov

Editor's Note: The City of San Francisco, saying just recently that it was too warlike to accept a U.S. Navy gratis offer of a WWII battleship as an attraction, doesn't seem to mind an active Russian warship docking for 6 days. Go figure! +

Reliving His Youth



Bob Peavey spent 4 years searching for a car identical to the one he bought when he returned from Vietnam in March of 1969. His search for an orange, or what Ford called "Calypso Coral", 1970 Ford Torino 429 Cobra Jet, 4-speed, with a shaker-hood came to an end in March, 2009 in Montreal, Canada. It took 12 months to restore the car back to its original glory. The car has won several awards and was recently selected to appear at an "invitation only" show sponsored by the city of Atlanta & the Georgia Aquarium as one of the top 100 collector cars in the area. Bob reports that the car is hard to steer— it wants to turn into every gas station it passes; it gobbles 9 MPG highway! It's biggest asset, the 429 high compression engine is also its main drawback. The 405 H.P. engine burns only 100 octane gas— try finding that at your local Quick Trip! It means buying 114 octane race gas (at \$9.00 p/gallon) and mixing it with today's paltry 93 octane premium. The stout engine is tied to a low 3.95 rear axle and is very quick out of the hole. Bob's only wish is for 1968 gas prices to come back when premium gas was 104 octane and sold for .37 cents a gallon!

Tony Sims makes TV appearance!

USMC VTA member Tony Sims of Windsor, IL, was featured on the History Channel TV Show, "Pickers", on August 9th and 16th. The TV crew was at his home for 5 hours going over his collectables. Fellow tanker Bob Vaxter says the now TV star, Tony Sims, will be signing autographs from Noon to One PM at his home. Look for reruns of the show to catch "The Lonely Bull's" loader haggling with the two buyers.



Jan Wendling and son on the links.

Got a Grease Gun story? Who hasn't?

The VTA needs your short stories or tales concerning your experience with the on-board submachine gun that we called the "Grease Gun" - good & bad. Ray Stewart wants to write up our short stories for inclusion in the next Sponson Box. I am certain that he will use your name when describing your experience. E-mail is preferable but you can also call Ray with your short story.

We need you to act in the next 45 days. That means that the deadline is January 15th, 2011.

E-mail: USMCVTHF@comcast.net
Or call Ray Stewart at: 253-835-9083



Bob refinishing the rear louvers

GUESS WHO Contest

Can you guess who the person is in this photo? The first person to contact Bob Peavey with the right answer will receive a large embroidered patch of the VTA logo.



GUESS WHO Last Issue Winner

The winner from last issue's contest was Pappy Reynolds who correctly identified Lt. Ray Stewart on the far right of the photo.

In addition, Pappy was also able to provide the name of the tanker standing next to Tom Wharton (photo). He stated: The Marine with TJ Wharton is Charlie Clements. He was our Platoon "S__t Fister". He could make an A-bomb out of junk, but could also make a mess in a pig pen. He retired as a Captain.



SEASTORIES

FROM GARY GIBSON

Well, I'm not sure which story you would like me to tell.

1. The whore house episode in Hoi An which my have resulted in our truck driver losing his leg above the knee.

2. The mine incident on Operation Allen Brooke where I ended up with 2 sprained ankles and watching a tank & infantry assault from very close up.

3. The time I was about ten feet from a six by truck that was parked on a mine that went off and a very large piece of asphalt road flew over my right shoulder.

4. The time I didn't salute an admiral at Mainside, Olongopo and got away with it 3½ times.

5. The time I made a pig climb a tree with only one finger.

6. The time seven of us were caught in a whore house in Hue City by an armed platoon of NVA (we were in civilian clothes). And I have a lot more stories like that.

7. The time that we mounted out to Con Thien in an emergency and our dog (Eunuch) who was deaf, tracked us down after 12 hours...and later we killed him.

8. The time I hit an NVA in the right hip at 1200 yards and I got my ass chewed out.

Ok, ok, I'll tell you about the time when the trash dump blew up at Cam Lo. The firebase at Cam Lo was south of the DMZ and it was fair signed as "Base Camp Go." Sometime in late 1966 or early 1967, the base was to be abandoned. Everything salvageable was gone and all the old ammo & explosives were thrown into a pit to be blown up. My tank platoon and a platoon of grunts were the last to leave. The Montenyards

were told they could have the old barbed wire and anything else that they wanted after we left.

Well they started lining up at the gate in happy anticipation. They were way too close to the ammo pit. Since I had an old M-1 rifle that I had bought off of a sailor for \$8, my platoon leader posted me at the gate. He told me to move those people farther away. They were in a good mood and were easy to herd but they kept inching closer. Then...KA-BOOM!!!!...the pit blew up and shit came raining down for hundreds of yards...smoking Willy Peter rounds being the most obvious. Now the "yards" are scared to enter the camp and I was sent out to herd them back in. As they passed me at the gate, they kept bowing and looking me in the eye, saying, "OK? OK?" And of course, I said, "Ok! Lai Dai. Numba One", etc.

The old mess hall dump seemed to be the biggest draw, a big mountain of cans and stuff. There were women and kids swarming all over it. The...KA-BOOM!... it blew up too!

We ran over as soon as stuff quit raining down. There were dead and wounded kids everywhere. We got to as many wounded that we could find. They were in really bad shape, bleeding from their ears, nose, mouth and eyes. Then we started carrying the dead out of the mess over to their parents. I was tromping around the pile and stepped on something soft. It was a dead woman. We got a poncho and loaded her on to it. We found her hand laying there as I laid it on her stomach. We went about ten feet and her hand fell off. We stopped and I carefully placed her hand on her chest. Well, she sagged in the middle,

the edges of the poncho were up higher and the hood was under her. The damned hand fell off five or six more times. I tried to keep an eye on the falling hand but I never saw how it was happening. It was down right spooky, you know? Something we just could not explain.

Then one of the little boys we carried out was missing about half of his skull. His brain was exposed, all slimy and rippled...just like the pictures I had seen before with the exception of one silver dollar sized flat spot. I had hold of his shoulders and someone else had his feet. As I was walking, his brain fell out right in front of my boot and I stepped on it. Man! It was just terrible. I went over to my tank and sat down. Pretty soon it got real quiet and I went over to investigate. A Corpsman was surrounded by "yard" men. Some of whom were carrying dead kids in their arms. The Corpsman was panicking and was waving his .45 pistol in the air, trying to back them up. I ran up and leveled my M-1 just over their heads and fired two shots. Then I lowered the muzzle right about face level. I was serious as they knew it. I would have killed them all if I had to. That seemed to break the spell and the corpsman got clear.

You know? No one ever questioned my actions that day and it has been 44 years since. I never heard anything about this incident. Anyone out there who wants to call me and fill me in on anything I may have left out of this sea story.

Gary Gibson
Verona, MO
(417) 498-6944

To the Great Tank Park in the Sky



Jim Guffey

It is with a heavy heart that I inform you all that one of our own, Jim Guffey, passed away on Friday, Aug 13, 2001 at 4:30 PM.

As most of you know, Jim faithfully took up the Buddy Fund standard which had fallen when Jerry Clark passed away several years ago.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Linda, Jim's wife.

Semper Fidelis,

John



Charles B. "CB" Doten

Charles Benjamin "Ben" Doten, age 59, and one of the original charter members

of the USMC Vietnam Tankers Association, passed away on Monday, August 16, 2010 at the Tucson VA hospital after a long battle with cancer. When the VTA was just getting launched a decade ago, "C.B." was the initial designer of our web site. He remained active in the organization up until his untimely passing. Charles was the eldest son of Edward and Eva Doten and was born and raised in Tucson, AZ. He joined the United States Marine Corp after graduating high school; "C.B." served in Vietnam with H&S Co., 1st Tanks, from 1969-70. The pride of being a Marine was evident throughout his life. Having a natural gift for mathematics and engineering, he earned a B.S. in Mining Engineering from the University of Arizona. He pursued his engineering career throughout the western United States and visited various countries in Central and South America. Eventually, he returned to Tucson to finish his career. His character and charisma were self evident by the numerous friends from around the country that visited when they learned of his illness. He will be missed.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Kathy, three children: Christopher Doten, Jennifer Duran, and Steven Doten, and

five grandchildren: Kendel, Kaitlyn, and Karlie Duran, and Taylor and Piper Doten. He also leaves behind his father, Edward Doten, and two brothers: Richard "Joe" and Edward "George" Doten.

Services were held on Thursday, August 19 at The Church of Latter-day Saints; he was laid to rest in a family plot at the LDS Cemetery in Tucson.

Submitted by Chris Doten & Jim Coan



Thomas Joseph Rees

Thomas Joseph Rees, the last, a/k/a T, TR or Tom, fighter by day, lover by night, drunkard by choice and Uncle Sam's marching clown forever, died Monday October 25th, 2010. He is survived by his mother- Emily W. Carnes; brother and sister in law- Winship and Elizabeth Rees and their son- Thomas Frithjoff "Joff" Rees; sister- Frances Rees and her daughters and son in law- Gabriele Garcia Erickson, and Nicole and Michael Bennink; and a niece and nephew- Thomas Winship Rees

and Merrily Anne Rees, the children of his deceased brother, Arthur Frithjoff Rees, IV. TR was a loyal and favorite son, brother, uncle and friend. TR was born in Atlanta on May 3rd, 1948, grew up on Castlewood Dr. and W. Wesley Rd., attended Westminster school in Atlanta and graduated from Sewanee Military Academy in Sewanee, TN, in 1966. He graduated from West Georgia College in 1971 and enlisted in the Marine Corps. After successfully completing boot camp at Parris Island, SC, TR was selected for Officer Candidates School in Quantico, VA, and successfully completed officer candidate training, distinguishing him in the Corps as a "Mustang." He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and served as a tank platoon commander in the Western Pacific, deploying to several Asian countries during and after the Viet Nam War. He subsequently was assigned as a training Officer at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, CA, and promoted to Captain. After honorably and faithfully serving our country and his Corps on active duty for over seven years, he became President and CEO of Mortgage and Investment Development Co and General Partner of Larkabit Partnership, LP, until his retirement this year. TR enjoyed beautiful women; Jameson Irish Whiskey; Camel cigarettes; fast cars- first a 396/375 1966 Chevelle Super Sport, then an AC Cobra, and finally several Aston Martins; his Harley Davidson motorcycle; vintage submachine guns; and, the many animals to which he gave a home. His Marine service was always a justifiable source of pride to him and he remained an enthusiastic supporter of the Marine Corps his entire life. He was a member of the Marine Corps

League and the American Legion, and was instrumental in organizing both the Annual Marine Birthday Celebration in Suwanee and the local group of Marines known as the "Gunslingers". He loved interacting and sharing stories of the old days with fellow Marines, members and former members of the other services, and those who "get it." He will be deeply missed by his comrades-in-arms, but will continue to be an inspiration to them. "

Semper Fi, Marine!"

Jack Wilder

I'm a longtime friend of Jack Wilder who served in Bravo Co. 66-67 and I'm so sorry to inform you that Jack passed away in April 2010, from complications of diabetes and heart failure. I didn't know if anyone has informed you. Jack was a Marine through & through. He always had the highest admiration for the Corps and his tour of duty in Viet Nam. I was on the "other side" during my time in Vietnam when I served in the U.S. Army as a commander of APC running convoys further down south. Jack and I met up after I got out of service in 1972. We seemed to think alike about a lot of things like fishing and drinking. Jack was a good man and a good Marine. He always held out a helping hand to anyone who needed help and he never asked for anything in return. Please be proud for you have a Marine Tanker standing watch at the Gates of Heaven.

Sgt. Joseph Wayne Thrower
720th M.P.Bn. Vietnam 70-71
Email: dback@btconline.net
Home address : P.O.Box 927
Nahunta, GA 31553

Robert Lee "Bobby" Ruble

In response to our annual dues reminder post card, I received a hand written note and a funeral program for USMC VTA member Robert Lee "Bobby" Ruble.

He was born on March 16, 1933 in St Louis, MO. Bobby joined the USMC in January 1953, serving in Vietnam from 1966 - 67 and 1970 - 71. He retired from active duty after 23 years. He had been awarded the Navy Comm. w/ "V", the Combat Action Ribbon and retired as a Gunnery Sgt. Sadly, he passed away on April 22, 2010.

Florence Kilgore

I am sad to report that the wife of GySgt Wesley "Tiny" Kilgore, USMC (ret), Florence, passed away mid-June 2010 due to medical complications. Our condolences are with Tiny and his family.

P.S. If anyone would like to send a Mass Card to the family, Tiny's" address is:

15 Parkridge Road
Wayland, MA 01778
Phone: (508) 653-4792



Blessings in a Small Bottle.

BY MAJ WILLARD F. LOCHRIDGE IV, NYNM

Sometimes in combat our Marines are spared their lives in various and strange ways. In this personal account of his first task in combat, the author is saved by a wing and a prayer.

In early 1966 I arrived in South Vietnam as a brand new second lieutenant, just out of The Basic School at Quantico and the Track Vehicle School at Camp Pendleton.

As a young Marine officer I reported in to Headquarters, 3d Tank Battalion, 3rd Marine Division. At the time, 3d Tanks was located just south of Da Nang on Hill 34. I was not the only second lieutenant to arrive, there were five of us.

“Combat action” was what we young lieutenants most desired. We wanted to go where the action was, and where it was then was in a place called “The Horseshoe.” Named after a horseshoe-shaped lake, it was in an area south of Da Nang-south of China Beach and Marble Mountain along the coast of the South China Sea.

Battalion Orientation

Before any of the five of us would get our operational assignments our battalion commander decided to hold us back at battalion headquarters for 3 weeks in order to observe our individual capabilities. Besides instructing us about Viet Cong (VC) tactics, weapon systems, and particularly their use of booby traps and vehicular landmines, we spent time performing numerous headquarters

duties fit for junior officers. We spent several days visiting the battalion’s line companies in the field where again we were instructed about how they were using their M48A3 tanks against the enemy. We were told over and over again not to follow in old tracks-the VC planted large mines in them.

Combat Assignments

Finally, word came down about our assignments. Surprisingly, I was selected to go to the Horseshoe to take over 2d Platoon of Bravo Company. Within 24 hours I was spirited off in an old UH-34 helicopter that had large, vicious-looking black eyes and a shark-like jaw full of teeth painted on its nose. I supposed this was intended to intimidate the VC. The helicopter, armed with a single M60 machinegun, took off flying south over Highway 1. In about 20 minutes flying time we began a corkscrew descent into Kilo Company, 3d Battalion, 9th Marines’ base camp. Scrubby looking pine trees, bamboo stands, and tall grasses surrounded cleared fields of fire that rolled up to strings of barbed wire and bunkers. The helicopter landed just outside the wire. Several Marines ran out to help offload supplies. I asked one of them where I could find their company commanding officer (CO) and the tank platoon leader. He yelled, “Over there,” and motioned toward a sandbagged tent next to a shattered pagoda.

Halfway there I met the officer I was to

replace coming toward me. He clasped my hand and said I should hook up with the platoon sergeant for a briefing. He shook my hand again wishing me luck and ran off to catch the helicopter I had just come in on.

Inspection of the Platoon

Before meeting my new platoon I paid my respects to the infantry CO who was busily laying out patrol routes for the coming night. Afterwards, I met my platoon sergeant. We walked to each tank, inspection style, and met the crews. By now it was getting dark, so we settled down in an open fly tent for the night. As the new platoon commander, I was informed which tank would be assigned to me. I learned a little about each of my crewmen before we turned in for the night. My driver was a young private from Boston. The gunner, a lance corporal, was a full-blooded Cherokee from the western branch of the tribe. My loader, a corporal, who had been the tank commander until I showed up, was from Chicago.

Sleep finally came until the CO suddenly awakened me at 0430 hours. Apparently, one of his patrols was ambushed, pinned down, and surrounded by VC. They had taken several casualties and were running low on ammunition. Worse, medevac and supply helicopters could not get in due to intense ground fire. The CO wanted us to go out and break through to pull them out. We immediately saddled up three tanks-the

heavy section. We loaded ammunition and other supplies on top of each tank’s engine armor plate. A squad of infantry also joined us. They were evenly dispersed to ride on the second and third vehicles.

Out on Patrol

As the sun was just beginning to rise we moved out of the company position. Diesel smoke and sand flew as we headed south to rescue our fellow Marines. Spaced about 75 yards apart, we raced forward with my tank in the lead. Remembering not to follow in old tracks we came to a large field with a bamboo tree line on the far side. Glancing over the area I noted that the bamboo ended just short of an old pagoda. There was a small break, perhaps 20 feet wide with no old tracks running through it. Leading off, my tank went through without a hitch. As the second tank went through there was a tremendous explosion. A huge cloud of black smoke and flying debris hid the tank from sight. Then, the vehicle lurched forward out of the smoke and came to a dead stop. Marine infantrymen having been blown off the tank lay on the ground among boxes of ammunition and supplies. Smoke surged out of the turret along with the crew. The tank was on fire! My platoon sergeant, who was the tank commander, ran forward to the driver’s hatch and pulled the main fire extinguisher handle. All of the extinguishments went off in the driver’s compartment and not in the turret and engine compartments as they should

have. Gathering up fire extinguishers from the other tanks we finally put the fire out before the tank’s 90mm, 30 caliber, and 50 caliber ammunition cooked off. Fortunately, none of the infantrymen was seriously injured.

The Revelation

Placing the other two tanks into defensive positions I ran back to the crippled vehicle. It was charred and the under hull was ripped apart bow to stern. The diesel engine had been blown off of its mounts and thrust through the firewall into the turret. Both fuel cells were ruptured. It was a Code X-a total loss.

While I was sitting on a log next to a rather large crater made by the mine explosion; one of my men came up to me with the detonating device. The device was simply two wooden planks with copper wire zigzagged on opposing surfaces. The planks had been held apart by four wooden pegs. A battery had been attached to the ends of the copper wire. When the tank drove over the planks the pegs were crushed and the wires made contact with each other causing an electrical current to set off the mine. It was a simple instant pressure device. Holding the device in my hands, I looked at the crater. It was several feet in diameter and about four feet deep. I said aloud, “How come we didn’t blow up?” The slot between the bamboo trees and the pagoda was just wide enough for a tank to pass through with no leeway on either side. The answer came from

my driver. He said, “Sir, I know why we didn’t blow up.” I said, “How’s that, Joe?” He then explained how his girlfriend had sent him a bottle of holy water, and during the night before when we-the crew-were asleep he went around and poured a small amount on each of us. He then put some on himself and emptied the remainder over our tank. I was spellbound. A warm, tingling feeling filled my body. I said, “Joe that must be why . . . Heaven certainly knew this tank crew.”

Shortly thereafter, we were able to tow the destroyed tank forward a short distance to link up with the ambushed infantry and successfully pull them out to safety.

To this day whenever I think of this story it brings warmth and a respecting belief to me. I thank Joe and his girlfriend always, and most of all I thank God above for His blessings in a small bottle.

Maj Lochridge, New York Naval Militia (NYNM) and a former Marine, is the officer in charge of naval forces attached to the New York National Guard’s 27th Brigade. He commands small coastal vessels, crewed by Navy personnel, protecting the Indian Point nuclear power plant in Buchanan, NY.

This article first appeared in Marine Corps Gazette – Quantico in the June 2005 issue.

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Book Review

(Continued from page 8)

and medals. The regiment’s leader, a bird-colonel, was a WWII veteran with a drinking problem but who loved his men and wanted to be in the action with, “his boys.”

Every tale in the book is true and experienced by the author at one time or another during his tour, which gives the book its nonfiction-like credibility. The author has a gift for painting a scene with words like his description of a squad moving through the jungle:

“The fourteen-man snake moved in spasms. The point man would suddenly crouch, eyes and ears straining, and those behind him would bunch up, crouch, and wait to move again. They would get tired, let down their guard. Then, frightened by a strange sound, they would become alert once again. Their eyes flickered rapidly

back and forth as they tried to look in all directions at once. They carried Kool-Aid packages, Tang— anything to kill the chemical taste of the water in their plastic canteens. Soon the smears of purple and orange Kool-Aid on their lips combined with the fear in their eyes to make them look like children returning from a birthday party at which the hostess had shown horror films.”

At 592 pages the book may seem daunting to some but it doesn’t take long for the action and adventure to pull you in; I found it hard to put down. A Newsweek review written by a Vietnam news correspondent, Steve Kroft, stated it best: “For those who fought there and survived, and for the families, widows, and children of those who did not, this is their masterpiece.”

My takeaway? We were damned lucky to have been tankers. There it is. +

Remembering Jerry Holly

EXCERPT FROM "TRACKS"
 BY CLYDE HOCH
 REPRINTED WITH
 AUTHOR'S PERMISSION

Jerry Holly was the driver on the tanks I commanded for quite some time. He liked being a driver and stayed at that position. He was a true Marine. He did what he was told. He would tell you if he did not like it, but he would still do it. I tried to promote him to gunner several times, but he did not like that position, so I let him stay as the driver. He had certain guidelines he expected everyone to follow. If you followed them, he was your best friend. If not, he did not have much use for you. He felt everyone should respect their seniors. I liked Jerry and had a great amount of respect for him.



Jerry at the wheel

I was down to about a month to go before I rotated out of the Nam. Someone asked if I would like to ride to Battalion Headquarters. I said that I would go. It would be nice to see some of the guys in the rear. They told us to pick up a new guy who was going to our platoon. As was the custom, we seldom introduced ourselves. We just said, "Jump in". No one wore rank insignias in the field. It would have been like wearing a red light - SHOOT ME FIRST! As we were driving back, we started to talk. He said, not knowing who I was, that the guys in battalion headquarters told him to try to get on Sergeant Hoch's tank. "He is the best." I was very flattered and I did put him on my tank. His name, I later found out, was Todd Phillips.

Jerry and Todd stayed in contact for all those years after Vietnam. Jerry kept trying to find out where I was. Finally after almost thirty years I got a call from Gary Mefford, the

Communications Sergeant. Jerry had helped him find me. We had a reunion in Las Vegas. It was with the last tank crew I had in Vietnam, along with Gary. We had an old black and white photo of us in front of our tank in Vietnam. We did the same pose in Las Vegas. There was probably a two hundred pounds difference from the Nam photo to the Las Vegas photo.



Vietnam 1969 - Jerry, Todd, Ski, Clyde, Gary



Las Vegas 2007
 Top: Clyde Hoch, Richard Gerszewski (Ski)
 Bottom: Jerry Holly, Todd Phillips

Soon after I rotated out of the Nam, Jerry and my old tank crew, with a new Tank Commander, were sent on a stupid mission dreamed up by someone who wanted to be a hero. His tank (which was my old tank with a new Commander) was struck by an RPG. Portions of it hit a box of fifty caliber ammo sitting on the fender near the driver's hatch. Parts of the RPG hit Jerry in the neck, severely wounding him. He received a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart for this operation.

Soon after he left the Marine Corps, he worked for an auto manufacturing company. He later became a police officer for the Great Lakes Naval Yard. It was there that he was awarded two medals for bravery. One was for grabbing someone who was going to jump off of a building, I think. One was for going into a burning building to save two children. I saw Jerry in Las Vegas along with the rest of my last tank crew and the Communications Sergeant. It was the first time we were together in thirty years. It was a great feeling to be with them after all those years. I felt so safe and comfortable with them. It was like the old days when we watched out for each other. Some bonds just do not fade over time. Jerry told me that he felt I was a role model for him and he tried to follow my example throughout his life. I do not think I ever received a better compliment, especially from someone I respected as much as I respected him.

In Las Vegas he weighed approximately two hundred and forty muscular pounds. I saw him last in Washington D.C. where he weighed one hundred and twenty seven pounds. He

had terminal cancer. He asked me to be one of his pall bearers at his funeral. I was honored to do so. The last thing I said to him, with tears in my eyes, was, "Jerry, what can I say." He said, "Nothing, absolutely nothing."

I flew to Kenosha, Wisconsin to be his pall bearer. He died on November tenth, the Marine Corps' birthday. What a fitting day for him to go. I believe he planned it that way. I also had the privilege of meeting his wonderful wife and two wonderful children, who respected him very much also. Jerry was a Sergeant in the police force and retired a Lieutenant. It amazed me that after all those years he still called me Sarge. Jerry once said to me, "I wish you were there when I got wounded." I said, "I am very glad I wasn't". He said, "It would have been a totally different outcome had you been there."

Todd and I are still good friends. He now lives in Vermont and we communicate through the computer or on the phone often. Jerry always credited Todd with saving his life when he was seriously wounded after I went home. I am grateful that he did. Gary received the Navy Achievement Medal for Leadership and was promoted to Staff Sergeant. He went back to college after his service time and became a teacher. He later became the principal of the school and retired as one. He now has his own construction business. I always knew he would be successful!

Excerpt from *Tracks*, by Clyde Hoch, 162 pages, \$12.99 at Amazon or call Clyde at 215-679-9580.

Sandy

I had wanted to adopt a service dog ever since I was diagnosed with PTSD and other ailments. I live alone and figured if I had a dog to help me it would make my life better; I am here to tell you that is exactly what I found when I adopted Sandy.

Several weeks ago weeks ago, while attending a V.A. PTSD group session, one of our members told me where I could get a former service dog. Service dogs can be adopted by veterans who suffer from PTSD, Cancer, Diabetes Type 1 and 2, and vets with missing limbs that are in a wheel chair. I had to travel to Hot Springs, AR, where I could look over three dogs and see which would be the best fit between dog and owner. When I got there and I had a brief chat

with the Director, Dr. Bob, and we talked about what I needed in a dog.

I was shown three dogs one at a time and it was quickly obvious that the first dog, Sandy, and I hit it off right away; the other two showed no interest in me whatsoever.

Sandy has since helped lower my blood pressure and deal with my depression and anger. She hasn't picked up on my nightmares yet, but I think she will. She stays close to me at all times both day and night and, in fact, she sleeps with me. Sandy's love for me is priceless and mine for her. I now have her registered as a Service Dog.

Anyone interested in obtaining a service dog can contact the following:

Dr. Bob, Director of the DAVK9 Organization

Phone: 1-501-626-0237

E-mail:

davk9@hotspringsvillagevet.com

Semper Fi,
 Harvey Robbie Robinson
 409-385-6399



Attack on Cam Lo

AUGUST 26, 1966 GOLF & HOTEL 3/12

The battle for Cam Lo and its artillery batteries started about a week before the reported engagement. Hotel and Golf Batteries had positions on the south side of Route 9 at Cam Lo village. Looking back, it wasn't a great location because the village provided cover and concealment to any attacking NVA forces from the north and northwest. Additionally as 2/4 moved northwesterly, the guns were not always able to provide coverage due to the infantry unit moving beyond their maximum ranges.

To compensate, Hotel and Golf were each given a 155 towed howitzer, helping to achieve better artillery coverage for 2/4. A platoon of tanks with their 90mm rounds were also used as artillery to supplement the 105's.

Approximately the 17th of August Golf and Hotel batteries moved forward, heading west along Route 9. We set up on a small ridgeline that ran from the northeast to southwest; Route 9 was carved through the position. Golf was the easterly battery; It's 155 howitzer parapet dug into the ridge. Sergeant Troester, who was section chief of gun 4 was also the 155 crew chief. Guns 3 through 6 also had parapets carved into the ridge; we started building the ammo bunkers to our rear.

We had tangle foot and a triple row of concertina wire in front of our guns; a company of grunts supplemented our lines from Golf's 155 howitzer, running to the southwest connecting into the lines at Hotel Battery's location. There were 2 tanks and a tank retriever inside the lines to our left rear.

Headquarters Battery joined us on August 25th, bringing mess and living quarter tents; the site became congested with tents. Our Motor T section was used

on the lines to help coverage; Marines on watch for Golf and I think Hotel, were manning lines to their battery fronts as well as the rear lines. I'm sure we had LP's out front but we didn't know where. We had long days of shooting, building ammo bunkers, and nights shooting H and I's along with the normal fire missions. As usual it was exhausting work for the gun crews.

The batteries transferred one Marine from each 105 to the 155 howitzers to create another two crews. I don't know if this is the right place for this but in August of 1966, Marines along Route 9 and north of it were pretty gung-ho. There was no antiwar sentiments that I recall. Gun 4 had Corporal Lonergan, Lance Corporal Jones, our driver, JJ Casadena, Private Botts, myself, "Stump," and I think Butler. JJ and Butler were new to Nam, Jonesy was a good guy from Alabama. Lonergan was from southern Illinois and was going home in another month. I had a small reel to reel tape player that I would use to make tapes, sending them home and to friends "from the world." In turn, they would send me tapes of songs. It was at this location I got a tape with 2 very weird songs that made everyone think the world was going nuts. Those 2 songs, "They're coming to take me away Ha Ha" and "Yellow Submarine" by the Beatles. So during work parties I always had 1 of those 2 songs playing.

We had a couple of gooks from the village that would come into our position and give haircuts. This would prove fatal to them on the 26th. On the 25th both 155's moved forward approximately two clicks west to provide better coverage on the reverse slopes of the Razorback. The day of the 25th was like most, building ammo bunkers, shooting and filling sandbags.

The mess tents were set up; Alpha 1-4 came into our position to take over perimeter security. This evening bought mail call and hot chow, about as good as it gets in the field with the exception of "beer call." As I stood in line for chow with Rhorbach, I looked back; there was Lynwood Inman. Lyn had dated a girl that was friends with a girl I had dated in high school. I think I screamed out his name; we immediately got together and talked about "the world." I had received six newspapers from home that day and I gave him three of them, keeping three so we could switch the next day.

That night Gun 4 shot H&I fire. I took gun watch from 1am until 3am; after finishing my watch, I got my replacement up making sure he was awake. I had been thinking a long time had passed since I "aired" out my feet. Arriving at my tent, I went to my rack, took off my pants and boots; this was something I would never do again at night in the Nam. It seemed like I had just laid down when all of a sudden explosions went off behind our tent. I could see a red star cluster and then a large explosion sent the tank retriever into a ball of flames. It seemed all hell had broken loose in a matter of seconds...

The crews for Guns 3 and 4 were sharing a tent; after the explosions, it was chaotic getting out. Everyone was trying to get through the entrance at once; as both crews ran for the guns, we realized nobody had grabbed their M-14's; I turned around and ran towards our tent. As I made my way back, there now seemed to be rifle fire everywhere. I knew they were inside the wire; arriving at our tent, I grabbed all the rifles, all the web gear I could find, and ran out of the tent towards Gun 4. I wasn't five feet out the door when an automatic

weapon started firing at me; I hit the deck and tried to cover my head with rifles. No shit, I was scared...

It seemed like 5 minutes passed but I know it was more like 30 seconds when suddenly, there was an explosion where the rifle fire was coming from. I jumped up and ran to the gun; Jonesy was a-gunning, Lonergan was gunning, JJ and Botts were loading. I moved to the parapet wall, covering our front.

Rifles were given out to everyone; as I remember, Jonesy and Lonergan's were hanging on the shields of the 105. I started seeing green tracers coming from below our gun being fired towards our front. I started firing back, trying to stop anything from coming our way. As the battle progressed the CO stopped at our gun, asking what I was shooting at. Almost immediately a green tracer passed through our position, I think he said to continue and cover our front.

We had "Puff" come on station; he started firing at the Gook positions. All those red lines from the air to ground, then the buzz of bullets impacting. Everything seemed like slow motion, but it wasn't. We kept firing our 105 until we were out of ammo; as daylight arrived, the jets came in and started bombing runs to our rear. They continued all the way up, into the hills to the southwest where the gooks were trying to escape.

The enemy small arms fire started dying out; we began carrying ammunition for the gun from the ammo dump. I know I had a rifle over one shoulder and an 105 round over the other. H-34's started bringing in ammo for the grunts and taking our wounded out; the sun had risen when the last jet dumped his load on the gooks, made a pass over us, wagging his wings. Everyone started policing ammo tubes, getting ready for another attack, trying to make sense of the mess around us.

The mess tents were also "home" to the cooks; they were blown and burned. I think 3 cooks or mess duty Marines died there. Corporal Clark from Golf Battery had been on mess duty and was never the same again. He was a good Marine but the war that night had taken a heavy toll on him. I can't recall how many wounded

came from those tents but I believe Clark was the only one not wounded or killed.

The Gooks lay dead in weird positions; I recall one NVA soldier was running, then suddenly his midsection was missing and his chest and head lay about 10 feet away from his legs; bullets had hit the



explosives on his hips, litterly blowing him in two. Everyone started dragging dead NVA to an area where a bulldozer was digging a mass grave; we started throwing them in. The final count was 80 inside our lines; Lord knows how many were outside.

All the North Vietnamese had tied strings to their pressure points; if they were shot and still capable, the Gooks would stop, tighten the string to control bleeding, and continue on. Were they taking opium? Who knows but usually a rifle wound would take anyone to the ground. Maybe the weirdest I saw was an NVA soldier who had been shot through the head; he had stopped to bandage his wound when someone had finalized his days on earth with a few more rounds to his body.

The Golf Battery Marines on watch that night had more than eleven dead North Vietnamese in front of their fighting hole, and more behind and in the hole with them. I know PFC Blain was

with Lance Corporal Kowalyk; it may have been Bell or McRae, but all three were wounded, Kowalyk the worst, but he had stopped the NVA from entering the back of their hole killing one as he tried to get to the other Marines. It was interesting because over the last few nights, Blain,

and others in that position had seen and heard movement to their front. They had tossed grenades, but found nothing in the morning. That night the new Lieutenant had told the holes "if you throw a grenade you'd better have a body out there in the morning." I recall Blain yelling "there's a gook, there's a gook, you want a body I've got bodies."

An eight year old boy had been induced to attack with these NVA soldiers; they gave him a wooden rifle with a selector. He died charging across our compound as did the "barbers."

Golf Battery had 7 wounded: Blain, Kowalyk, Hite, Mcrae, Bell, Schlacter, and Lieutenant Westfall. I believe Kowalyk was awarded the Navy Cross. It was a long time before he recovered from his wounds; I also believe Lieutenant Westfall received the Bronze Star for his actions.

My buddy Inman from A-1/4 received the Silver Star or Navy Cross, a Purple

(Continued on page 42)



DEFENDING AMERICA

DAVID H. HACKWORTH

MARCH 14, 1995

IT'S SUCH A DEAL, I'LL TAKE TWO CORPS FULL

Quantico, VA -- "Battlefields seldom change," I thought as I walked the perimeter of the Marine basic course and observed the deep foxholes, outposts, barbed wire, fields of fire, wet, alert young warriors, ankle-deep mud and always, the smell of gunpowder.

Here, John Glenn, Chuck Robb, and my cousin, former Navy Secretary Jim Webb, learned the basics of leading men and winning in battle, as did California's Governor Pete Wilson and tens of thousands of other patriots who joined up to serve with America's finest. None of the Vietnam-era presidential hopefuls passed through this crucible; they all dodged the draft to serve a high priority -- themselves.

At Quantico, Marines learn not just to kill, but to lead, to think and to absorb standards that stick with them for life. Character is forged in an environment where perfection is not good enough, where duty, honor and country are forever grafted onto their belief systems. That's why so many Marines lead the way in almost every pursuit in this land.

There's little difference between the current crop of Marines and the "Devil Dogs" I first met as a ten-year-old shoeshine boy in 1940. Then, too, they were sharp, salty and proud -- and they liked to keep their mahogany shoes glistening, which was good for business. They were not in the Corps because it was a job. They had joined up because for

them, it was a near-religion, a compelling call to serve their country.

As I watched the kids who still have that calling dig in, I thought, "Nothing has changed since before Pearl Harbor." The faces are still young, the minds eager, the bodies rock hard and the equipment clean and serviceable, though worn and old...very old.

The big difference between Marines and the Army, Air Force and Navy, is the Corps runs on the smell of an old oily rag. They're the poor cousins of the other, richer services. Col. James T. Conway's total annual budget for putting almost 3,000 officers through basic school is a lean \$967,031 per year. The Army's "kiddieland" at Fort Bragg, built to babysit serving soldiers' offspring (71% of the family-oriented U.S. Army is married), costs five times as much; a month's per diem (hotel and food) for 300 USAF fighter jocks in Italy -- who are too princely to sleep on cots in tents as Marines do -- is about \$1 million a month; the cost for a headquarters in Naples to deal with ex-Yugoslavia is \$8 million a year, and boy, do the staff weenies there live high on the hog.

The Corps gets only six percent of the defense budget. This pays for 12 percent of the active forces, 23 percent of the active divisions, 13 percent of the fighter/attack aircraft and 14 percent of the total reserve force.

It doesn't take a whiz kid to figure out

this is one hell of a lot of bang for the defense buck. Marines don't waste defense dollars. They're into lean meat, not blubber. Quality of life to leathernecks isn't pampering and frills, but a resupply of ammo on the high ground.

Defense Secretary William J. Perry knows his budget will be halved by the year 2000, leaving us with a broken defense machine. The Pentagon has got to trim now to be able to fight later.

Perry should find out how the Corps can do so much with so little, and ask: Why do Marine pilots sleep in tents next to their planes while Air Force pilots live downtown in plush hotels? Why does the Army have 200 major generals for only ten divisions? Why do Marine sergeants serve as navigators aboard Marine C-130 aircraft while majors do the same job in the Air Force? Why does the Corps have one officer to every nine Marines when the Air Force ratio is 1 to 4, the Army 1 to 5 and the Navy 1 to 6? Why does the Pentagon have more people now for a force of only 1.6 million than it had in 1945, when the force was 13 million?

The Corps is one hell of a defense bargain. Pound for pound, in these days when cost-effectiveness is so critical, the Corps provides by far the best value at the best price. +

A REAL HERO

BY GEORGE EVERETT "BUD" DAY

I got shot down over N Vietnam in 1967, a Sqn. Commander. After I returned in 1973...I published 2 books that dealt a lot with "real torture" in Hanoi. Our make-believe President is branding our country as a bunch of torturers when he has no idea what torture is.

As for me, I was put through a mock execution because I would not respond... pistol whipped on the head....same event.. Couple of days later... hung by my feet all day. I escaped and a couple of weeks later, I got shot and recaptured. Being shot was OK...what happened afterwards was not.

They marched me to Vinh...put me in the rope trick, trick...almost pulled my arms out of the sockets. Beat me on the head with a little wooden rod until my eyes were swelled shut, and my unshot, unbroken hand a pulp.

Next day they hung me by the arms... rebroke my right wrist...wiped out the nerves in my arms that control the hands....rolled my fingers up into a ball. Only left the slightest movement of my left forefinger. So I started answering with some incredible lies.

Sent me to Hanoi strapped to a barrel of gas in the back of a truck.

Hanoi...on my knees....rope trick again. Beaten by a big fool.

Into leg irons on a bed in Heartbreak Hotel.

Much kneeling--hands up at Zoo.

Really bad beating for refusing to

condemn Lyndon Johnson.

Several more kneeling events. I could see my knee bone thru the kneeling holes.

There was an escape from the annex to the Zoo. I was the Senior Officer of a large building because of escape...they started a mass torture of all Commanders.

I think it was July 7, 1969...they started beating me with a car fan belt. In the first 2 days I took over 300 strokes...then stopped counting because I never thought I would live thru it.

They continued day-night torture to get me to confess to a non-existent part in the escape. This went on for at least 3 days. On my knees... fan belting...cut open my scrotum with fan belt strokes. Opened up both knee holes again. My fanny looked like hamburger...I could not lie on my back.

They tortured me into admitting that I was in on the escape...and that my 2 room-mates knew about it.

The next day I denied the lie.

They commenced torturing me again with 3-6- or 9 strokes of the fan belt every day from about July 11 or 12th...to 14 October 1969. I continued to refuse to lie about my roommates again..

Now, the point of this is that our make-believe President has declared to the world that we (U.S.) are a bunch of torturers...Thus it will be OK to torture us next time when they catch us...because that is what the U.S. does.

Our make-believe President is a know-nothing fool who thinks that pouring a little water on some one's face, or hanging a pair of woman's pants over an Arab's head is TORTURE.. He is a meathead.

I just talked to Medal of Honor holder Leo Thorsness, who was also in my Squadron, in jail...as was John McCain... and we agree that McCain does not speak for the POW group when he claims that Al Gharib was torture....or that "water boarding" is torture.

Our President and those fools around him who keep bad mouthing our great country are a disgrace to the United States. Please pass this info on to Sean Hannity. He is free to use it to point out the stupidity of the claims that water boarding...which has no after effect....is torture. If it got the Arab to cough up the story about how he planned the attack on the twin towers in NYC ... hurrah for the guy who poured the water.

Editor's Note: George Everett "Bud" Day (born February 24, 1925) is a retired U.S. Air Force Colonel and Command Pilot who served during the Vietnam War. He is often cited as being the most decorated U.S. service member since General Douglas MacArthur, having received some seventy decorations, a majority for actions in combat. Day is a recipient of the Medal of Honor. +



UNBELIEVABLE HUE CITY DIORAMA

BY STEVEN LUESKI

THIS DIORAMA IS DEDICATED TO THE 1/5 MARINES WHO FOUGHT THE BLOODY BATTLE FOR THE "CITADEL AT HUE", NORTH OF THE PERFUME RIVER IN VIETNAM DURING THE NVA TET OFFENSIVE OF 1968. SPECIAL THANKS TO NICK WARR, AUTHOR OF "PHASE LINE GREEN", WHO GRACIOUSLY GAVE OF HIS PERSONAL TIME AND MATERIAL INFORMATION TO HELP ME CORRECTLY DEPICT THESE EVENTS.

The Dong Ba Tower overlooked Phase Line Green, (Mai Thuc Loan Street), the Marines starting point within the walled city, and proved to be a formidable challenge to the Marines tasked with clearing the NVA from the Ancient Imperial City. It was bitter

house to house fighting in misty rain during most of the fighting. Until the tower was taken and held many Marines would be lost in battle for Phase Line Green and beyond.

This diorama depicts actual events which took place during the battle for the Ancient Imperial City of Hue. The Marines were outnumbered at half normal strength and without proper air and artillery support for days, against an enemy already dug in and waiting. It was against all odds, but the 1/5 Marines prevailed and on 25 Feb 1968 the Ancient Imperial City of Hue was declared secured and the Marines were pulled out the following day. That next day was just another

day they had to spend in the "Nam".

Nick signed my copy of "Phase Line Green" inscribing; "May we know Peace and Healing for America, for our Veterans and for Vietnam. Semper Fidelis". When you see a Nam Vet, thank them for their duty to Country, then shake their hand. Many gave all!

Steven Zuleski
1250 N. Highway PMB 262
Colville, WA 99114

Editor's Note: Go to Steve's website and see this wonderful exhibit in color from many different angles. You won't believe it!

<http://www.track-link.net/gallery/7245>



Reunion after 40 Years

BY JIM SAUSOMAN

The best place to start is at the beginning and the beginning would be 40 years plus, Northwest of DaNang, Vietnam. I was with 2nd Platoon, "A" Company, 1st Tanks. We were attached to 3rd Tanks in support of the 3rd Marines. Our platoon commander was Lt. Chandler and the platoon Sgt. was Gunny Wright; the platoon was sent to different positions in support of the grunts. We had a couple of tanks at the Hai Vang pass and at Namu Bridge. In February of 1966 we received our new platoon leader, Lt Robert E. T. Mattingly. It was during his tour as platoon leader that I was called in from the field to be his driver and the platoon "goffer" in the platoon area. I became real close to Lt Mattingly during his tour as our platoon leader. It was during his tour that he came into the possession of a Thompson sub-



Jim Sausoman checks out the Thompson

machine gun. He was going on R & R and gave me the "Chicago Typewriter" to watch over it.

Shortly after he went on R&R, the Company Gunny and

the Top came out and asked me if I had a Thompson in my possession. I told them yes that I was keeping it for Lt Mattingly until he returned from R&R. Well a lowly L/Cpl doesn't stand a chance against the Top and the Gunny and they said it wasn't my TO weapon; they took it from me. These two rear area M. F-ers kept the weapon for themselves and the LT never saw it again. I explained it all to him when he got back and he said it was alright.

I kept in touch with Lt Mattingly off and on when one day I saw him at the platoon area just before he was getting transferred; it was July of 1966. He stated that he would be taking over Civil Affairs and asked if I would be interested in coming along. I jumped at the chance and he got me transferred to Civil Affairs, 3rd Tank Bn. I believe we were at Hill 34 at the time. My duties were to drive truck and jeep for Lt Mattingly, Gunny Anderson, SSgt Biedrzycki and Sgt Lambert plus our two interpreters Lac and Phuc. I was with Lt. Mattingly until he was being transferred to Division Civil Affairs; he was taking over the District. At the same time we got our new officer, Lt Willard "Lurch" Lochridge.

Lt Mattingly asked me if I wanted to transfer to Division along with him and I agreed to go with him. I had already extended my tour of duty 3 months and was ready for another 6 month extension. We went to see the General and I requested the transfer. Unfortunately I was turned down by the general so I decided to not extend after all. I returned back to The World in December 1966.

I didn't see Lt Mattingly until 1967 when he came to Camp Pendleton and looked me up. I was driving a 1966 GTO which I loaned him for a date he was going out on. He was stationed in San Diego at the time and after the car loan, it was the last contact I had with him other than a couple of letters.

I was sent back to Vietnam in February 1968 when Bravo Company, 5th Tanks mounted out. Four months later I was due to be released from active duty along with Sgt Hearn and Joe Landaker; we rotated back to El Toro and were released from active duty. I came home and got married in 1969. During that time I got a couple of letters from now "Major" Mattingly. We even saw him on a TV game show. He was then transferred to Embassy duty in Damascus. I had sent him a wedding invitation when I was getting married and he sent a gift from there. Later

I would receive a wedding invitation from him. After that I lost all contact and hadn't seen him since 1967. Many times I had wondered what he was doing and would try to find out. I had also lost contact with Lt Lochridge.

The miracle of the computer gave me the ability to try and locate people. I came up with several "Mattinglys" but never

the right one. Then in 2005 I dug out all my old collection and came across the wedding invitation he had sent me in 1970. I noticed that it said the reception would be held at his brother-in-law's place; his name was Dieter Alber. That was my lead – how many Dieter Albers could there be? I entered his name and bingo - I got his address and phone number. From my home in

Montana, I called the number in Maryland. A woman answered the phone; I explained I was looking for a Robert Eugene Templeton Mattingly and did she know him? She said yes and I was thrilled that I found him. The next afternoon I got a call from Bob Mattingly and the rest is history. I was already planning a trip to Quantico to see a good friend, Major Hutchison, so I called Bob and told him I was coming his way. I landed in Washington in April 2005 and Bob picked me up at the airport. We had aged a little but I still remembered him as if it was still 1967. Since that time I have been in close contact with him and "Lurch" Lochridge on a weekly and daily basis through e-mail.

Jim Sausoman, Sgt.

2nd Platoon A Co. 1st Tanks 1964-65-66

H & S Co, 3rd Tanks 1966

Hqts Platoon B Co. 5th Tanks 1968



Jim Sausoman and Bob Mattingly 40 years later.

Can anyone ID this crew?



This photo was sent in by a grunt that was at C2 (below the Washout). He was wondering if we can ID the crew? The name on the gun tube is "Never Happen".

Jim Coan Gets An Answer

BY LOUIS RYLE

I am responding to a request from a Sponson Box article titled, Tanks on the DMZ, by Jim Coan.

My name is Louis Ryle. I was the driver of Tank B-25, 2nd Platoon Bravo Co, 3rd Tanks during a major attack on Con Thien. My crew at the time was made up of Gunny Sgt Harold Tatum, Gary "Whitey" Young, loader, and James Wilson was the gunner. I had previously been on B-24 with Gunny Eckler and survived the Market Place Massacre on July 2, 1967.

I am responding to many requests from tankers to tell my story of what happen on September 10, 1967. We were on Operation Kingfisher near the Nui Ho Khe area about two clicks west of C-2; we were supporting 3/26. The purpose of the op was to stop NVA infiltration from across the DMZ.

I was the driver of B-25, the lead tank. My TC ordered me to drive up the hill towards a rice paddy. I suddenly saw what looked like hundreds of NVA soldiers running towards our tank. We immediately stopped and opened fire. The last words I would hear from Gunny Tatum was, "Pull forward and stop! Commence firing! Fire! Fire! Fire!"

We fired 5 or 6 rounds 90mm and then an explosion occurred within our tank— we had been hit by an RPG! The blast blew my helmet off and knocked me down— I couldn't hear a thing! I felt heat and a stinging pain on my back. I yelled for help. I yelled for Gunny and no one answered. Smoke was coming out of the tank so I got out. I got up on the turret and saw that Tatum and Whitey were badly burned. I yelled for help. A few Marines climbed up on the tank and helped me pull Gunny Tatum and Whitey out. I then reached down to pull Wilson out— he was already dead. After

pulling him out we had to drop him off the side of the tank. A couple Marines helped me throw the exploding ammo off the tank. I told everyone to get off the tank so I could move it before it blew up and killed us all. I got in the driver's seat and backed the tank down close to where B-23 was sitting. To this day, I pray that I didn't back over any Marines during the chaos.

Then I saw B-23 get hit by an RPG and explode. It was on fire. I saw all the crew get out. I left B-25 running and grabbed my .45 and grease gun and jumped out. I started shooting at the enemy between the two tanks with the grease gun until I ran out of ammunition. I ran along with the other tankers from B-23 to where Gunny Tatum and Whitey Young had been laid out on ponchos and took cover near them.

I stayed with Tatum and Young throughout the night. They were lying on ponchos and were badly burned. Their skin was falling off. They had big bubbles and blisters from the Willy Peter rounds that went off when the RPG hit the tank. I stayed with them all night, I couldn't leave their side. We could not get any medevacs to come in that night; they were both in horrific pain. They were very brave. I tried to comfort them and tell them that it will be all right. Another Marine was with us and told them he would take care of them and look after us. Their moans quieted down through the night and I know I was going to lose them.

At day break the medevacs came in and removed the injured. B-25 was emitting a large plume of black smoke 200 feet straight up—almost like a marker. And yet the tank was still idling. Reinforcements started to arrive and we started taking rocket and artillery fire again. An officer yelled, "Get that tank out of here!". I ran to the tank along with some other Marines

and looked in the driver's compartment . . . it looked okay. I then looked inside the turret. It had been totally burned out. I jumped into the driver's seat and drove up to the roadway and then straight to Camp Carroll— I was scared and traumatized. I had lost my entire crew and wanted to get the hell out of there. I drove through several check points without stopping as I raced to Camp Carroll. I am sure I broke every torsion bar on tank in my mad dash.

I have been asked by many of my tanker buddies to tell my story of what happened that day. This event was very tragic and one I will never forget. I apologize for not responding sooner. I spent 1 year and 27 days in Vietnam. It has been very hard for me to write this letter and relive those events again.

I appreciate all of my tanker buddies for keeping in touch with me throughout the years and the Vietnam Tankers Association for making this possible. To all my buddies that are still with us today, I AM HONORED TO HAVE SERVED WITH YOU and will never forget the time that we shared together.

Semper Fi, Marines.

Louis F. Ryle

1966 - 1968 Vietnam

2nd Platoon, Bravo Co, 3rd Tanks

Editor's Note: During this action, 3/26 took 40% casualties but was credited with stopping a large ground attack that was prepared to assault Con Thien. The battalion had walked onto the home turf of the 812th NVA Regiment. You can read more about the op in 3 different books: Jim Coan's "Con Thien- The Hill of Angels", or Eric Hammel's book, "Ambush Valley" and Dick Camp's book, "Lima 6".

Welcome home Louis. This is what the VTA is all about!

TANKS IN OPERATION LIBERTY JUNE 1966

BY GENE WHITEHEAD

Operation Liberty (7-15 June 1966) found my section of tanks from 3rd Plt, A Co, 3rd Tk Bn (A-34 & A-35) attached to the 9th Marines, but the day in question was 18 June 1966. We were involved in a search and destroy operation several clicks west of Hill 55 in 9th Marines' area of operation. We had been experiencing intermittent VC contact and taking a lot of sniper fire since crossing Liberty Bridge many days before, but this day was a smorgasbord of action and incident. I was by this time the gunner on A-34 (in my opinion) the most sought after position on a tank crew (if there is one). Our tank crew consisted of SSgt. Turby Thomas (TC), LCpl Gene Whitehead (gunner), PFC Holmes (Driver) and Sgt Kulick (Maintenance man/loader). The grunts were taking some casualties from mines and a well trained group of VC snipers and we had two corpsman and a few grunts that were the object of their keen marksmanship skills which was not a coincidence. These guys were deliberately targeting our on sight medical life support system. Nothing hits home and pisses off a Marine than to know that the enemy is targeting his corpsman.



SSgt. Thomas and Gene Whitehead

After we medevaced the wounded as a result of these VC snipers we got the word to move out. It was not long when we found ourselves directly on top of (25 to 30 meters) a large VC unit. I was searching and traversing the turret in order to find a clear target to unload a canister round when SSgt Thomas (Turby) yelled, "Gooks! Twelve o'clock!" I swung the turret around and all I could see were VC running frantically around firing weapons. Without an order to fire, the main gun recoiled and approx 1300 30 Cal. pellets were on their way to the VC location. Without waiting and while Truby (SSgt Thomas) was firing the copula mounted 50 cal. machine gun at the same time giving his fire commands to me and telling the loader to insert another canister. By this time I began to distinguish more clear VC targets. These guys were well prepared, well armed and it was obvious that we had driven directly into an ambush.

There were so many close VC that their movement was not hard to detect. I felt that I couldn't fire fast enough to cover the threat. I heard SSgt McCormick (Jerry) over the radio yelling several times

"Scratch my back, the gooks all over me!" As I was swung the turret in his direction which was to our right front I could clearly see a few gooks take a burst from Jerry's cupola-mounted .50 Cal. machine gun. It downed one VC and took off the left arm of another gook turning him around and put him to the ground, but to my amazement and disbelief

this guy gets up and starts running down a trench with my tracers pouring into his knap sack. As A-35 came into my view I could see why Jerry's call's were filled with total anxiety, there were several VC attempting to lay charges on top of his tank. Without thinking a command I sprayed A-35 with 4 to 5 healthy burst of coax (30 Cal.) machine gun. About this time I am thinking this is why I came to Vietnam, this is what it is all about. I felt we had the upper hand in this fire fight that was supposed to be an ambush, and the source of our demise. Being young and dumb, I was thinking one dimensional and blindly. We were barely staying afloat and Jerry and Trudy knew it.

As I was directing my attention back to my sector of responsibility I saw some VC attempting to fire an RPG at us and Trudy must have seen the same picture because by the time he said "RPG" I had let the canister round go and when the smoke cleared I was already focusing back on the same area with the infinitive sight pressing the red triggers and the gunners controls sweeping the VC trench line with 30 cal.. At some point in time I began to think there are more of these guys than we can kill, "where the hell are the grunts?"

I was hearing explosions on and near our tank, then Jerry (TC A-35) came over the radio and said, "Hey, let's get the hell out of here. There are too many gooks here!" I began to wonder if there was something going on that I didn't comprehend. I said to Turby, "We got them were we want them (that was a very stupid observation on my part) we can't leave now!" Jerry was adamant about leaving, and about this time Trudy calls back to 9th Marines Company CO to asking where they were, and that we need their support. It turns

out that the grunts had stop again due to more Marine's getting wounded and in the confusion had forgot to inform their tank section to stop. We were two tanks several hundred meters ahead of the grunts and being surrounded by at least a company size VC unit.

Sgt Kulick, not being an experienced loader was doing a great job keeping the 30 Cal. firing and the main gun fed with rounds. I can remember asking for another canister and he throw in a WP, but anything down range at this point severed the purpose. About this Time I heard what could only be described as someone hitting the side of the turret with a sledge hammer. There was no explosion however. I thought that was awful strange at that time. I continued to put canister and 30 cal. along the tree line and trenches seeing many VC taking hits, but continuing to fire back at us until they received additional bursts of 50 and 30 Cal.



Sgt. Kulick and maintenance man with dud mortar in foreground

Jerry called again overly excited to Trudy and insisted that we pull back and call in for supporting fire, and shortly thereafter the grunt Actual called and said he has fast movers coming in with Nape and 500 pounders so, we need to exit the area. As we backed out I continued to lay down covering fire for Jerry because his tank was well forward of ours, and the gooks were trying to out flank him on his left.

We moved no more than 50 yards back when the entire front of our vision was engulfed in flames of red and black smoke. The shock of 500 pound bombs

that close shook the vehicle. After several passes by our air support dropping napalm and bombs we stop receiving fire and the only sound that was heard was that of things burning. You could smell the horrible stench of burning flesh in the air. By this time the grunts had made it to our position.

A short while later the order to move out was given and we moved through the area that had previously being occupied by the VC Company. We drove over the trenches and set up a 360 on the other side. After assessment of what had just happen the gravity of the event started to set in and I became suddenly physically and mentally exhausted. There were many VC dead and only two wounded VC were found, one being a young woman. She was brought to my tank along with another VC man and they both had their arms tied behind their backs. I was asked to watch them until a chopper that was in coming could pick them up. The grunts picked them up and sat them on the back of my tank. Turby was checking out A-34 for hits and discovered an unexploded anti-tank round on our left front finder. That was the sledge hammer sound I had heard during the ambush.

My attention focused back on the two VC that were occupying the back of my tank. I noticed the woman staring at me with hatred in her eyes that I have never seen before or since. The man was lying down by this time and crying from the pain of his wounds, but as I looked back at the VC female I noticed that she was wounded worst than him, but she was not making a sound. She had bad burns and deep shrapnel holes in several places. I asked her with a gesture of my canteen if she wanted some water, but she just continued to starred defiantly at me and I knew if she had the opportunity and the resources she would cut my throat, or worst.

The chopper came in and the POW's were taken off my hands. We all decided to quickly put down some C-rats. As we were sitting together (very stupid thing to do) on a rice paddy dike eating chow and talking about the morning contact, snipers opened up on us along with bursts from automatic weapons fire. Another corpsman was hit. Where they came from was a mystery. Sgt Kulick and I both just made a mad dash for A-34 as round kicked up around us. I still remember to this day that I leap from the ground on a dead run to the fenders and into the turret without using the tank to pull myself up. We were both in the tank and Sgt Kulick said, "I'm hit!" His eyes were as big as oranges and he was holding his left arm. I quickly investigated his wound, but what I found was a hole in his left shirt sleeve and a red streak mark on his arm. After he realized this we both laughed with a bit of anxiety.

(A few months later I was told that Sgt Kulick experienced a mental breakdown and started shooting at our own grunts with a 50 Cal machine gun thinking they were NVA. He was sent back to the states for treatment. I sure hope he has found the help he needed. He was a friend and a good man. It's a wonder that more of us haven't lost grip! I know I have more than my share of anxiety and other facets of relate physiological problems related to my time spent in VN.)

Turby and Holmes finally made it to the tank and we began to attempt to fine the source of the incoming fire. A few rounds of strategically placed 90mm HE T-91 in a few bunkers silenced most of the automatic weapons fire, but the sniper fire continued. A while later we made a push to renew contact with the remaining VC, but all we got in the next couple of hours was incoming mortars and more sniper fire. A few more Marines were wounded and we all were scared, but also fluctuated and getting more pissed off.

By late afternoon and with precisely laid arty fire and air strikes called in by the grunt CO we managed to finally weep through this village which lay

in our path and to the banks of a river next to it. The only thing left alive in that village was a couple of pigs and a wounded old woman. I heard Turby say over the intercom, "Where the Hell did the gooks go, they have just disappeared!" We set up a 360 and A-34's sector of responsibility was overlooking the river. As I got out of my tank a grunt Sgt came over and asked if he could borrow my 45 Cal. pistol. I thought he was going to check out a hole, without hesitating I gave it to him already loaded. He just did seem very happy. Then he turned and walked down a trail a short distance. I heard one shot and within a minute he came back with my pistol and said, "That old bitch won't feed any more gooks!" I am still dumb-founded, shocked and stunned to this day, not only that he shot that old woman but he used my pistol. Strangely enough at that time I knew why he did it, anger had controlled his actions, and he wasn't thinking clearly at the time. The marines even shot the pigs. Over the next few days we were ordered to blow any boats to hell coming down the river. Our tank accounted for destroying nine boats and no telling how many people?

We lost three Corpsman that day and several Marines either killed or wounded. The enemy took us on and lost a lot of people in the process. How they could just disappear, melt away is a credit to them. If we could have cornered them that day more death would have been evident on both sides.

I was told after returning from Operation Liberty that when we pulled back from the ambush site and after the air strikes ended, an entire squad of VC with RPGs was found dead from napalm trying to out flank A-34 my tank, so in hindsight SSgt. Jerry McCormick's concerns and anxiety were warranted, and he deserves full credit for not only saving his tank crew that day but mine too! ✚

Two ideas on fighting positions



Fighting position we inherited at C2



Same position after the CB's got done with it!

Tom F

Ontos at Con Thien and Khe Sanh

BY EDWIN L. "TIM" CRAFT

I graduated from High School in 1966, and all of my course studies had been academic. My main interests besides girls were Marching Band and Debate. Having won the Kansas State Oratorical championship in 1964 with a speech topic "Optimism Formula For Freedom", my intentions were to become a lawyer. I was aware of the Viet Nam war, especially when it began to heat up in 1965. Little did I know that before the next year was over that I would take a journey straight into the pits of hell and see the heaviest fighting our country has ever experienced.

After high school, I enrolled in junior college. I paid my own way by also working at night part time for the H. D. Lee Company that made clothing. When I quit college to join the Marines my professors and especially the office tried to get me to reconsider by saying, "But your grades are well above average. You will never have to go!" My reply, and my reason for joining, was simply, "Those guys fighting and dying over there are no more deserving to be there than me, and I can't feel right letting them do something I would not."

My goal was never to be heroic or gallant. That was the last thing on my mind. After joining, I was barely in the states nine months when I was sent to Nam. En route, we landed on Wake Island. It looked like a grain of sand in the middle of the ocean when our commercial flight United 747 Jet pitched downward and aimed at that grain of sand. My thought was, "You've got to be kidding me". All of the Marines that fought there became

POW's of the Japanese. Later, I met one of them and got to know him well. I spoke at his funeral. His name was Bob Eaton.

Next stop was Okinawa. The next day it was Da Nang, then Dong Ha, then Hell at Con Thien. My first day in the field I met a Marine who would be my Commanding Officer...a fine man. Thirty minutes later, Lt. Dallas Thompson would move in front of me and die from an explosion. He fell right across my lap and died looking into my eyes. We were taking so much incoming that our Platoon Sgt. ordered us off the hill, mainly because they had our little bunker zero'd in. When I found a hole to jump in, the Marine in it mistook me for a corpsman and called me "Doc". He said, "Doc, that is some of the fanciest footwork I

have ever seen. They were following you all the way down. You would go right and they would explode left, then you'd go left and they would explode right. You probably saved all of those guys." I told him, "I'm not a corpsman. I'm a Marine, and I just got here. I was scared and just followed orders. I don't know enough to plan anything!" He just looked at me for a long while and said, "That was still some run Doc!" (Jarheads!!!) Con Thien, by the way means "Place of Angels". We were under siege there for several months and were cut off from food and water for much of it.

Leatherneck Magazine called the siege for Con Thien "Time in the Barrel". We received a minimum of 200 incoming rounds a day, and it was a small place. It



felt like they hit every square inch. One thing I quickly learned was how to know the difference in the sounds of incoming. That knowledge was literally a matter of life and death. Mortars made a high arch and the initial blast in the distance was a muffled report. An artillery round has a bassier sound. It gave you slightly more time to find cover, but if it was on you, then you were in deep trouble. The other one was the most terrifying. It was the rocket, and it screamed as it came in. You could not tell where it might come down, and it came fast. They also had recoilless rifles that fired large shells. They went off almost at the same time you heard them fired at you, and they had a flat trajectory.

My second day in the field another Marine and I wiped out an artillery section that had us pinned down. The Phantoms that flew over reported we had killed 162 of the enemy. This was L/Cpl Arthur Kennedy and myself. We went out under direct fire and had to get out and make sure the grunts (infantry) were down before we could fire our Ontos. If we had been in any other branch both of us would have received the Congressional Medal of Honor. The truth I learned over and over is the Marines were too small an outfit to allow its members to go to receive them, and many of the Marines I knew were cheated out of them. During 1967 and 1968 the Marines bore the brunt of the war, and that is a fact. World Book Encyclopedia reported that fact. Don't get me wrong, I am not medal happy and I wasn't then. When I returned I had at least four rows, and the Marines make you earn theirs.

After months of carnage we had a cease fire on Christmas Eve of 1967. I arrived there about the second week of August and saw many good men die. All of us lived with death every second of every day. On this particular Christmas Eve I heard a broadcast on Armed Forces radio and learned the "Clintonites" were marching on our Capitol protesting against us! I could not believe what I was hearing. Here we were fighting for freedom and these low life commies back home were fighting against us. I was dazed. I just could not understand it. I was hurt to my soul, angered, and disgusted. (This motivated

me to write a message on a C-Ration case.)

Not very long after that night we got the word that we were going to a resort area called Khe Sanh. It had not seen any of this type of action. It actually had a mess hall and a laundry, and they marched to chow. Wow!!! What unfathomable luxuries. Also, during this time I was on an operation with B Co 1/9 called Kingfisher, where we got the name "Walking Dead", and a new phrase was coined "Thousand yard stare." One of the Marines started cussing one night, and there was a big commotion. The next day we found out a tiger had grabbed him by the arm and was just carrying him off. He was punching it in the snout. It got as far as the Ben Hoa River and didn't know what to do with him, so it just let him go. That story was in *Stars and Stripes*. (I was afraid to write back home about that one for fear they would think I was nuts.) The Marines just kidded him about being too grisly for the tiger and that it wanted a softer cut of meat.

When I got to Khe Sanh, sure enough, they were marching to chow, had on starched utilities, and what really blew my mind was that all of their bunkers were built above ground!!! What was wrong with these people? We were met by our new CO, whom I had met at Con Thien. I didn't know who he was, just that he was a big wig. Captain James Lea told us in no uncertain terms that we would fall out in the morning clean shaven and in freshly starched utilities, because special arrangements had been made for us. The Junior Officer took over after Captain Lea left and asked if we had any questions. Being an old salt by now I told him, "Sir, with all due respect for your rank you can go --- yourself, because me and my men are not going to live in any of these above ground bunkers." He said "Fine, Corporal Craft" (Actually, I was only a L/Cpl, lance corporal). He said "See that wire over there? You just take your merry men and go right out there and pick out any real estate you want because that is enemy territory and they will be glad to have you. But, as long as you are here, you will comply. Is that clear?" I said "Yes sir, perfectly."

When he turned away and went back

to the HQ, we beat feet for the wire and told them we were going to be an LP (listening post). You can bet we would be too! They said "And you're taking an Ontos to an LP?" I just said "You never can be too careful!" We went out and started digging in. We were the diggingest bunch of guys you ever saw. We just dug and filled sand bags. I think they knew they had been had because they ignored us for nearly a week. Then, our Lt was sent out to read us the riot act. En route, the siege began. The enemy hit the ammo dump, and it sounded like Volkswagens flying past us. It was Con Thien all over again. The next day I was sent for and they wanted me to work with some Seabees to show them how to build the new bunkers. (I wonder why?)

This siege lasted for 77 days and was the most intense fighting of our history. Some reports say there were 1,000 of us and as many as 400,000 of the enemy. Other reports show 6,000 Marines at Khe Sanh, but this was not the Combat base. This figure had to include the surrounding hills and supporting units. Khe Sanh Combat base wasn't that big! Essentially, it was a runway. We were taking some 1,600 rounds of incoming per day every day on this tiny piece of real estate. Someone calculated that we had an explosion from an enemy device every 30 seconds day and night for 77 days. I had been called away from my safe hole when they found out my secondary mos was Ammo/Tech. It was during this time that I spotted a reporter and asked him if he would please mind getting a message back to the world for me. He asked "What is it?" I told him and he looked shocked and asked if I would mind writing that down. I said "Sure" and wrote it on a C-Ration case. That message is: ***"For those that will fight for it...FREEDOM ...has a flavor the protected shall never know."***

Semper Fi!

L/Cpl Edwin L. "Tim" Craft, B Co 3rd AT's, Khe Sanh Combat Base, February, 1968 +

IN THE CROSSHAIRS ONCE AGAIN



An article recently appeared in our newspaper here in Pueblo, Colorado titled "Marine Corps In Crosshairs One More Time." I'm not going to reprint the whole story but it was interesting enough to open my eyes wide.

Excerpts:

"Since WWII, the Marines have turned up almost anywhere that America finds itself in a jam against supposedly unconquerable enemies - in bloody places like Inchon and the Chosin Reservoir in Korea, at Hue and Khe Sanh during the Viet Nam War, at the two bloody sieges of Fallujah in Iraq, and now in Afghanistan."

"Their eccentric culture of self-regard so bothers our military planners that some higher-ups try either to curb their independence or end the Corps altogether."

"After the Pacific fighting, Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson wanted to disband the Marine Corps. What good were amphibious landings in the nuclear age? Johnson asked. His boss, President Harry Truman, didn't like the cocky Marines either."

"The U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, retire three-star Army General Karl W. Eikenberry, reportedly made a comment about there being 41 nations serving Afghanistan - and the 42nd composed of the Marine Corps. One unnamed Obama administration official was quoted as saying, "We have better operational coherence with virtually all of our NATO allies that we have with the U.S. Marine Corps."

This article was written by Victor Davis Hanson through the Tribune Media Services. My feeling is that everyone is extremely jealous of our Corps and can't accept the fact that we are "The Few and the Proud." Our Marines today carry on the fine tradition that has been handed down to them for generations. I, for one, am very proud to have served my God, my country and my Corps as an Atomic and Viet Nam Veteran.

Bob Eggert

L/Cpl 1931465 1960-1963

Editor's Note: This article only hints at the fine line the Marine Corps has walked over the years but maybe never as sharp an edge as the one they walk now. This year Secretary of Defense William Gates asked the Marine's for their "vision" of how they fit into the overall force beyond amphibious assault— the key word being "beyond" for Mr. Gates recently stated there will never be the need for a wartime amphibious landing to be made again. His confidence is backed up with his cancelling of the Marine's EFV project, designed to replace the current old and slow AAV, the EFV was a vehicle similar to our 1960's LVT. Agreeably, the EFV was a very expensive and therefore questionable project during these economic times, but its cancellation was not solely an economic one. The real issue here is not one of hardware but rather the role of the Marine Corps as Mr. Gates sees it, for if he truly believes there will be no call for an amphibious landing in the future, does the U.S. need another land army called the Marine Corps? That's the real issue at stake here. I hope I am wrong.

Announced just before going to press:

Amos Plans Lighter, More Mobile Corps

October 29, 2010

Stars and Stripes|by Kevin Baron

WASHINGTON -- Tasked to redefine the future of the Marine Corps, Commandant Gen. James Amos has pledged to aggressively experiment with unit sizes and the Corps' overall structure in a rebalancing effort he says will make the Marines a lighter force, ready to fight anywhere they're called.

Amos' "planning guidance," issued Wednesday, is his formal answer to Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who this summer asked Marine Corps leaders to determine what kind of service they want to be. In recent years, Gates and the previous commandant, retiring Gen. James Conway, have worried the Corps has strayed too far from its amphibious roots and were used too long as a second land army in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Where Amos, who assumed command last Friday, decides to steer the Corps will affect everything from the types of combat for which the Corps trains to how big it will be and what equipment it needs.

"While we remain focused on combat operations in Afghanistan, leaders at all levels must consider the likely challenges of the next two decades and how the Corps will meet them," said Amos.

Amos' priorities begin with preparing Marines for Afghanistan, followed by reorganizing, resizing and equipping the Corps, providing better education and training for Marines fighting in complex geopolitical environments, and keeping the promise to care for Marines and their families.

The commandant set several deadlines early next year for the Marines to complete tasks or studies that change its structures and missions, all of which would make the Corps more flexible and mobile. His targets include consolidating and boosting training elements such as special operations, foreign advisory units and irregular warfare training organizations, as well as decreasing the size of deployed expeditionary units.

Amos said he also aims to institutionalize "values-based training," adding that "the objective is to markedly reduce incidents of illegal/immoral/indecent acts among Marines."

Additionally, the Marines must decide whether to continue pursuing key procurement items such as the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle, the only viable new amphibious landing craft the Pentagon is considering purchasing.

"The Marine Corps is wedded to the capability," said Maj. Joseph Plenzler, Amos' spokesman. "We need to have the ship-to-shore capability that projects power from the sea, over shore, and into another country."

The next assessment of the EFV is due early 2011. +

FRIDAY AT THE PENTAGON

BY JOSEPH L. GALLOWAY

McClatchy Newspapers

Over the last 12 months, 1,042 soldiers, Marines, sailors and Air Force personnel have given their lives in the terrible duty that is war. Thousands more have come home on stretchers, horribly wounded and facing months or years in military hospitals.

This week, I'm turning my space over to a good friend and former roommate, Army Lt. Col. Robert Bateman, who recently completed a year long tour of duty in Iraq and is now back at the Pentagon.

Here's Lt. Col. Bateman's account of a little-known ceremony that fills the halls of the Army corridor of the Pentagon with cheers, applause and many tears every Friday morning. It first appeared on May 17 on the Weblog of media critic and pundit Eric Alterman at the Media Matters for America Website.

"It is 110 yards from the "E" ring to the "A" ring of the Pentagon. This section of the Pentagon is newly renovated; the floors shine, the hallway is broad, and the lighting is bright. At this instant the entire length of the corridor is packed with officers, a few sergeants and some civilians, all crammed tightly three and four deep against the walls. There are thousands here.

This hallway, more than any other, is the 'Army' hallway. The G3 offices line one side, G2 the other, G8 is around the corner. All Army. Moderate conversations flow in a low buzz. Friends who may not have seen each other for a few weeks, or a few years, spot each other, cross the way and renew.

Everyone shifts to ensure an open path remains down the center. The air conditioning system was not designed for this press of bodies in this area.

The temperature is rising already. Nobody cares. "10:36 hours: The clapping starts at the E-Ring. That is the outermost

of the five rings of the Pentagon and it is closest to the entrance to the building. This clapping is low, sustained, hearty. It is applause with a deep emotion behind it as it moves forward in a wave down the length of the hallway.

"A steady rolling wave of sound it is, moving at the pace of the soldier in the wheelchair who marks the forward edge with his presence. He is the first. He is missing the greater part of one leg, and some of his wounds are still suppurating. By his age I expect that he is a private, or perhaps a private first class.

"Captains, majors, lieutenant colonels and colonels meet his gaze and nod as they applaud, soldier to soldier. Three years ago when I described one of these events, those lining the hallways were somewhat different. The applause a little wilder, perhaps in private guilt for not having shared in the burden ... yet.

"Now almost everyone lining the hallway is, like the man in the wheelchair, also a combat veteran. This steadies the applause, but I think deepens the sentiment. We have all been there now. The soldier's chair is pushed by, I believe, a full colonel.

"Behind him, and stretching the length from Rings E to A, come more of his peers, each private, corporal, or sergeant assisted as need be by a field grade officer.

"11:00 hours: Twenty-four minutes of steady applause. My hands hurt, and I laugh to myself at how stupid that sounds in my own head. My hands hurt. Please! Shut up and clap. For twenty-four minutes, soldier after soldier has come down this hallway - 20, 25, 30.. Fifty-three legs come with them, and perhaps only 52 hands or arms, but down this hall came 30 solid hearts. +

Good Tears

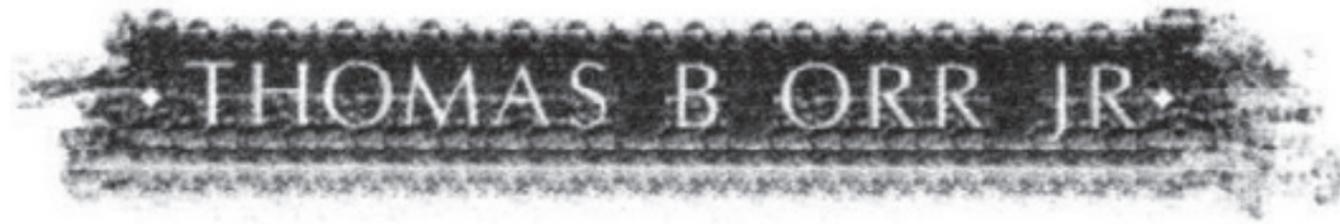
BY JOHN WEAR

Below is an email note that I received this past month from one of my younger sister's college roommates. Over the years, since the middle 1960's, all of the young ladies from Colorado State University have always been locked in time, in my opinion; the young girls from CSU would rather party than be involved with the real world. I know that they would not

*Dear John,
Okay, please don't think I have gone off the "deep end" but I had the best news today.*

Remember back to Ft. Collins and the Student Center during our "tour of duty to improve our minds"? While walking through the Student Center one day I bought a "POW Bracelet" for \$2.00. Being a Social

they suggested I research Capt. Orr on the Internet. They "mentored up" because I still am not very "tech" savvy. I investigated and found that he was last seen helping civilian women and children onto a C-130 military aircraft for evacuation. After the plane lifted off it was shot down and crashed - Capt Orr's name was not on the manifest because the situation was under fire and



take this the wrong way because I do love them like I love my sister, in a little sisterly-way but while those young ladies were in school doing their college-thing; some of us were doing not-so-pleasant things in a land far away from home & far away from our loved ones. Now after all of those difficult-to-adjust-years, I now am deeply moved to read the incredibly wonderful, sad and yet happy story that she sent out this past Memorial Day. It just goes to show (me) that there are many good folks out there who have feelings left over from a very dark period of time for our wonderful country. I replied to her: "Thank you for sharing the same tears that we Vietnam veterans shed...seemingly more and more as the years roll by."

Work major I felt compelled to participant in some form of student activism, albeit small. Of course, I picked out my bracelet by name and rank...Capt. Warren Orr Jr. For some strange reason this bracelet really impacted me - so much so, that my mother told me I could not wear it on my wedding day - not the "correct" accessory.

Over the years, I have pulled out that bracelet and worn it over the Memorial Day weekend as long as I can remember... exposing myself to some ridicule along the way. During a couple of visits to "The Wall" in D.C. I would always go to check on Capt Orr, he was always listed as an MIA.

Two years ago the "kids" at work inquired about my bracelet - of course, they weren't even born in the 60's and

completely crazy...so he was listed as MIA.

Here is the good news: I checked the Internet today and I discovered that his remains were found in December of '08 at the crash site and he has been buried in Arlington. I am such a dork, I cried. Regardless to our thoughts on the war, this guy has finally returned home and is at peace. I am elated.

Hope you and yours are enjoying a nice holiday.

*Love,
Didi*

Missouri Mini Reunion

Because the re-assembly of Gunny Garza's 3rd Herd was such a success at last summer's VTA reunion in Charleston, SC, it was decided we should not wait till next summer's reunion in San Diego to get together again. Therefore, plans for a mini-reunion "operation" were formulated, with St Charles, MO the chosen "field of operation". Two advance "tanks" were deployed to reconnoiter the area; B-34, commanded by Ron "Snoopy Dog" Davidson, and B-32, commanded by Mike McCabe. Their "Operation Orders" read in part, "They will set up positions on the north end of Hill St Charles, along the Song Bong Missouri River, in the Sundermeier RV village. After securing the area, they will camouflage their tanks

to look like large motor homes waiting the arrival of the rest of the 3rd Herd."

By sundown on August 4, twelve members of the 3rd Herd, each with their commanding officer (the wife), had assembled at Hill Quality Inn & Suites, the platoon headquarters. Rations (beer and unhealthy junk food) were distributed and well received. The operation lasted four days, with patrols venturing out each day to places of interest, looking for targets of opportunity. Evening chow consisted of sampling the local cuisine, our own BBQ with all members helping out, and a farewell catered dinner at the RV park. Sgt John Beck, unable to attend, forwarded a generous supply of MPC to purchase adult beverages for the 3rd

Herd. Once again, we lifted our glasses and toasted our fellow 3rd Herd tankers - those that have passed on and those who were unable to attend the reunion.

George Shaw, Stan Olenjack and John Beck had planned to attend, but had to cancel because of other commitments. A special thanks to Ron Davidson - he and his wife Jo did the planning, reservations and coordinating for this event. Several trips to the area were made by them before the "Operation Orders" were issued. Great Job - a fun time was had by all. David "Alabama" Walters even found a place that served GRITS - life is good! +



Back row: Tim Hackett, Mike McCabe, Mike Shaw, David Walters, Harlan Langlitz, Tom Wollney, Ron Davidson, Cecil Brown
Front row: Rod Henderson, Tony Wills, Glenn Barnett, Paul Tate

V. A. News & Updates

For more health information
visit our NEW website at
www.USMCVTA.org

HOSPICE CARE Update 02:

There is a common misconception that hospice services are only for those who are actively dying or in their last month of life. Not true! Hospice services can be initiated any time an individual meets the specific criteria based on his or her medical condition and functional status. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has developed eligibility criteria for nine specific conditions —cancer, dementia, failure to thrive, heart disease, liver disease, lung disease, kidney disease, stroke, and functional decline. Having a nursing assistant provide bath and personal care can be tremendous relief for a family. The nurse eases relative's anxiety and the burden of handling all the small details that go along with maintaining comfort in someone's final hours. Medicare and Medicaid pay for hospice care and provide it in an individual's home, nursing home, assisted-living facility, and specially designated hospice units. An entire team of professionals that includes a registered nurse, a home-health aide, a social worker, and a chaplain is available to assist you and your relative.

Services are provided on a weekly schedule based on a patient's needs, and a registered nurse is available 24 hours a day for urgent concerns. Services include assessment of the medical condition, bathing, assistance with dressing and grooming, counseling and support for you and the patient, spiritual guidance, and advance planning for the end of life. Hospice also provides all medical equipment and supplies, and a "comfort kit" is issued to each patient containing medications for pain, fever, and excessive saliva. To determine if hospice care is appropriate and whether he or she is eligible, first, talk to the health care provider about his

or her medical condition and plan of treatment. If prognosis is less than six months and it is his or her wish to receive supportive and comfort care only, a referral is made to hospice for an evaluation visit. The initial visit is completed by a registered nurse who performs a complete assessment and compares the results to the eligibility criteria for the patient's primary diagnosis. If they meet at least three of the criteria, they will be enrolled in services for three months.

Once receiving hospice services, a patient will be reevaluated every three months, and if he or she still meets the criteria, the services will be extended for another three months. If the condition improves, he or she might be discharged from hospice but can be reenrolled in the future if his or her condition deteriorates. Hospice provides much-needed support for caregivers, whether you provide care yourself or need the peace of mind that they are receiving care and support because you cannot be there to provide assistance. The goals of hospice — maintaining quality of life and comfort — are what we all wish for our family during their final years. Talk with them, and plan ahead for when hospice care might be needed. You will not regret the decision and comfort that comes from knowing you provided the best care at the end of his or her life. To learn more about hospice services or to find a hospice organization in your location refer to www.hospicenet.org. [Source: MOAA News Exchange Nanette Lavoie-Vaughan article 7 Apr 2010 ++]

VA HANDBOOK

The 2010 publication in English can be downloaded at no cost from VA's Web site at

http://www1.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp.

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[Source: www.va.gov May 2010 ++]

AACE: Agent Orange Ups Some Thyroid Risks

By Kristina Fiore, Staff Writer, MedPage Today
Published: April 26, 2010

Reviewed by Dori F. Zaleznik, MD; Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Boston and
Dorothy Caputo, MA, RN, BC-ADM, CDE,
Nurse Planner

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Action Points

- Explain that veterans who'd been exposed to Agent Orange were three times more likely to develop Graves' disease, but were not at greater risk of other thyroid disorders including cancer or nodules.
- Note that this study was published as an abstract and presented at a conference. These data and conclusions should be considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

BOSTON -- Vietnam veterans who came in contact with Agent Orange are more likely to develop Graves' disease than those who avoided exposure, researchers said here.

The autoimmune disorder was three times more prevalent among veterans who encountered the dioxin-containing chemical, Ajay Varanasi, MD, of SUNY Buffalo, and colleagues reported at the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists meeting here.

"We also looked at other [thyroid] diagnoses," Varanasi told MedPage Today, "but we didn't find any significant differences in thyroid cancer or nodules."

Varanasi and colleagues originally hypothesized that the latter two diagnoses may be more prevalent among vets exposed to the toxin.

Agent Orange was a defoliant sprayed from U.S. planes and helicopters during the Vietnam War to deprive Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers of cover. Veterans have long complained that exposure to the chemical caused them a variety of health problems, though few have been confirmed.

Since most Vietnam veterans have been assessed for possible Agent Orange exposure, the researchers were able to review their records and correlate that with disease.

In 2008, they assessed the prevalence of major thyroid diagnoses in the Veterans Affairs (VA) electronic medical record database beginning in 1996 for veterans born between 1925 and 1953 who were treated in a VA network in upstate New York.

They compared the frequency of diagnosis with thyroid cancer, nodules, hypothyroidism, and Graves' disease in both exposed and nonexposed populations.

A total of 23,939 vets had been classified as exposed to Agent Orange, while 200,109 were not exposed.

The researchers found that the prevalence of Graves' disease in those exposed to Agent Orange was three times that of the unexposed group (OR 3.05, 95% CI 2.17 to 4.50, P=0.001).

The relationship remained even after multivariate analyses accounted for potential confounders such as smoking (OR 2.76, 95% CI 2.22 to 3.81, P<0.001).

Interestingly, Varanasi said, prevalence of hypothyroidism was lower in those exposed to Agent Orange. Nor was there any difference in the prevalence of thyroid cancer or nodules between those exposed and those not exposed.

"There's no real mechanism as to why it should cause a high prevalence of cancer," Varanasi said.

But the literature holds a likely mechanism linking exposure to Graves' disease, he added.

"In doing a literature search, we found that the dioxin in Agent Orange might have some immune-modulating effects in human beings," he said.

This dioxin — 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (TCDD) — binds to aryl hydrocarbon receptors (AhR) very tightly, leading to prolonged activation of genomic and nongenomic metabolic disorders, the researchers said.

In mice, for example, AhR can regulate the differentiation of regulatory T cells and of T cells that produce interleukin-17. Also, AhR ligands like TCDD can modulate autoimmunity.

“The effects could be through this hydrocarbon, and this receptor is mainly expressed in T-helper-17 cells,” Varanasi said. “Through this mechanism, we could have some immune modulating effects, and this could cause a higher prevalence of Graves’ disease in exposed patients.”

He and colleagues concluded that the relationship of Graves’ disease to Agent Orange exposure warrants further investigation.

Vet Toxic Exposure ~ MALATHION:

The Vietnam Veterans Association Agent Orange/Dioxin Committee released its report on Malathion. This is the name of an organophosphate insecticide used in Vietnam to combat mosquitoes. Organophosphates were first developed in the late 1930s by Nazi Germany as chemical warfare agents (nerve gas). VX nerve gas and Sarin gas are well-known examples. Organophosphates operate on humans and insects in a similar fashion by attacking the nervous systems. During the Vietnam War, large numbers of troops came down with malaria. To kill the mosquitoes that carried the disease, the Department of Defense converted aircraft that were spraying Agent Orange to the spraying of Malathion. This was the start of Operation Flyswatter. Many Vietnam veterans recall the non-camouflaged aircraft flying over their positions—shortly after dawn or just before dusk—covering them with a mist. Three silver—Bug Birds were used in Operation Flyswatter. Many connected those flights with the spraying of Agent Orange. It is now known that, in those cases, veterans were subjected to Malathion and its more potent form, Malaoxon. These were not just one-time missions. Every nine to eleven days, weather permitting, the planes re-sprayed the areas. The spray operation created recurring chemical exposures for Vietnam veterans.

What are the health risks of these spray operations and what are the combined and synergic effects of Malathion with other exposures such as Agent Orange? These questions have not been addressed. We know that a MAR 08 study shows that organophosphates including Malathion significantly increase the risk of Parkinson’s disease. Knowing that organophosphates work on the nervous systems, the diseases of the central and peripheral nervous system become prime areas of concern. This is a fresh chemical exposure area for Vietnam veterans to explore as they seek answers to their many health issues. The VVA Agent Orange/Dioxin and Other Toxic Substances Committee also will be researching this area. You can read their full report on this operation at www.scientificjournals.com/sj/espr/Pdf/ald/10482 If you have additional questions about malathion or the health effects from spraying, contact the New York State Department of Health’s Environmental Health Information Line at 1(800) 458-1158, extension 27530.

The Vietnam Veterans Association Agent Orange/Dioxin Committee is tasked with accumulating and disseminating information regarding Agent Orange and Dioxin and actively pursuing the recognition of presumptive disabilities from exposure to Agent Orange and Dioxin by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Committee shall provides assistance to State Councils, Chapters, and service programs in the handling of Agent Orange related problems. The Committee shall encourage and foster the sponsorship of legislation to help the victims of Agent Orange and Dioxin, and encourage scientific and medical research in the field of dioxin-related ailments.” [Source: VVA National Committee Chair Alan Oates article Nov/Dec 09 ++]

Visit our website for additional VA health news: www.usmcvta.org

Attack on Cam Lo

(Continued from page 23)

Heart and a trip home. I wouldn’t see him again until November 10, 1985 when we went to a Marine Corp Birthday party; he and I spent the whole night trying to recall August 26, 1966 and the horror of that night. Hotel Battery had three killed in action as did Headquarters Battery. Wounded from Hotel was six, and four from Headquarters. S-2 was reduced to one person because of the losses.

The next night at about 11:00pm we started receiving small arms fire again but nothing more happened. During the morning hours of the 28th, the hole

manned by the grunts right beside Golf’s Gun 4 had an incoming grenade and one additional WIA. I was on gun watch at the time and immediately went forward to the parapet wall but nothing more happened that night.

I’ve often wondered about the 26th after reading the after action reports and journal entries, why no one gave us notice; the LP’s had movement, contact was assured. Then, on the 28th, why that grenade wasn’t thrown ten feet to the left of that hole. It would have been me in a big gun pit trying to escape the outcome.

Semper Fi,

Dan “Stumpy” Post - Email: postd_j@yahoo.com

Jim Pickett - Email: jpickett4309@yahoo.com

Edito’r Note: Stumpy was kind enough to send me a news article from Stars & Stripes as well as a 3rd Tanks Sitrep for that night. One retriever, C-43, was hit with an RPG and burned most of the night; a tank, C-14, was destroyed by a satchel charge dropped inside the turret. The tanks involved were from C Co. No tankers were killed that night. A quote from Major Lavern Larson, XO, 3/12, printed in S&S said, “They have every reason to hate our artillery and tanks. All these weapons are in direct support of Operation Prairie.” †

HULL BOTTOM ESCAPE HATCHES

BY TIM HANKS

I saw the mention of the ASP-1 ammo dump fire and the huge explosions and thought maybe I could add a little more to the story. I was at the First Tank Battalion compound (and weeks away from rotation) and we were all very interested that Sunday (I think) morning because we were just over a click away and had front row seats to the most expensive fireworks show ever witnessed. What most people that saw that unbelievable event don’t know is that there were men who worked the dump who ran to their bunkers at the first few explosions and who now couldn’t leave because the fire and heat were so intense. We got the word for two certain tanks and all tank crewmen to report to the Battalion ammo bunker. They were sending them in to rescue the trapped men.

We emptied all the 90mm ammo (more room) from the two tanks; each tank took only the driver and TC (tank commander) and headed out to get them out. The hull bottom escape hatches had been dropped and the turrets turned backwards and the guns put into travel lock. This allowed them to nose up to a bunker and allow the men to one by one crawl up into the tank through the escape hatch. I don’t remember how many total

were rescued, but I seem recall one tank coming out of there with 13 men inside the turret. I think the tankers who went in received some kind of medal as they well should have. The fire eventually consumed almost everything and died out, but not before spreading to the POL (oil) dump next door and starting the smokiest fire imaginable.

There were fires in the artillery powder storage bunkers that were so hot we could feel the heat at over a thousand yards. I remember some huge explosions and of seeing the shock wave from one radiating out at a stunning speed that only allowed us time enough to turn away before it actually knocked those in the open to the ground (really), and broke roof trusses in our hardback hooches. I also seem to remember the windows in the new Air Conditioned Staff and Officers Club being blown out!

After that one those of us assigned to tanks were told to “saddle up” and head out to our night guard positions on surrounding hills. This didn’t come any too soon for me as there had already been shrapnel falling on the area from some of the bigger explosions and we all wanted to move out. It now seems amazing that a thousand yards wasn’t far enough. I

will try to get some photos of the bigger explosions scanned and send them in so the actual mushroom shaped clouds can be seen.

Again, all this is only one old Marine’s recollection and forty years is a long time. Corrections and additions are welcome. If anyone knows where I could find a report of this event I would appreciate them passing it on. It would be very interesting to see what the “official” version explains.

And to all Marines that read this, if you haven’t been to the new Marine Corps Museum in Quantico you absolutely MUST go. It is beautiful and amazing and must be experienced to be believed. Pictures you may see can’t do it justice. I saw it with two of my old tanker buddies and we were moved. Plan on seeing the Air and Space Museum at Dulles Airport at the same time.

Tim Hanks, Cpl. 67-70

First Tanks, Phu Bai and Da Nang 68-69

Proud Second Generation Marine

Armor school leaves Fort Knox after 70 years

By Dylan Lovan - The Associated Press

Posted : Thursday May 27, 2010 13:38:23 EDT

FORT KNOX, Ky. — Fort Knox is bidding farewell to the armor school that has trained American tank soldiers since World War II.

A ceremony Thursday marked the official start of the move by the Army Armor Center to Fort Benning in Georgia as part of a military reorganization announced five years ago.

Military leaders created the 1st Armored Division at Fort Knox after seeing the success of German tanks that conquered France in 1940.

The division has long since moved to other bases but armor training remained at Fort Knox for seven decades.

More than 180 M1 tanks and about 1,000 other vehicles will depart Fort Knox over the next year and a half.

The transfer ceremony also marked Fort Knox’s transition to its new role as the Army’s home base for recruiting, training and human resources.

Editor’s Note: This will include the Marine tank school as well.



The Final Inspection

Author Unknown



The Marine stood and faced God,
Which must always come to pass.
He hoped his shoes were shining,
Just as brightly as his brass.

'Step forward now, Marine,
How shall I deal with you?
Have you always turned the other cheek?
To My Church have you been true?'

The Marine squared his shoulders and said,
'No, Lord, I guess I ain't,
Because those of us who carry guns,
Can't always be a saint.

I've had to work most Sundays,
And at times my talk was tough.
And sometimes I've been violent,
Because the world is awfully rough.

But, I never took a penny,
That wasn't mine to keep...
Though I worked a lot of overtime,
When the bills got just too steep.

And I never passed a cry for help,
Though at times I shook with fear.
And sometimes, God, forgive me,
I've wept unmanly tears.

I know I don't deserve a place,
Among the people here.
They never wanted me around,
Except to calm their fears

If you've a place for me here, Lord,
It needn't be so grand.
I never expected or had too much,
But if you don't, I'll understand.

There was a silence all around the throne,
Where the saints had often trod.
As the Marine waited quietly,
For the judgment of his God.

'Step forward now, you Soldier of the Sea,
You've borne your burdens well.
Walk peacefully on Heaven's streets,
You've done your time in Hell.'



Meet Your Board of Directors (Continued from page 5)

all day I requested to be assigned additional training. The OIC it seems had a sense of humor as he assigned me TAD to 3rd Force recon. Yahooooo! They kicked my butt and I loved every minute of it. More running, more danger, great attitude and best of all . . . more stuff to blow up. The training was tough, top notch and, although way to short a time for me, I think it saved my ass more than once while in country.

Not wishing me to waste any more time training in Okinawa, I was sent to DaNang (Camp Love) to hook up with 9th MAB but they were still nowhere to be found and having little taste for being in the rear with the gear I wrangled a poncho liner and a spot at the BAS near Marble Mountain. While there I treated all kinds of people, including Vietnamese civilians, most of whom, unfortunately, were children. Then one afternoon, into the BAS walked two lieutenants, one silver bar and one gold. The silver bar shouts, "I need a Corpsman. Any of you want to get into the field with Tanks?" No one stepped forward. In fact, to my surprise, they shied away from the request. This I saw as an opportunity. "I'll go sir." The Lt turned to me and said, "Well get your shit Doc, let's get a move on!" I liked this no nonsense guy already. The three of us piled into a jeep, the gold bar, Lt Dobbins, my new X.O., the silver bar, Lt Roberts, my new C.O. and me. As we headed out toward a desolate landscape, Lt Roberts, who was driving, said, "Do you know how to use that weapon of yours Doc?" When I assured him that I did he replied, "Well then, lock and load, we're going into "Indian Territory."

I spent the rest of my tour with Charlie company and even spent time with the ROK Marines at Hoi An. Most of my time in Nam has oddly become a blur, names have faded away for the most part as have the specifics of every day events. But in the end, I was able to do my part, patch up Marines and keep them alive. Credit be to skill, circumstance or the grace of God, I never lost a Marine, at least not while they were under my care.

When I left Nam I submitted my 'Dream Sheet' and requested England, Scotland, Sweden or fourth choice,

anywhere Europe. Subsequently I spent the last eighteen months of my four year enlistment in Panama, Canal Zone where I ran a dispensary, played football and drank beer.

After leaving the Service in 1971, I returned to Florida and school as a pre-med major. To my surprise, I did very well and actually enjoyed it but there was something lacking. I'd become addicted to adrenalin and needed a fix. So I took the test and was hired on the Boca Raton Fire department where I also helped set up their Paramedic program and where too, I taught Paramedics. I loved the work but found that a system that provided 'Tenure' also extracted incentive from its employees. The apathy in the department after tenure was achieved was too much and I left the department after four years and returned once again to school, this time as a Theater major. But I couldn't divorce myself from the medical field completely so I took more training and became licensed as an O.R. technician. I worked for the next few years in an operating room to supplement the G.I. bill and pay for college while I studied acting and directing. It turned out I had a knack for "The Boards." I quickly acquired my first couple of union cards and got busy doing theater and lots of commercials. One thing led to another and in a very short time I found myself in New York with a contract role on a TV show. Imagine that! Oh yes, just prior to starting the fire department job, I got married and almost ten years later, divorced.

I was very fortunate to have remained consistently employed as a television actor. This provided more opportunity for stage work, some film roles and for training at the prestigious Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London. In 2001 I moved to Los Angeles where I was hired to direct a television show, which I did for almost four years before running away as if my head was on fire. Suffice it to say that L.A. and I were not a match.

I returned to the east coast and settled into the country life of Pennsylvania where I reside to this day. Life is simpler today. Occasionally I still snag a role in a play or on an east coast tv show. (Sex in the City, Law and Order, 30 Rock) But these days are primarily reserved for fun and giving

back. I'm into motorcycles and travel, rode my BMW R1200RT down to the reunion in Charleston last summer and in January of 09' returned to Vietnam for a little sightseeing and healing. Good trips both. I am an active member of the Marine Corps League in N.E. PA and spend a great deal of time helping with people with addictions. Finally the world is spinning in greased grooves. +

WANTED! New Members REWARD! \$30 a HEAD

Get a new, never before member to join our organization and we will pay you a \$30.00 bounty! The money will be paid out at the business meeting during the 2011 reunion as each name and amount are announced — that gives you an entire year to make some dough and possibly even cover your costs for the reunion if you are ambitious enough. If not attending the reunion, we will send you your check.

Simply print out a Membership Form off our new website or ask Robbie Robinson to send you some extra forms (409-385-6399). Have your potential new member fill out the form COMPLETELY, enclose a copy of his DD214, and his check for \$30 made out to: USMC VTA

You are responsible for getting the completed material to:

USMC VTA
c/o John Wear
5537 Lower Mountain Road
New Hope, PA 18938

Make certain that your name appears at the bottom of the registration form indicating you were the person who found the new member. Only COMPLETELY filled out forms with accompanying DD214s will be eligible for this program. Sorry, any prior member does not qualify for this program.

Looking For
(Continued from page 11)

CAN ANYONE ID THIS TANK CREW?

We have been contacted by the mother of one of the Marines pictured in these two photos. She is looking for the crew that saved several grunts, including her son, during the battle for Hue City. Anyone know from these two pictures what tank was involved and who the crew was? See both photos below.

Contact: John Wear 212-794-9052



CAN ANYONE ID THIS TANK & ONTOS CREW?

My cousin, Jim Leigh, was a Marine grunt rifleman with Alpha, 1/4 from October '66 until late February '67, when he was wounded during Deckhouse VII and medivaced to the USA. In his collection of pictures was this one of a Marine tank and Ontos which appears below. When first in RVN, he was up north around Phu Bai, then his outfit was sent to Okinawa for training and refitting before coming back to RVN as a BLT and Operation Deckhouse VI and VII. I remember at the VTA reunion in Charleston, someone was trying to put together tanks with who the crewmen were. When I looked at this picture with a magnifying glass, the name on the gun tube is "Rebel" and it looks like the serial



number of the tank is 207627. You might want to mention this in the Sponson Box and see if someone remembers anything about this tank and crew. The picture was probably taken in October or early November of '66.

Thanks for all your work - looking forward to seeing everyone in San Diego.
Semper Fi,

Lt Fuzz - Rod Henderson
(970) 587-9743
gjobrod@aol.com

Please use our new website for posting new "Looking For" names and photos. You stand a much better chance of finding someone when posted to the website where the world has access to view your request.

Letter to the Editor
(Continued from page 9)

God bless Gunny Tatum, Whitey and Wilson... all KIA. And thank God for Louis Ryles' survival. He will see us all in San Diego. That will be north of Tijuana if you happen to be traveling with "Pappy" Reynolds! Ha! Ha! Ha!

I'm fine by the way. I met a nice VA doctor who was with the 101st Airborne. I found out he was the supply sergeant back in Nam. He did a spinal tap on me but he could not hit the target... even though he tried six times.

Semper Fi,

Wally Young
11160 US Highway 31
Ft Deposit, AL 36032

Editors Note: Wally is a Charter Member of the VTA and has had perfect attendance to all of our reunions. We look forward to seeing him in San Diego. We also know that his singing will fill the Slop Chute once again.



2011 San Diego Reunion Tentative Schedule

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 17	0900-2330 Arrival Day – Town & Country Hotel Pick up reunion welcome packet at the VTA Reunion Registration Desk	SATURDAY AUGUST 20	0900-1730 Free Time – See the City Golf, Deep Sea Fishing, Sea World Tour, San Diego Zoo, or shopping.
	1300-1600 The "Company Office" will be open in "The Slopchute" Hospitality Room for problem resolution and questions answered.		0900-1700 "The Slopchute" Hospitality Room Open 1730-1815 Reunion Banquet – Cash Bar 1830-1845 Presentation of Colors & Remarks 1845-1930 Farewell Dinner Please note: Dress for the Farewell Dinner will be a shirt with a collar, dress slacks and shoes. Coats and ties are optional. • 10 minutes Break • 5 minutes Charleston Reunion Review • 10 minutes Awards Presentation • 30 Minutes Guest Speaker • 30 minutes Fallen Heroes Presentation
THURSDAY AUGUST 18	0800-1030 Reunion Kick-off Meeting and VTA Business Meeting Win a FREE stay!	SUNDAY AUGUST 21	2200-2330 "The Slopchute" Hospitality Room Open
	0800-1030 Ladies Coffee (Hospitality Room) 1100-1115 TBD - Board buses to visit 4th Tanks tank park or... Possible tour of Camp Pendleton if they are doing some active training...like live fire exercises.		0900-1200 Departure Day "The Slopchute" Hospitality Room Open <i>*Anyone who would like to volunteer to help clean up, it would be greatly appreciated.</i>
	1230-1330 Lunch to be announced 1600-1615 Board buses for return to hotel 1700-2330 "The Slopchute" Hospitality Room Open 1800-2000 VTA Sponsored Poolside BBQ, Group Photo and Live Auction		
FRIDAY AUGUST 19	Choose One of two morning trips		HOW TO WIN A FREE HOTEL ROOM! You can win a free hotel stay for this year's reunion when you bring this coupon to Thursday's Opening Meeting no later than 07:59 PST Rules: This coupon is your raffle ticket to be given at the door of the meeting room before 07:59 PST for a chance to win a free 4-night stay during the reunion. The prize covers the basic room rate (\$109 + tax). Prize value: 436.00 + tax. Drawing will be held at the conclusion of the same meeting. Tickets will be awarded only to people who are in the meeting room prior to 07:59 PST. No latecomers will be permitted in the drawing. Correct time is determined by the President's watch set to atomic clock standards. Doors will close at exactly 08:00 PST to determine who is in the room on time. Winner MUST be in the room when the bell rings. If someone is almost at the door when the bell rings and he is not physically in the meeting room, he is NOT eligible for the drawing. No exceptions will be made. Only one (1) entry per person allowed. Name: _____ Room # _____
	0800-0815 Board Buses for MCRD San Diego 0830-0845 Arrive - MCRD Parris Island 0900-1000 Recruit Graduation 1030-1130 Guided Tour MCRD 1145-1230 Noon Chow – MCRD Mess Hall (lunch provided) 1230-1245 Board buses for hotel 1300 Arrive at hotel TRIP 2 San Diego Harbor Tour 1315-1335 Board Buses for San Diego Harbor Boat tours conducted (lunch not provided) 1400-1600 Board Buses for hotel 1630-1645 Arrive at hotel 1700-1730 Dinner on your own 1800-2330 "The Slopchute" Hospitality Room Open		



How to make 2011 REUNION hotel reservations



RESERVATIONS PROCESS & BOOKING WEBSITE

Online and phone reservations will be accepted from 10/19/2010 until 7/14/2011 after which the room reservation process will be closed. Book your room early!!!

You can do it by phone or via the web.

The option of phone reservations the number for hotel room reservations is (619) 291-7131 or **(800) 772-8527**.

For access to the website, please click the following link:

[https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?](https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_ei_new&eventID=3091941)

[mode=welcome_ei_new&eventID=3091941](https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_ei_new&eventID=3091941)

The "official" USMC VTA reunion dates are August 17 to 21, 2011.

Be sure to mention "USMC Vietnam Tankers Association" to get the proper low room rate.

The Town and Country Hotel has guaranteed the reunion room rate for there days before and three days after the above dates so you can take advantage of the wonderful and enjoyable things to do & to see in the San Diego area.



OFFICIAL REGISTRATION FORM FOR THE San Diego 7th Biennial Reunion

Towne & Country Resort & Convention Center
August 17-21, 2011

GET A FREE REUNION T-SHIRT WORTH \$25.00!

When you prepay your registration fee by **June 17, 2011**

Member's Name: _____ This is how your name will appear on your name tag _____ Shirt Size: _____
S, M, L, XL, XXL

Guest's Name (s): _____, _____ Relationship to you _____ Shirt Size: _____
and relationship Name Relationship to you S, M, L, XL, XXL

_____ Relationship to you _____ Shirt Size: _____
Name Relationship to you S, M, L, XL, XXL

_____ Relationship to you _____ Shirt Size: _____
Name Relationship to you S, M, L, XL, XXL

Address: _____ Unit#: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Vietnam Tank or AT Bn: _____ Co: _____ Years in-country: _____
(Circle one of the above) 1st 3rd or 5th Example: 65-66

Is this your first USMC VTA Reunion? Circle One YES NO

You must be a **current** 2011 USMC Vietnam Tankers Association member to attend the reunion. If your membership is delinquent please mail your dues with this registration or the dues will be collected at the sign-in desk. No partial payments of the registration fee are accepted. Fee covers planned food functions, transportation & lunch, meeting facilities, hospitality room & beverages and other expenses associated with the cost of hosting the reunion. Registration fee does not include your sleeping room and taxes.

See Free Shirt offer on back inside cover



OPTIONAL ACTIVITY LIST for Friday, August 19th

Please circle the trip number you want and indicate how many people will be taking that trip (including yourself) if you have guests. Your guests can choose a different trip if they wish.

Trip #1 **MCRD Graduation & Tour with lunch provided in chow hall**
Buses depart hotel at 0815 and return to hotel by 1300.
 How many? _____

Trip # 2 **San Diego Harbor Tour (lunch not provided).**
Buses depart at 0915 & return to hotel by 1300.
 How many? _____

Your total reunion fees

My Registration Fee: \$ **140.00**

Number of guests _____ X \$ **140.00** = \$ _____

Registration fee is required for each guest including children if they are attending ANY of the scheduled events.

Grand Total = \$ _____

Optional: Would you like to donate a few dollars to help with the beer & soda fund? \$ _____
Thank You!

GROSS AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____

You must make your own hotel reservations by **July 17th** to get the low room rate!
 Call: 1-800-772-8527 ask for the "2011 USMC Vietnam Tankers Reunion" for the special room rate of \$109.00 per night or make reservations online by going to:

https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_ei_new&eventID=3091941

CAUTION: Do not confuse the above hotel booking deadline date with the early registration free T-shirt offer which has a **June 17th** deadline. These are two different offers.

Submit this form along with your payment by June 15th to get a free Reunion T-shirt worth \$30.
 Send check or money order made out to: **USMC VTA**
 Then send form and payment to:

USMC VTA
c/o Ron Knight
720 Quail Run Ct.
Alpharetta, GA 30005-8920

How to get a **FREE** 2011 REUNION **SHIRT!**



Yes! We know, we know! The reunion is still 9 months away, but . . .

...we wanted to start planting the seed now for those on a fixed income and give time to begin planning. And for this reunion we need the registration forms turned in early so we can plan for bus transportation and other coordinated activities. Consequently, we are offering an incentive to get your registration forms in 60 days early— a free reunion shirt with a retail value of \$25.00!

You should have heard by now that our next reunion is being held in San Diego on August 17 – 21, 2011. We are excited because it should be our largest ever! The hotel is the finest we have ever used and they are renowned for catering to military veteran organizations. There will be a 3,000 square foot ballroom just for the "Slop Chute" hospitality room that will have plenty of seating to share our stories and our Vietnam photo albums. It is twice as large as the room we had in Charleston! We will have another special room for the fun-filled auction where we will also be offering a few items specifically for the ladies for the first time.

Another First: We are offering an alternative side trip for those who wish not to go to MCRD since we did Parris Island at the last reunion.

To be able to offer all these choices requires us to get your registration turned in early. -

To provide an early register incentive, we are giving away the official reunion T-shirt to each registered person (including all registered spouses, friends or family members) whose **order and registration check is received before June 17, 2011 (...which is 60 days prior to the reunion start date)**. This cut off date will not be extended. Your envelope must be postmarked no later than June 17, 2011. The reunion t-shirt, (shown above), will be another first as it is a two-sided, full color design! We think that it will be the coolest shirt we have ever done and it will have a **retail value of \$25.00!** Your shirt will be inside your reunion check-in bag for those meeting the June 17 deadline. Use the official reunion registration form at the back of this issue and submit your registration form along with a check on or before June 17th, 2011. Please make certain you choose the activity choices that you and or your guest(s) want as well as each individual's men's T-shirt size. Please note that ladies need to order in Men's sizes and that men's Small is the smallest size offered.

USMC Vietnam Tankers Association
5537 Lower Mountain Road • New Hope, PA 18938

Please get your 2011 dues paid up! Send \$30 to:
John Wear, USMC VTA, 5537 Lower Mountain Road, New Hope, PA 18938

