



# Sponson BOX

*Voice of  
the USMC  
Vietnam Tankers  
Association*

**Ensuring Our Legacy Through Reunion, Renewal & Remembrance™**



*Featured Stories:*

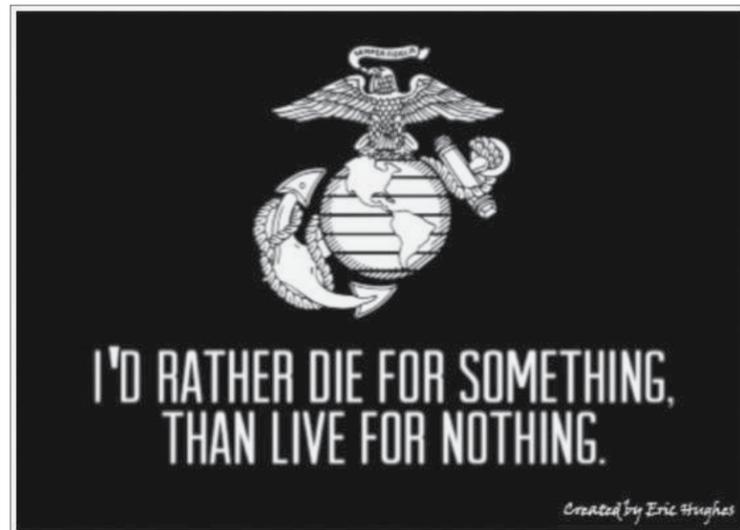
A Letter Home..... Page 16

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The truth comes out about ROK Marines ..... Page 28

# You Know You're a Marine Corps Tanker When...

1. The only ashtrays at home are 90 mm shell casings.
2. You're always accusing your wife of turning the volume down on the TV, telephone, doorbell.
3. You cannot pass gas without saying "On the way!"
4. You wish it wasn't illegal to stick your head out of the sunroof while driving.
5. You refer to Camp Del Mar (Tank School) as "Home."
6. You refer to George S. Patton as "Him."
7. You consider four as the right number of people to have in a family.
8. The only kind of "scouts" you are aware of are Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.
9. You laugh whenever someone mentions the thrill of firing a "big bore" gun such as a .308.
10. "Up" is no longer a direction to you.
11. You believe a hammer can fix anything.
12. You invite all your friends to a barbecue and all three show up.
13. You drive everywhere, even if it's two houses down.
14. Your wife is always reminding you to bring the lounge chairs and cooler home.
15. You sleep better sitting in your chair than you do in your bed.
16. You can sleep through the worst thunderstorm but wake up immediately when your clock radio goes off.
17. You believe radial tires are overrated.
18. Your hunting dog obeys such commands as: "Halt", "Traverse left/right", "Forward" and "Identified!"
19. You were doing drive-by shootings before they were a fad.
20. You think nothing of your kids peeing off the porch instead of using the bathroom.
21. You use old track to surround your wife's small garden.
22. You replace all your wife's flower vases with shinier ones after each gunnery.
23. You get mad whenever your wife puts anything away and it's not by the load plan.
24. It takes you a few extra minutes in the morning to remember that the throttle for your car is on the floor.
25. You use your child's telescope to track passing cars.
26. Your child's first words are "Not my echelon."
27. You believe that a combat load should not interfere with the amount of coffee and propane you pack.
28. You would help your kids with math if only you had all your fingers.
29. When you drive the Interstate you are always looking for possible ambush sites.
30. You figure vacation travel by fuel consumed and rations needed.
31. Overhead helicopter noise makes you tuck your head in and tighten various muscles.



## Letter from the President

It's just weeks before our 2015 get together in Washington, DC. I am so pleased to see so many registrations and to know that we will have so many first time attendees. As our very special brotherhood continues to grow, we become that much stronger and more meaningful. If you are coming to DC please be sure to bring your Vietnam photo album and maybe something that you can donate to our fund-raising auction.

After we ran the "Guess Who?" in the most recent issue of the Sponson Box, there have never been as many telephone responses as we got from you-all. We decided to add a page of follow up stories that some of you relayed to me. God bless Marvin "Charlie" Brown!

A few months ago, I finally got to read the classic WW II account of the USMC in the Pacific, With the Old Breed by Eugene Sledge. If you have not had a chance to read it, I highly recommend that you do. One very poignant passage (for me) from the book is:

"In our myopic view we respected and admired only those who got shot at, and the hell with everyone else. This was unfair to noncombatants who performed essential tasks, but we were so brutalized by war that we were incapable of making a fair evaluation."

I think that the above statement hits the nail on the head and shows me how young (and stupid) many Marines can think about the rest of the so-called "non-combat world." Every Marine had a job to do, no matter what we did or where it took us. I believe that the correct statistic was that for every one Marine in the field "pulling a trigger" there were seven Marine support personnel keeping the supply lines open and fully stocked with beans, bandages, bullets and bombs. While I served on active duty, I never realized how democratic the USMC really was. If you recall, our uniforms were all the same. For the most part, we could not tell a grunt or tanker from a cannon cocker from a comm. guy from a recon Marine. We all did our part as best as we could.

If you are attending the reunion and have not already signed up, please consider volunteering for our VTA History Project video interviews. If you are not attending, please sit down and write a story for the Sponson Box. The story does not have to be glorious, it can be humorous. It does not have to be about Vietnam, it can be about a Med. or Carib. Cruise or a wild weekend in Jacksonville or Tijuana.

I hope to see you all in Washington, D.C.!!!

Semper Fidelis,

"Those who hammer their guns into plows will plow for those who do not."

Thomas Jefferson



### Executive Directors

#### John Wear, President

5537 Lower Mountain Road; New Hope, PA 18938  
(215) 794-9052 · E-mail: johnwear2@verizon.net

**1st Sgt. Richard "Rick" Lewis, Vice President**  
5663 Balboa Ave (#366), San Diego, CA 92111-2793  
858-735-1772 Email: ricklent@aol.com

#### Bruce Van Apeldoorn, Treasurer

73 Stanton Street, Rochester, NY 14611-2837  
(585) 613-6564 Email: bvanapeldoomsr@gmail.com

#### Ronald C. Knight, Secretary

6665 Burnt Hickory Drive-Hoschton, GA 30548  
(678) 828-7197 Email: rckusmcvta@att.net

### Directors

#### Lt. General Martin R. Steele, USMC (Ret.)

16331 Ashington Park Drive; Tampa, FL 33647  
E-mail: MRSteele@aol.com

#### Carl Fleischman

P.O. Box 727; Keyport, WA 98345-0727  
(360) 779-1327 · E-mail: gfleisch@sinclair.net

#### Fred Kellogg

15013 NE 16th St.; Vancouver, WA 98684-3605  
(360) 609-3404 E-mail: kellogg@comcast.net

#### Robert H. Vaxter

45749 Prairiegrass Court; Belleville, MI 48111-6428  
(734) 385-6395 Email: rvaxter47@yahoo.com

#### Pete Ritch

833 E Gulf Beach Drive, St George Island, FL 32328-2915  
(850) 734-0014 Email: goldendog@mchsi.com

#### Mike "Belmo" Belmessieri

279 Dundee Drive, South San Francisco, CA 94080-1028  
(650) 756-2324 Email: zippoF-11@aol.com

#### Greg Martin

6514 - 81st Drive NE, Marysville, WA 98270-8010  
Phone: 360-480-1206 Email: usmctanker@comcast.net

### Committees & Chairmen

#### SgtMajor Bill "JJ" Carroll

Nominating Chair & Reunion Chair

CRCS/CR Representative

651-342-0913 CST

#### Bruce Van Apeldoorn

Audit & Finance

585-613-6564 EST

#### CWO4 Bob Embesi

CRCS/CR Representative

406-821-3075 MS

#### Joe Liu

Jerry Clark Memorial Buddy Fund

801-731-7591

Email: pjliu@hotmail.com

#### Ron Knight

Member Data Integrity

770-623-9237 EST

#### 1st Sgt. Rick Lewis

VA Information

VTA History Project

858-735-1772 PST

#### Bob Peavey

Fallen Heroes

770-365-3711 EST

#### Pete Ritch

VTA History Project

850-734-0014 EST

#### Jim Coan

Scholarship Committee

Phone: 520-378-9659 PST

Email: zzjimco@aol.com

#### Greg Martin

Webmaster

National Recruiter

360-480-1206 PST

Email: usmctanker@comcast.net

Web Site: www.usmcvta.org

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John Wear - Editor & Publisher - johnwear2@verizon.net

Tuyen Pham - Layout and Design

Sandra Coan - Proofing

Printed in the USA

### New Members

#### Felix, Gary A

1148 River Rock Lane

Danville, CA 94526-4004

Phone: 510-693-3814

Email: felix4@pobox.com

H&S Co, 1st Tanks, '67 - '68

MOS: 1811

DOB: 3/14/45

Wife: Jo

Recruited by: Steve Falk

#### Tubbs, Charles B

136 Smull Avenue

West Caldwell, NJ 07006

Phone: (973) 670-1945

Email: capttubbs@aol.com

A, B and C Co, 2nd Tanks, '63 - '66

MOS: 1811

DOB: 9/11/45

Wife: Andrea

Recruited by: VTHF

#### Schlieben, George T

PO Box 372

Yardley, PA 19067-8372

Phone: 215-4936783

Email: schliebg@verizon.net

A & H&S Co, 1st Tanks, '66

MOS: 0141

DOB: 6/6/46

Recruited by: Steve Falk

### MEMBER INFO CHANGES

#### Sgt Maj William "JJ" tarroll

Email: sgtmajwfc@comcast.net

Phone: 651-342-0913

#### Monty Cramer

1754 Fox Ridge Road

Laramie, WY 82072-5211

Cell Phone: 307-760-0961

#### Lt Col Bill Lockridge

6400 Montvale Court

Charlotte, NC 28226

Phone: 980-237-9582

Cell: 914-260-4847

#### Brad Goodin

Phone: 636-668-8104

#### Roger "Blues" Unland

Email: Bluesfromnam@gmail.com

#### Guy Wolfenbarger

500 S Parkview, Unit 200

Columbus, Ohio 43209.

## Our Readers Write

(Formally known as "Letters to the Editor")

### Corrections

In "The Great Tank Park in the Sky", Charlie Doering was from North Carolina (NC) not Nevada (NV).

Joe Tyson

The book review that I wrote on The First Marine Captured in Vietnam that appeared in the most recent edition of the Sponson Box has an error. The author, Col. Donald Price, informed me that he was not a graduate of the Naval Academy, that he was an English instructor at the Naval Academy from 1972-75.

Jim Coan

It's a great Issue! Well done! The photo on Page 9 of the latest Sponson Box shows the two tanks and some grunts. I checked with Darrell Clock and we both agree that the guy without a cover on the "Lonely Bull" is Tex Massingale (sp?). I did not become the driver until after Operation Pegasus was over.

Bob Vaxter

I am looking at my Sponson Box and saw the picture on Page 9 and yes, that is Operation Pegasus, and the tank behind the gun tank is the flame tank that I drove. Gary Hobbs was the gunner and the TC was Sergeant Rupp. I went back and looked at the past issue and not sure how I missed the photos.

Chet Ruby

### More Stuff to do in DC

I just received the latest Sponson Box! Always a joy to receive! I was wondering how you could impress upon the attendees of all the wonderful things to see around DC!

I read some years ago Steven Ambrose's book "Undaunted Courage." Where he details an old colonial era air rifle. The only place I could find one was in the NRA Museum in DC. Since I travel back to DC at least yearly, I thought I would get the family to go to the museum. Unfortunately, it is too far for the Metro subway system so we do a Zip Car to see it. I was really surprised when they said they had a full shooting range in the basement of the museum and my wife absolutely loved the Hollywood exhibit with Dirty Harry's

guns, James Bond etc., etc.

There is just so much to see. I think members should understand how easy it is to use the Metro and see the many, many sights around DC. And I think that they should also to take advantage of the very reasonable hotel rates for extra days!

Lee Tannahill

### Marine Corps Memorial Restoration

The famous bronze U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial overlooking Washington that depicts Marines raising the American flag at Iwo Jima during World War II has begun turning green with age, but now will be restored with a \$5.37 million gift.

Philanthropist David Rubenstein announced Wednesday that he will give the National Park Foundation the funds needed to wash, wax and restore the memorial and refurbish its plaza and landscaping. Improvements are also planned for the memorial's signage and access for visitors. The project will also restore the memorial's engravings to be much brighter.

The 61-year-old memorial honors all who have given their lives in the U.S. Marine Corps. It depicts a famous incident of World War II after a bloody battle when the Americans moved to capture the island of Iwo Jima to help bring the war to an end. The monument's depiction was inspired by a Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph by Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal.

The restoration effort will be the first comprehensive refurbishment of the memorial since it was dedicated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1954, though it has had routine maintenance over the years, said National Park Service Director Jonathan Jarvis. The granite base will be polished, and cracked segments of the surrounding plaza will be replaced. Restoring the memorial's original bronze color will be the most noticeable difference.

Work is expected to begin this summer, and the project is expected to take about two years to complete. The memorial site will remain open to the public.

- From Marine Corps Times

Submitted by Bob Peavey

>>



### FRONT COVER PHOTO:

VTA Charter Member *Garry Hall* took this amazing photo of a USMC M-1 tank firing its 120 mm main gun during "Tiger Comp 2015" at Camp Le Jeune in June. Note the muzzle flash and the tracer off to the right. See follow up story on Page 26.

## Christmas 1966 – Bravo Co, 1st Tanks



In the photo: Harry Herren, Office Clerk, Tannahill, Tim Hackett, John Beck, next two Guys on left ??, Stanley Olenjack, Donald Rapp. In the shade with no shirt looks like Cecil Brown

Tonight, my thoughts drift back to Christmas 1966 on a hill NW of Da Nang, with chickens from the local village that we tankers butchered and BBQ-ed for all on the hill. The grunts had the trimmings flown in by chopper, and we even had ice cream as I remember. Bravo 35 and Bravo 33 were on that hill. Bravo 32 and Bravo 13 were to the north on the grunt company CP hill. Bravo 31 was at Namu Bridge (having a fish fry, using M-26 hand grenades for fishing poles) and Bravo 34 and our flame tank were in the Bravo company area, protecting Capt Lou Cherico! That night, "Parrott" and I were playing black jack, going back and forth with the pot. First he'd be a couple hundred dollars ahead, then I'd buy the deal from him for another hundred, and then I'd be ahead several hundred. Rogers was having a fit because we were playing for such high stakes; he'd try to sleep and then he'd get up and pace around, telling us to quit and go to bed! We started laughing, and that just made things worse. We finally quit when we both broke even!

Once again, I want to thank all of you for the good times we have had together. My wife Doris and I so enjoy our 3rd Herd reunions. Our health issues will continue to plague us but our spirits are high (and with the right kind of spirits, even higher). Here's looking ahead to 2015; we shall stay in touch and wish the best for all!

Fuzz ... (aka Rod Henderson)

## Late Arrival At MCRDSD

I attended a reunion and there was a lot of talk about boot camp and DI's that had me on Memory Lane of late. Of course my favorite is waking up after the late arrival at MCRDSD. I'm guessing we hit the rack about 3:00 AM

and reveille was at 4:00 AM. My first thought upon waking was I've really messed up this time, only "messed up" was not the exact term I used. Funny, I remember thinking the same thought before we hit the rack.

At Oh-Dark Thirty the DI's lined us up in platoon columns and we half-assed marched over to this little yellow building where the DI's stopped us. The platoon discovered that this building will be forever known as the head. The command that the DI gave will forever be engrained in my brain.



"Platoon 3059 get in the shitter!" I don't think it registered with us right away but after the usual "Sir, Platoon 3059, get in the shitter! Aye-aye Sir!" (which we screwed up a few times before we could say it in unison). Suddenly, 75 guys are sprinting to the head, trying like hell to fit the entire platoon into those double doors. Ramming and jamming each other we were on a very urgent #1 or #2 mission.

Finally, we were all inside for maybe 20 seconds trying to complete our mission when we heard a call from the DI outside "Platoon 3059, get out of the shitter!" We looked at each other with that WTF look on our faces as half of the guys hadn't gotten their mission accomplished. Again, 75 guys ramming and jamming through those double doors to get into formation.

That, my Marine friends will recall, was the start of the first day of 8 weeks of an experience we will never forget.

Kim B. Swanson

9th MAB, RVN '67-'68

Submitted by Doug Scrivner

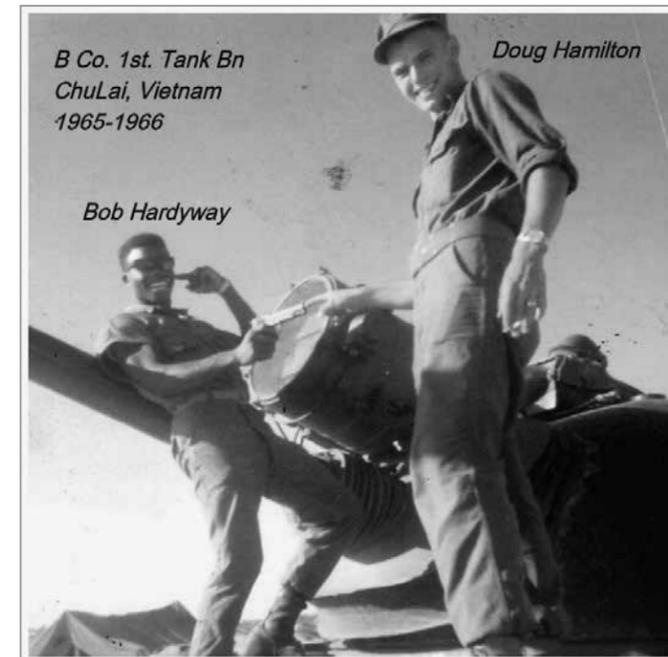
## A Cross Country Sojourn

When I was a Pvt. and was being sent back to Camp Pendleton from 2nd Tanks after being there for just one month. They put me on the famous Piedmont Airlines on "space available." Well, they kicked me off in Memphis, TN and said, "You can get on a flight in two days." So I called the number the 1st Sgt. gave me that was for 1st Tanks at Pendleton. The Duty NCO told me to find the bus station, show them my orders, and said that they will bill the Marine Corps for the ticket. So I did and had a great time getting to Oceanside, CA. The old ladies on the bus would always have baked goodies that they were taking to their families and they would give me some. At the stops, some old guy would always buy my breakfast, lunch and dinner. I look back now and realize they were all U.S. military vets who saw this slick-sleeve Marine private and they were just being good guys taking care of their own. It was a long three-day trip. Once I was in Oceanside, I found a sea locker store where I could shit, shower, shave and change, all for a few bucks, and then I reported in.

Ah, the good old days!!!

Rick Lewis

## Old Friends



Do you think the finger in the barrel trick works?

*Editor's note: Tom Snyder sent me the above photo. He also sent me Bob Hardyway's email address so I sent Bob a recruiting email, we'll see what it nets us.*

## The Origin of Chu Lai

Rick Armstrong writes: I served there during my first deployment but I cannot recall the Hill but had a commanding view of the 'ville, the RMK-BRJ compound and surrounding countryside. I also did duty at the massive ammo dump in the middle of a "desert" with an M-67A2 in support of the 7th Marines. I didn't know the following but I found it in the Sgt. Grit newsletter:

Until the Marines landed on the beach in Quang Tin Province in 1965, Chu Lai didn't even exist. There were no towns in the vicinity, and the area that was chosen to be an expeditionary airfield had no designation on any of the maps. As it turns out, the name "Chu Lai" isn't even a Vietnamese name—it's Chinese! Here's how it happened.

*"Although few things were named in Vietnam for living servicemen, there is a known story of one location named for a living Marine in Vietnam. Chu Lai, in Quang Tin Province, was not even a town when the U.S. Marines constructed a major base there. When then MajGen Victor H. Krulak selected the site for an airfield, a naval officer accompanying him remarked that the site was not marked on the maps. Krulak replied that the name was Chu Lai, giving the officer his (own) name in Mandarin Chinese — thus General Victor Krulak named Chu Lai for himself."*—from the book "Vietnam Military Lore, Legends, Shadows and Heroes", by MSgt Ray Bows, USA Retired

This same reference to the origin of the name given to the area now known as "Chu Lai" (which today is currently maintained by the Vietnamese as an international airport), can also be found in Robert Coram's book, "Brute: The Life of Victor Krulak, U.S. Marine".

## An Update on Don Gagnon:

As you know, Top can be a PIA at times. After over 60 years you would think I would have had enough but I still love the guy. I'll call and call getting only voice mail. I will hear nothing from him for weeks at a time and then I'll get a call and he wants to see me ... RIGHT NOW!!

Anyway, Don is getting on in age as you know. He is showing it as well. He no longer drives, his eye sight and hearing are very poor. He has lost a good amount of weight and yet he seems in reasonable good health. His memory is still sharp. >>

If anyone is interested in Top's where-about's direct them to me.

Snail Mailing Address:

Arthur E. Nash Sr.

P.O. Box 1275

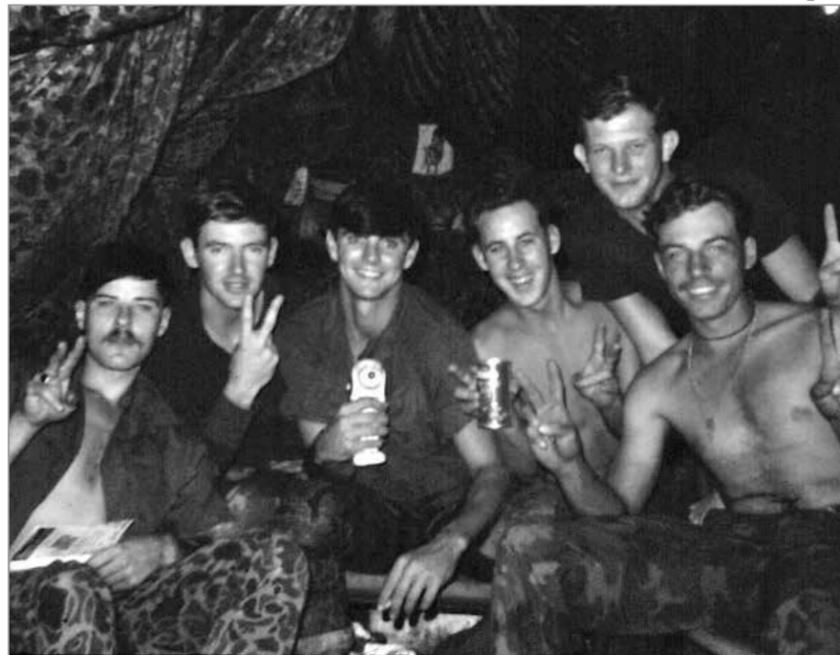
Hereford, AZ 85615

Phone: (520) 236-7836

Email: anash3@msn.com

\*\*\*We may be slow in response with "Snail Mail"...The stage-coach from Tucson come's through only twice a week.\*\*\*

Christmas 1968 – Charlie Co, 3rd Tanks



(L to R) Andy Anderson, Mike Andregg, "Froggy", Bill "Festus" Payne, Brad "Goodie" Goodin and "Frenchie" La Porte

### Rules of Engagement

John Wear wrote: Ken, thanks for the phone call and for all of the detail. As you were telling me about the (horrible) Rules of Engagement that you-all had to endure back in 1965, I remembered several times where my crew spotted "black shirts" (NVA soldiers) out in front of our tank. It was mid-1968 and the ROE were that if you were not involved in a "hot" firefight, then you called in the sighting and you sought permission to shoot. All the while, the unofficial SOP was to shoot and then call it in. For the most part, we believed that seeking forgiveness was far easier than gaining permission. Now, grant you, 3rd Tanks was "up north"

along the DMZ, and most of the area was designated a "Free Fire Zone." None-the-less, the brass hats at MACV still wanted us to call in sightings before we engaged them.

One story that I recall about this ROE fiasco was that an Alpha Co. gun tank was at a daytime OP out along the road between the Washout and Con Thien. The crew spotted "black shirts" and the TC called it in. After a very long delay, the radios crackled and a voice came over saying that the so-called "black shirts" was an ARVN patrol, so permission to fire was denied. Everyone on the crew knew that no ARVN would be outside of their protective perimeter wire in that specific location. Anyway, the following week, another tank pulled into the same OP slot and when the TC jumped off of the tank onto the ground, a booby trap exploded, blowing off the TC's foot. Most of us knew that the booby trap was probably set by the "black shirts" that the other tank crew spotted a few days before.

**Ken Zebal replied:** Yep, '65 was all like that; nobody wanted to be relieved from a command in combat which is exactly what happened to the 1st CO of 3/3 for having an amtrac blown in place w/o permission. But in '66 it loosened up to be a more reasonable and far less cumbersome approach. Then '68 – '69 it was open season because it was just us and them in a Free Fire Zone.

### A Note From a VTA Scholarship Student

I am writing to let you know that I just finished my third year of college at the University of New England with a cumulative GPA of a 3.7. I wanted to send you my transcript and let you know that I will be taking a full course load again for the 2015-2016 academic year.

I want to thank you again for providing this scholarship. I am incredibly appreciative to have the opportunity to be where I am in my academic career, and to have the Vietnam Tankers Association supporting me. I believe that in the coming semesters, I will have the opportunity to be working with veterans and I imagine that it will be incredibly rewarding as it is something that is so close to me.

Sincerely,

Page Carr

Daughter of VTA member Frank Carr

## The Guest Column

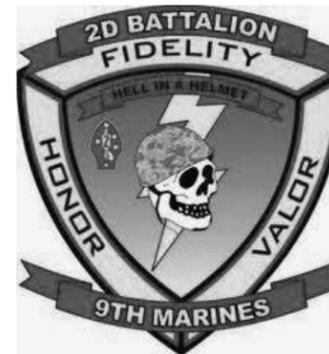
### An Incident of War

AUTHOR: 1ST SGT. JAMES L. LANGFORD, USMC (RET.)

From the series: "A Test of Judgment"

Marine Corps Gazette

Volume 99, Issue 5



The Vietnam era 2/9 logo

The time was April 1969; the locale Vietnam; the characters United States Marines. The facts as told herein are true, but whether there are still live witnesses to the incident is unknown.

My name is James Lawrence Langford, and at the time, I was First Sergeant, Golf Company, 2d Battalion, 9th Marines (G/2/9) located at LZ Stud, later to be known as Vandegrift Combat Base (VCB).

G/2/9 had been in combat in the I Corps area when I learned that one of my Marines, a deserter, had been apprehended at Dong Ha. I returned from the field and went to Dong Ha, took control of the prisoner, and returned to VCB.

As I approached VCB, my prisoner shouted to a group of Black Marines to please help him. The further in we went, I found we were being followed by a large crowd of these Marines. Because my prisoner had made an effort to escape, I had handcuffed him to my Jeep. Before I could release him and catch a helicopter out to my company, I found myself confronted by a large, noisy crowd of Black Marines. They were unarmed but making threatening gestures and remarks to me. They insisted I release my prisoner. I estimated that about 300 men were in the group. As I confronted this crowd, I also posted my driver on a small ridge behind the Jeep where he could cover me. I told him not to shoot unless it looked like I would be seriously hurt. He was armed with an M-16, and I had my .45.

I told the crowd to disperse, but this they ignored and

became even more unruly. I was now faced with several problems. I had hoped that other Marines from the battalion would see my problem and come to help. I know there were several officers and SNCOs around, but they were not to be seen. I had no power to force dispersal and knew that the longer this confrontation went on, the more dangerous it would become. If I stood my ground and they attacked me, I knew my driver would fire into them. On the other hand, there was a strong possibility that some of them might leave and return armed. The possibility of a race riot was ever present in my thoughts. I could easily imagine the Marine Corps, and particularly the 9th Regiment, being humiliated throughout our Nation. Whatever happened to me would pale in comparison to the potential danger to the Corps, although I was well aware that my career as well as my life could possibly be ended.

As I stood in front of this angry, shouting mob, I knew it was decision time. I could be the brave first sergeant who refused to let them take his prisoner and, in the process, gotten some of them killed, or I could be the coward and give up my prisoner to a mob, thus violating every tenant I had been taught about never giving up your prisoner.

I wasn't really worried about my personal safety; after all, I was armed and had an armed man backing me up. My real problem was that I did not know what the mob would do. As I said earlier, my thoughts were constantly on being the man who started a race riot and ruined the reputation of my regiment, my Corps, and myself.

I made the decision to let them have my prisoner, face the shame this decision would bring me, and its subsequent degradation.

As soon as the prisoner was taken away, I reported to the battalion sergeant major what I had done. He reported to the regimental sergeant major, and I soon learned that the regimental commander was going to hang me out to dry.

Col Robert H. Barrow was the 9th Marines regimental commander.

To conclude this article, let me say that nothing whatsoever happened to me. To this day, I am still not sure my company commander, 1stLt James Horn, knew of this incident.

The purpose of me telling this story is to emphasize that in any war, incidents will arise that test the judgment of any person. He will have to decide for himself whether what he does is appropriate or not. This was just an incident in a war of long ago. Was it moral, ethical, cowardly, or courageous? >>

**Here is a response to Top Langford from two other career USMC SNCOs:**

I finally got my Gazette and your story brought back memories. It takes guts to put in writing events where you have wondered your whole life if you made the right decision. We all during the late sixties and early seventies had to deal with the divisive racial atmosphere and the reluctance of higher Commanders to face the realities of the situation.

Was the Marine you wrote about later captured at Vandergrift? The reason I ask is that toward the end of April I was waiting to get to Golf after three tries where the chopper couldn't get in. At the LZ someone gave me a deserter to take to the field (I don't remember if it was you). This guy was talking a mean game. Nobody was man enough to get him on the helicopter and he was going to shoot us all.

It just so happened that there was a Cpl. also waiting to go on the flight. His name was McCarty and he ended up in first Plt. with me. He had been wounded at Khe Sanh and elected to come back to RVN. I told Cpl. McCarty that I wanted this clown (or words to that affect) on the chopper no matter what it took. He kind of smiled and took the Marine behind a bunker for about five minutes and when they came back the guy was as meek and mild as could be and he got on the chopper without another word. When we got to Golf's position I turned the deserter over to Gunny Kenny. I don't know how long he stayed or what happened to him but we got him to the field.

Semper Fi,  
Sid

I remember there was a UA black Marine that stayed over in Sydney after R & R for a whole month. When I saw him briefly back at VCB, his appearance was pure sh\*tbird, beads and all. He told me he wanted to go out with us to get even for the death of Cpl. Tommy Segars, whom he described as a friend. I found that hard to believe. Then he told me I better do my job out there or he would shoot me. I told him if he shot at me he'd better not miss, because I wouldn't! I think his threat was an effort to stay in the rear and avoid going out in the bush, again. He had coward written all over him. He failed to show up for deployment on our next mission to the bush. We were better off without that spoiled apple along.

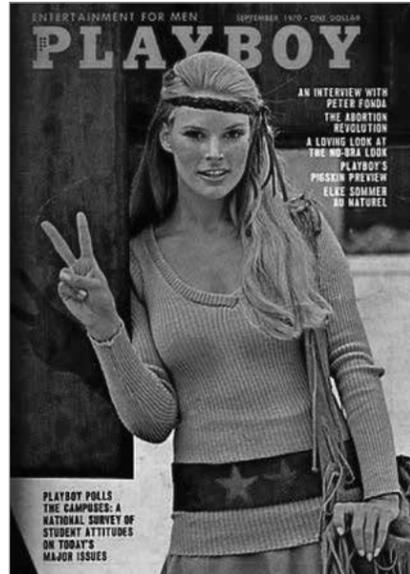
Semper Fi,  
Jim

**Please Note:** "The Guest Column" is a new feature created for anyone who wants to send us a 200 – 300 word essay that pertains to the interest of Marine tankers, past or present. The Sponson Box editorial board will consider all submissions and determine which essay to run; this does not replace, "Letters to the Editor". This is a venue for expressing what may be controversial or the writer has a strong opinion about. We only ask that is not be political or religious in content. Opinions expressed in The Guest Column are not necessarily those of the Sponson Box editor or the VTA Board of Directors. ■

## Photos from Vietnam



Bob Haller and Lee Tannehill



## 90 Days a Grunt

One of the biggest surprises I encountered when reporting for duty in Vietnam in September 1968, were orders to a Marine infantry company as a platoon leader. When I asked why a newly trained armor officer (MOS 1802) was being assigned to an infantry unit, I was told "All new 2nd Lieutenants assigned to the 3rd Marine Division, were sent to infantry units for their first 90 days in country". Bob Skeels, John Heffernan and I all experienced the honor of being a grunt platoon leader for 90 days.

The USMC Vietnam Tankers Association is compiling

"90 Days as a Grunt" stories from us for publication in our association magazine, "The Sponson Box". I am curious where there others of y'all that were assigned to an infantry unit prior to operating in your actual MOS? If any of you had a similar experience please contact me by email at [www.goldendog.com](http://www.goldendog.com) or by phone at 850-734-0014

Pete Ritch

OCS 1967; TBS 1968;

Tracked Vehicle School 1968;

Vietnam 1968-1969.

## Discounts Not Often Mentioned

### Restaurants

Applebee's: 10-15% off senior discounts (varies by location) MAY require Golden Apple Card at some locations (60+)

Arby's: 10% discount (55+)

A&W All American Food: 10% discount and varies by location(60+)

Backyard Burger: Seniors get free drink with each purchase (60+)

Ben & Jerry's: 10% discount for seniors (60+)

Bennigan's: Discount varies by location (60+)

Bob's Big Boy: Discount varies by location (60+)

Boston Market: 10% discount (65+)

Burger King: 10% off (60+) plus additional discounts on coffee and soft drinks

Bubba Gump Shrimp Co: 10% discount for AARP Members

Captain D's Seafood: "Happy Wednesday Offer" choice of 8 meals + drink for \$4.99 or less-varies by loc. (62+)

Carrabba's Italian Grill: 20% discount on Wednesday's to AARP Members

Carrows Restaurants: Golden 55 Menu offers discounted breakfast, lunch & dinner (55+)

Chili's: Discount varies by location. (60+)

CiCi's Pizza: 10% discount (60+)

Country Kitchen: Great Senior Menu. 10% discount. Varies by location. (55+)

Culvers: 10% discount (60+)

Dairy Queen: 10% off for seniors (15% for coaches) varies by location (free small drink at some locations)

Denny's: 10% discount; 20% discount for AARP members (55+)

Dunkin' Donuts: AARP members receive a free donut with the purchase of a large hot coffee (at participating restaurants only)

Einstein's Bagels: 10% discount on baker's dozen of bagels (60+)

El Pollo Loco: 10% discount. Varies by location (55+)

Friendly's Restaurants: Breakfast discount varies by location (60+) Senior List readers to confirm

### Retail

Banana Republic: 10% discount (50+)

Bealls: 20% discount first Tuesday of each month (50+)

Belk's: 15% discount first Tuesday of every month (55+)

Bon-Ton Department Stores: 15% discount on senior discount days (55+)

C.J. Banks: 10% discount every Wednesday (60+)

Clarks: 10% discount (62+)

Dress Barn: 10% discount (55+)

And check this website for hundreds more:

<http://www.veteranprograms.com/id1371.html> ■

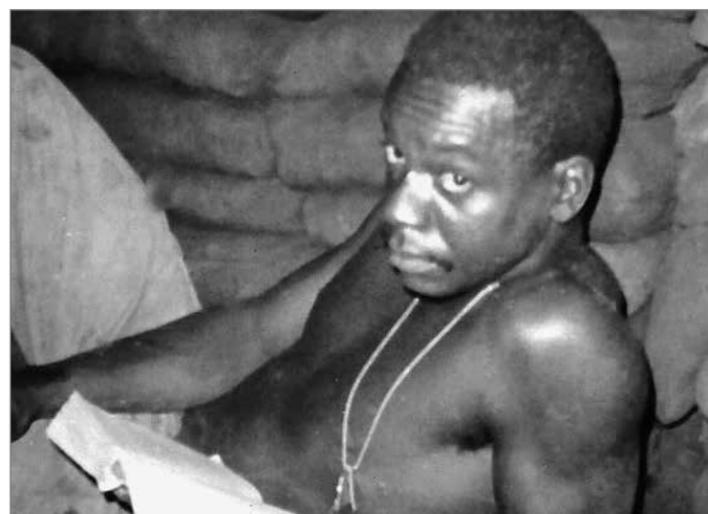
Can you guess who the person is in this photo? And as a bonus, can you tell at what bridge the photo was taken? The first person to contact John Wear (at 215-794-9052) with the correct answer will receive a yet unnamed mediocre prize.



## GUESS WHO Photo Contest

### Last Issue Winner

**Editor's note:** On July 16th at 3:27 PM EST, I got a phone call from William "Creech" Franker. Bill asked, "Am I too late to ID the photo? I almost didn't call you." I replied that the magazine was probably still in the U.S. Mail on the way to most of the members on the West Coast and that the ink was probably not even dry from the printer! He went on to ID the photo as **Charlie Brown** who was Creech's TC and his acting Platoon Sgt. The photo was taken at Cam Lo Village when he was with Alpha Co, 3rd Tanks in 1968.



See the follow up story next.

### "He's Gonna Get Caught, Just You Wait and See..."

A refrain from the 1960's group The Coaster's song Charlie Brown

#### FOLLOW UP STORY:

The same day that "Creech" called to identify the photo, John Harper also called two

hours later and relayed the following story: Charlie Brown had a transistor radio that he loved to play the tunes that Armed Forces

Vietnam radio would play. One morning Charlie's beloved radio was missing. Not much later an ARVN came ditty bopping by the tank carrying Charlie's radio over his shoulder. Charlie took one look at the

situation; he jumped down off of the tank; kicked the dog poop out of the ARVN and took his radio back. Two days later, John Harper got a call on the radio from the Alpha Company HQ at Dong Ha telling him to bring his tank from the "Charlie-4" outpost, which was located north of the Navy base at the mouth of the Cua Viet River, and to come out to Cam Lo Bridge in order to take over as acting Platoon Sgt. It turns out that the Alpha Company "brass hats" had to rescue Charlie Brown from the ARVN "brass hats." Why? Because the ARVN soldier that Charlie Brown kicked the poop out of happened to be an ARVN Sergeant Major and the ARVN "brass hats" wanted to hang Charlie for attacking a senior Staff NCO. Now that this story is out in the open, I am guessing that there are more of the VTA members who may now think pretty highly of Charlie Brown. As an aside, John Harper thinks that Charlie Brown has since transferred to "The Great Tank Park in the Sky." Rest in peace, Marine.

#### MORE STORIES:

And that same day, I also got a call from Dickey Russell who said that he first met Marvin "Charlie" Brown at Camp LeJeune in the early 1960's. They went on an extended Med Cruise where, being Marines, they got into all sorts of innocent and not-so-innocent trouble. Dickey said that Marvin got his nickname from the (then) popular song of the early 60's sung by the Coasters, "Charlie Brown." One of the refrains is: "He's gonna' get caught, just you wait and see. Why is everyone always pickin' on me?"

Dickey said that poor old Charlie Brown always seemed to have a dark cloud over his head. He never seemed to be able to stay out of trouble. Dickey said that while Charlie had probably intended to be a career Marine, he thinks that Charlie may never have been promoted above the rank of corporal ... and that he may have been a corporal many times again and again.

Another Charlie Brown sea story that Dickey told me was that one day back at Camp Le Jeune, Charlie begged, borrowed or "acquired" enough money to go to the PX to buy two LP records. The all-girl-group, The Supremes, were a brand-new singing phenomenon and Charlie brought their record back to the barracks, along with a new one by Ray Charles. At the time the barracks had the NCO's living area separated from the snuffies with a blanket hanging on a rope. That day, everyone living in the squad bay was out on the battalion tank ramp doing PM on the tanks, so Charlie had the entire squad bay to himself. He cranked up the record player to full volume and sat on his rack smoking Pall Mall cigarettes while grooving on the sounds. After the work day was over and the troops came back to the barracks for evening chow and liberty, Dickey remembers that Charlie had a shit fit because the snuffies all made too much noise and it ruined his groove.

**Tim Nichols** called me and correctly identified Charlie. Tim said that Charlie was a sergeant and his tank commander in Alpha Co., 3rd Tanks in 1968. Tim seemed to think that Charlie may have picked up S/ Sgt. Tim also said of Charlie what a lot of Marine tankers say about "field Marines." That is, Charlie was one of the most knowledgeable tank commanders he ever had, "but when we were in the rear, Charlie could get himself in way too much trouble."

A few days later, **Gunner Bob Embesi** called and identified Charlie. Bob said that he never served with Charlie in combat, but back in Okinawa Charlie was a sergeant and lived in the NCO quarters with Bob. Bob said that Charlie always seemed to have something to complain about. I guess that Charlie followed the axiom that Marines are not happy unless they are bitching & moaning about something. This is a quote from the "Terminal Lance" cartoon: **If there's one constant of the Marine Corps**

– it's that Marines will bitch about pretty much anything. You can give them the world, but something will be wrong with it and it could probably be better.

**Jim Coan** said that L/Cpl. Charlie Brown came to 1st Platoon, Alpha Co., at Con Thien in 1967 and was assigned to Sgt. Weicak's tank on the northern perimeter. One afternoon, while several MACV brass were congregating by the CO's bunker entrance, they heard that the 2/12 arty battery at Con Thien had been firing at an FO position in a church steeple several thousand meters north of Con Thien and had been unable to score a direct hit. One of the Marine brass, probably a tanker, asked if the tankers could have a go at it. Charlie Brown was in the gunner's seat of Weicak's tank. The first H.E. round out was a bit high. A few seconds later, the second round scored a direct hit. Jim was at the CO's briefing later that afternoon when the Bn. CO relayed how the tankers had outshone the cannon cockers, thanks to Charlie Brown's expertise with Kentucky Windage.

**Jim added:** Once at Camp LeJeune in 1969 when I was the skipper of one of the 2nd Tank companies, I had stopped in to speak with the Bravo Co Commanding Officer. As I was leaving, I walked towards a Marine sitting outside of the captain's office. He jumped to attention. It was Charlie Brown, all squared away. I said, "At ease, Brown. What the hell are you up to now?" He told me how he was in some hot water again and was waiting to see the CO. I went back in to the CO's office, closed the door and proceeded to tell the captain what an outstanding combat Marine Charlie Brown was and that I'd be honored to have him in my company if he was a problem. That was good enough to the captain and whatever Brown had done was forgiven. I never saw Charlie Brown again. ■

# Six Reasons I'm Happier Because I Went to War

BY JOHN WALTERS

Eight years of my life was spent enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. I was deployed to Fallujah, Iraq and Helmand Province, Afghanistan. One of the most frequent questions I am asked about my service is, "Are you glad you did it?" It surprises most people when I respond with an enthusiastic YES. Naturally wartime and combat are associated with sadness and devastation. War affects millions of innocent people and PTSD afflicts service men and women with crippling effects. I'm not immune to all the negative fallout of being a Marine during wartime, but many lessons I learned as a Marine make me a happier person. Here are a few: (Note I use the term Marine, but it could be exchanged for soldier, seaman, airman, or any other service member.)

## 1. No Maserati, No Problem – Letting Go of Materialism

We put a lot of emphasis on having nice homes, sleek cars, and the latest tech gadgets. As a whole, we are very materialistic. This is evidenced by the fact that over the last few days the biggest headlines surround Apple's launch of the Apple Watch and the iPhone 6. I'm not saying Apple gadgets aren't nice to have. In fact, I had an iPod in Iraq and Afghanistan and at times it was the only thing that kept me sane. And I certainly would never give up the experience of being my platoon's DJ.

But after living on the desert floor for a year with no more personal belongings than would fit in a small backpack I learned to make do without a lot of 'stuff'. The experience helped me to understand the happiness in austerity. I have since accumulated a few more things than would fit into a backpack. However, I have gained the perspective that while the latest gadgets and gizmos might be entertaining and useful, they are not absolutely necessary. And not having them certainly does not make me sad. Letting go of materialism makes me a happier person.

## 2. Mustaches are Hilarious – Finding Humor in Difficult Situations

On my final deployment my platoon got a new corpsman (medical specialist). Doc Bear joined the Marine Corps the year I was born and had recently enlisted in the Navy in order to accompany us into combat as our corpsman. He was so old we asked him what the beer tasted like at Tun Tavern—where the Marine Corps was organized in 1775. He couldn't remember. Doc Bear was one of the best companions I had, but he had the most barbaric mustache known to man. Every time Doc Bear would say something funny or clever we would respond, "That was good Doc. Did your mustache come up with that?"

I have never laughed as much as I did when living with other Marines. I have never laughed at myself as much either. Being in a bad situation shouldn't dampen our humor because sometimes humor is the only thing that will get us through it.

## 3. That Tingling Feeling Is Love – Understanding Emotions and How They Make Life More Colorful

One of the most prominent side effects of deployment is the development of apathy. I've heard psychologists say that sometimes the brain numbs emotions as a coping mechanism when it is exposed to horrible things. In a sense, I'm glad it happens that way. I would rather be apathetic than have crippling depression, untampered anger, or inconsolable guilt and sadness. However, in the real world, where death and destruction are not commonplace, emotions make life vibrant and rich.

When I returned home to my wife and 9-month-old son I was glad the deployment was behind me, but I didn't really feel happy. I didn't really feel anything. Well, that's not entirely true; I did feel hungry from time to time. At the time I didn't realize how apathetic I had become. Ten months

after I had been home I had an experience that caused a few emotions to hit me like a freight train. I was in the delivery room for the first time as my daughter was being born (I missed my son's birth). The sounds of her first little cries not only entered my ears, but they broke through the wall that my mind had built to hold my deeper feelings captive.

Witnessing a child come into the world is something that millions of men have done. Similarly, many millions of men have seen the sunlight. But to me, whose eyes had become accustomed to a pitch black cave, the sunlight of my daughter's birth was so overwhelming and powerful that for the first time in over a decade I teared up for a reason other than walking around in a dust storm. In the past I had taken emotions for granted, but now I can fully appreciate the rich feelings that life has to offer. I notice now very keenly every time my heart starts to beat a little faster, when my skin starts to heat up slightly, or when my breathing speeds up. I'm so much happier now because I have been to life's deepest trenches of apathy and so I can better appreciate its peaks of emotion.

## 4. Working Well With Shorty – The Best Teams are Made Up of Completely Different People

The Marine Corps made it possible for me to build relationships with different types of people that I never would have otherwise. As I would learn in combat, taking advantage of our differences was the most effective thing my team could do. I am tall, quiet, deliberate, and calm. My teammate was short, loud, tactical, and wild. In the beginning he was also annoying. TJ joined my unit a month after I did. I remember looking at him walking in to our building straight out of training and thinking to myself, "who does this arrogant boot think he is?" (Boot is an endearing term used to describe young, untested Marines.) Apparently he thought of me as annoying, awkward, and soft. A third member of our team was Ben, who studied Norse mythology and read fantasy books like he got paid for it. Understandably when he joined our team just before our last deployment we thought he was a little weird.

Little did we know that we would become best friends, having accompanied each other to the pits of hell. Alone we could not have accomplished much, but together we were amazing. We performed dozens of missions with the RAVEN (a small drone) including creating a flight path that enabled us to use its camera to call in and observe mortar fire. We conducted dozens of patrols and became the go-to

team for critical missions. Each of us had a unique set of skills that complimented each other and created the highest skilled team I have ever been a part of.

The first step to happiness is accepting other people's differences. The next step is to utilize, take advantage of, and sync those differences in order to launch your teams and companionships into long-term success and happiness. In my opinion, embracing and taking advantage of differences is one of the most critical factors to a successful marriage. In this regard, TJ and Ben taught me more about marriage than they might ever realize.

## 5. It'll All Be Over Soon – Only Two Things Endure: Knowledge and Relationships

After starting a family, graduating college, and starting a great career my time in the Marine Corps seems like a surreal past. Although it seemed like an eternity when I was wearing the uniform eight years went by quickly. Contracts and uniforms come and go but what we learn and the bonds we form will last forever.

Gaining knowledge and building relationships with people are the most important things we can do; working at it will produce lasting happiness.

## 6. Selfishness Accomplishes Nothing – Focus on Others

Every once in a while I am asked why I joined the Marine Corps instead of one of the other branches. My response is always, "If you found yourself in a foxhole, who would you want on your left and right? I would want to be surrounded by Marines." Marines have many missions and each Marine has his or her own motive for joining the Corps. But when push comes to shove there is only one thing that matters: doing what it takes to make sure the Marines around you make it home. Selfishness not only undermines the mission, but it puts Marines at risk.

Traditionally discipline and ferocity are the hallmarks of a Marine. But to me selflessness is the key identifier of a true Marine. Everything else falls into place as a Marine does what is best for his teammates.

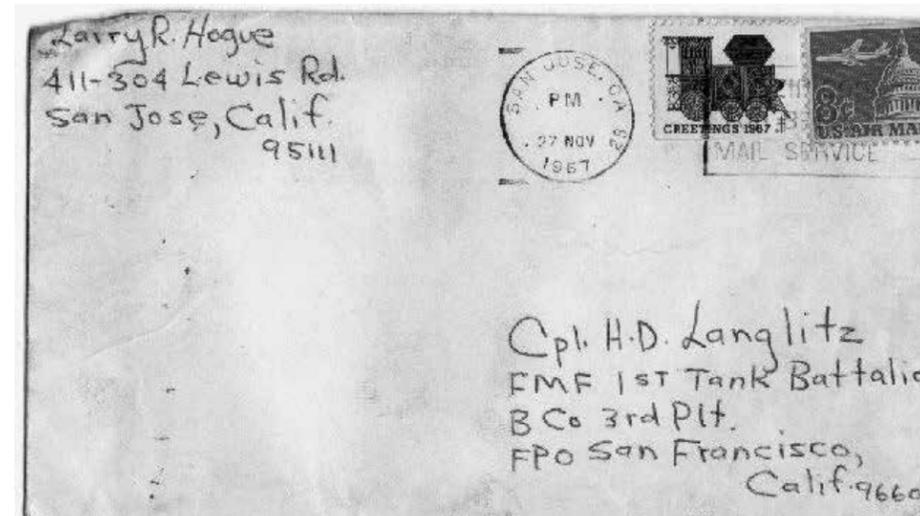
Too often we witness the sense of entitlement pervade our society. No wonder people are still searching for happiness. My secret: forget about yourself and do something for somebody else! Forget about how uncomfortable you are, what you're missing, or how unfair things are. Focusing on other people brings true happiness. ■

# My War in Vietnam was Over—Back to the World NOV67

By Larry Hogue

26NOV67—1:00 PM SUNDAY

for processing. If you had orders for another duty station they get you out of there and leave in about 45 minutes. If you are there for release or discharge you have to stay for seven days. If you have 59 days or less you get released. The first day you turn in your papers. They have formations three times a day. The second day you have a physical. It's just like the one you got when you got inducted. There are a lot of people but they get through it pretty fast. Then on the third day we heard a speech by a member of the reserves. He told us what we needed to do or not do to get out of reserve meetings. We could be called back in a national emergency crisis. All we had to do was go to the selective service and



get reclassified to 4A and notify them and the reserve headquarters in Kansas City anytime we changed our address. The rest of the time at El Toro we spent on working parties or cleaning up the transit barracks. Liberty goes from 4:00 PM to 5:30 AM. Saturday and Sunday you have off. They have a cafeteria that everybody tried to get out of working parties to go to but they put it off limits to us during the day. We had a couple of inspections wearing our green uniforms but that was because it was 10NOV67,

H.D.

I made it safe and sound back to civilian life, although it was a struggle. I spent almost four days at Okinawa. There had been a typhoon before I got there and the planes weren't able to land so there were a lot of guys waiting. Most people only stayed there for about a day and a half and some even less. All we did there was to get our clothing out of storage. I didn't have to get any shots but they do look at your shot card and stamp it. You have to leave Okinawa in your green uniform. If you can prove that you don't have one you can leave in your khakis. We had a lot of people get bumped off of flights. They would take more than they needed to the airport. People on emergency leave got to go first and those at the end of the list got bumped and had to wait another day. They had formations three or four times a day to call off names for flights. Sometimes people's names were misplaced and left off. A few guys had been there for ten days. The plane that I was on flew non-stop from Okinawa to El Toro California. It took eleven hours. They served two meals. We landed at El Toro and right away they put us in a terminal

the Marine Corps birthday, and President Johnson had come to El Toro. He was supposed to shake hands with us because we had just returned from Vietnam, but another plane had landed and he met them instead. On the last day there at 9:00 AM you pick up your release papers and get your red ID card. You can wear utilities, civilian clothes, or a uniform. Then at 10:00 you go to disbursing and get a check for back pay and travel. When you leave there you are on your own. I left in civilian clothes since I was just traveling in California, but most of the people traveling across country wore their uniforms so that they could fly home cheaper. For myself I'm on vacation right now. Doing as little as possible, but enjoying myself. All of the pictures that I took in Vietnam and movies all came out good.

Larry

*Editor's Note: We have added this new section to our magazine. If you or your loved ones have been fortunate enough to have kept any correspondences that you sent home, we'd love to share them with the membership. Please contact John Wear with your letters. ■*



## To the Great Tank Park in the Sky

### FAIR WINDS AND FOLLOWING SEAS... REST IN PEACE

#### Benedict Stephan Hanas



**Adel Hanas wrote:** My father, US Marine, Benedict S. Hanas who served in Vietnam passed away April 30th 2015. I wanted to share his eulogy with you.

In memory of Benedict Stephan Hanas who passed away April 30th 2015 leaving behind his wife and three daughters, three grandsons, a brother and sister, and many nieces and nephews. He was born in 1942 in Lamont Alberta, the youngest of five siblings. He was the son of immigrant parents who came over from the Ukraine. His father was a section foreman for the Canadian National Railway, he passed away when Ben was only 12 years old. Ben joined the Canadian Royal Sea Cadets while still in High School and graduated from Saint Joseph's College in Yorkton Saskatchewan. He joined the Marine Corps in Butte Montana, and did two tours in Vietnam. (Serving in the 3rd Tank Battalion). He made Sergeant (E-5) and was a tank commander. He was honorably discharged in 1969. He married Lana in San Diego, California where their three daughters were born. He worked as an automotive mechanic and diesel mechanic, then in 1975 he went out to sea as a ships engineer. He sailed the seven seas from the Marshall Islands to the coast of Western Africa, on tuna seiners, research vessels, and ocean going tugs. He crossed the Panama Canal with a

pet monkey intended for his children. He moved his family to the Big Island of Hawaii in the summer of 1984 during Madam Pele's active period. He worked for Sauce Brothers based on Oahu for 12 years as chief engineer. He decided to retire in the desert outside of Las Vegas, a very long way from any ocean, where he enjoyed maintaining and displaying his gun collection, taking road trips in his truck, cooking up exotic dishes, sitting out in the sun with his dog Tzipi, and having a cocktail while on the phone talking stories with friends. He had a dry sense of humor, he was a loving family man. He enjoyed fine food, drink, and cars, but was happiest when simply surrounded with good friend and conversation. We will all miss answering his phone calls, his unannounced visits, and his many sea stories.

Adele Hanas  
Phone: 713-572-5444  
P.O. Box 224  
Amargosa Valley, NV 89020  
Email: adele\_hanas@hotmail.com

#### Robert Delleville

We recently had Robert's July 2015 issue of the Sponson Box magazine returned as "PO Box Closed – Unable to Forward" ... so we went online to the Fernando Beach, Florida obituaries and found this:

**Robert Delleville, age 68, passed away on Wednesday, July 9, 2014 in Jacksonville, FL.**

According to the VTA membership roster Robert was a member of Bravo Company, 5th Tanks in-country in 1968. ■

# V. A. News & Updates

For more VA information please go to our website  
[www.USMCVTA.org](http://www.USMCVTA.org)

## Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)

### Criteria for PTSD

In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association revised the PTSD diagnostic criteria in the fifth edition of its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) (1). This criteria include a history of exposure to a traumatic event that meets specific stipulations and symptoms from each of four symptom clusters: intrusion, avoidance, negative alterations in cognitions and mood, and alterations in arousal and reactivity. The sixth criterion concerns duration of symptoms; the seventh assesses functioning; and, the eighth criterion clarifies symptoms as not attributable to a substance or co-occurring medical condition.

Two specifications are noted including delayed expression and a dissociative subtype of PTSD, the latter of which is new to DSM-5. In both specifications, the full diagnostic criteria for PTSD must be met for application to be warranted.

### Criterion A: Stressor

The person was exposed to: death, threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violence, as follows: **(one required)**

1. Direct exposure.
2. Witnessing, in person.
3. Indirectly, by learning that a close relative or close friend was exposed to trauma. If the event involved actual or threatened death, it must have been violent or accidental.
4. Repeated or extreme indirect exposure to aversive details of the event(s), usually in the course of professional duties (e.g., first responders, collecting body parts; professionals repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse). This does not include indirect non-professional exposure through electronic media, television, movies, or pictures.

### Criterion B: Intrusion Symptoms

The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in the following way(s): **(one required)**

1. Recurrent, involuntary, and intrusive memories. Note: Children older than six may express this symptom in repetitive play.

2. Traumatic nightmares. Note: Children may have frightening dreams without content related to the trauma(s).
3. Dissociative reactions (e.g., flashbacks) which may occur on a continuum from brief episodes to complete loss of consciousness. Note: Children may reenact the event in play.
4. Intense or prolonged distress after exposure to traumatic reminders.
5. Marked physiologic reactivity after exposure to trauma-related stimuli.

### Criterion C: Avoidance

Persistent effortful avoidance of distressing trauma-related stimuli after the event: **(one required)**

1. Trauma-related thoughts or feelings.
2. Trauma-related external reminders (e.g., people, places, conversations, activities, objects, or situations).

### Criterion D: Negative alterations in cognitions and mood

Negative alterations in cognitions and mood that began or worsened after the traumatic event: **(two required)**

1. Inability to recall key features of the traumatic event (usually dissociative amnesia; not due to head injury, alcohol, or drugs).
2. Persistent (and often distorted) negative beliefs and expectations about oneself or the world (e.g., "I am bad," "The world is completely dangerous").
3. Persistent distorted blame of self or others for causing the traumatic event or for resulting consequences.
4. Persistent negative trauma-related emotions (e.g., fear, horror, anger, guilt, or shame).
5. Markedly diminished interest in (pre-traumatic) significant activities.
6. Feeling alienated from others (e.g., detachment or estrangement).
7. Constricted affect: persistent inability to experience positive emotions.

### Criterion E: Alterations in arousal and reactivity

Trauma-related alterations in arousal and reactivity that began or worsened after the traumatic event: **(two required)**

1. Irritable or aggressive behavior
2. Self-destructive or reckless behavior
3. Hypervigilance
4. Exaggerated startle response
5. Problems in concentration
6. Sleep disturbance

### Criterion F: Duration

Persistence of symptoms (in Criteria B, C, D, and E) for more than one month.

### Criterion G: Functional significance

Significant symptom-related distress or functional impairment (e.g., social, occupational).

### Criterion H: Exclusion

Disturbance is not due to medication, substance use, or other illness.

*Specify if:* With dissociative symptoms.

In addition to meeting criteria for diagnosis, an individual experiences high levels of either of the following in reaction to trauma-related stimuli:

1. **Depersonalization:** experience of being an outside observer of or detached from oneself (e.g., feeling as if "this is not happening to me" or one were in a dream).
2. **Derealization:** experience of unreality, distance, or distortion (e.g., "things are not real").

*Specify if:* With delayed expression.

Full diagnosis is not met until at least six months after the trauma(s), although onset of symptoms may occur immediately.



**ATTITUDE is EVERYTHING ... Choose a good one.**

A teacher asks the kids in her 3rd grade class:

"What do you want to be when you grow up?"  
 Little Jimmy says: "I wanna start out as a U.S. Marine tanker, then be a billionaire, go to the most expensive clubs, find me the finest whore, give her a Ferrari worth over a million



bucks, an apartment in Copacabana, a mansion in Paris, a jet to travel throughout Europe, an Infinite Visa card, and all the while banging her like a loose screen door in a hurricane."

The teacher, shocked, and not knowing what to do with this horrible response from little Jimmy, decides not to acknowledge what he said and simply tries to continue with the lesson ...

The teacher turns to another student, "And how about you, Jessica?"

The darling little girl replies, "I wanna be Jimmy's whore."



## Looking for

Can anyone supply information about the tank shown in these two photos? Photo appears to have been taken on the south-eastern side of the DMZ, maybe Gio Linh or near Oceanview or in the DMZ. The hull was upside down as was the turret, which was 100 ft. away. That is all we know about it. Can you help us ID the tank? Who the crew was? Were there any eyewitnesses?

Contact: Bob Peavey

Email: repv@comcast.net

Phone: 770-365-3711

**John Wear wrote:** These specific photos are new to me. I recall seeing some photos that Dick Carey had taken of a similar incident that happened in 1967 in the sand dunes



In the photo: The upside down turret landed 100 feet away from the hull.



just outside of the main gate at Camp Evans. If you did not know, Camp Evans was up Vietnam National Highway One north of Hue City and south of Quang Tri. If I have the story correct, a Marine gun tank left the main road and as it traversed the down slope of a sand dune, the tank's bow bellied up against the ground and struck what was estimated to be an unexploded American 500 pound bomb. The explosion flipped the tank over (upside down) and bottom of the hull looked as if an old-fashioned "church key" can opener had punched a large hole just behind the escape hatch ... while the upside down turret, just like this horrible photo, was 100 or more feet away. All four crewmen perished in the massive explosion. ■



## Poem

### The Night the Third Platoon Gunned Down Santa Claus

Submitted by Paul "Wesel" Tate

Many strange things done 'neath the Vietnamese sun  
But the time that locked my jaws  
Was the night 'neath the moon when the Third Platoon  
Gunned down Santa Claus

Now it started out right  
Just another night we had to spend in the dirt.  
Security was out, three sixty about,  
With fifty percent alert.

With naval guns and eighty-ones<sup>[1]</sup>,  
Our tanks laid track to track,  
An Ontos<sup>[2]</sup> or so, an Arty FO<sup>[3]</sup>  
And barrages planned back to back

Well I froze where I stood when out from the wood  
eight horses came charging along  
This may sound corny but them mustangs was horny  
My God; mounted Viet Cong!

He came our way in what looked like a sleigh,  
You never know what they'll use  
And our flares were tripped, the SID<sup>[4]</sup> was flipped  
And the "Topsy"<sup>[5]</sup> blew a fuse

He continued to close and I shouted, "Who Goes?"  
like they do in the picture shows  
And the answer I got, believe it or not,  
Was a hearty "Ho, Ho, Ho."

Now those troops of mine had seen some time  
We'd done some things bass ackward,  
And we might have been thick, but knew a trick,  
And knew that wasn't the password.  
So the cannons roared, and the eighty-ones soared,  
the naval guns raised Hell.  
A bright red flare flew through the air  
And I fired the FPL<sup>[6]</sup>  
Now I'll give him guts but that old man was nuts,  
Or I'm a no good liar.  
He fell like a stone through our killing zone  
So I passed the word, "Cease Fire!"  
I went out to survey the carnage  
And my memory started to race.  
My mind plays games when it comes to names  
But I never forget a face.

He was dressed in red and looked well fed  
And older than most I'd seen.  
And he looked right weird in his long white beard  
With stumps where his legs had been.  
Well, he hadn't quite died when I reached his side  
Though the end was clearly in sight  
So I bent real low and he whispered real slow,  
"Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night!"

Well we should've known that our cools were blown  
When the light in the east we'd seen.  
The bright red flares must have been theirs  
Or the damned things would have been green.  
So I grabbed the hook<sup>[7]</sup> and, in a voice that shook,  
Said give me the "Six"<sup>[8]</sup> and quick!  
Colonel sez I, hang on to your hat,  
'Cause the third just greased Saint Nick!  
Now the old man's cool and he ain't no fool  
So he quickly put out the word.  
'Cause, without a doubt, if this ever got out  
He wouldn't be making his "bird"<sup>[9]</sup>  
"Take great care and bring him up here,  
Make sure he's wearing a tag."  
"Dismantle the sleigh, drive the reindeer away,  
And bury that damned red bag!"

So by and by, the kids may cry 'cause there's no toys under  
the tree.  
But the word came back from F M F Pac<sup>[10]</sup>, Santa had  
gone VC<sup>[11]</sup>!  
Many strange things done 'neath the Vietnamese sun  
but the time that locked my jaws  
Was the night 'neath the moon when the Third Platoon  
Gunned down Santa Claus ■

[1] 81mm mortars

[2] Ontos – literally, the Greek word for "thing," eight 106mm recoilless rifles on a tank track (probably killed more of us than them).

[3] Forward Observer – calls for fire missions

[4] SID – Seismic Intrusion Device (listening for little footsteps)

[5] Topsy – TPSY – ground anti-personnel radar

[6] FPL – Final Protective Line – all weapons fired at the cyclic rate (relatively short duration fire when you are getting overrun).

[7] Hook – field telephone

[8] "Six" – the commander. In this case a Lieutenant Colonel

[9] "Bird" grade insignia for a full colonel

[10] F M F Pac – Fleet Marine Force, Pacific

[11] VC – Viet Cong

# What Members Are Doing

## Father of The Bride



June 13, 2015, Armando Moreno with is daughter, Mrs. Danielle Corry

## A New Jersey Mini Reunion



In the photo (Front)–Carmine Montemarano, George Schlieben, Josh Santana. (Back)–Steve Falk and Joe Vernon.

**Steve Falk writes:** I thought you might use the attached in Sponson Box – Old US Marine buddies from H&S Com-

pany, 1st Tanks back in 1968 meet at “Moonstruck” in Ocean Grove, NJ on July 17, 2015.

## Proud Air Force Grandfather



**Doug Scrivner wrote:** My Granddaughter Madison graduated AFB Bootcamp 7/24/15.kinda’ good lookin’ ain’t she? **He adds:** It was 100 degrees in Texas and I was sweatin’ like a pig going to the slaughter house.

## A Mini Reunion in Utah



**Bobby Joe Blyth wrote:** This is a picture that I took yesterday on the way back home from Wyoming. I flew in and had lunch with OJ Leddy in Utah. Here I am presenting OJ with a copy of our association’s first volume of our published history.

## AN EMERGENCY!

Last Friday night I became ill but thought it would pass by morning. However I actually felt worse so my wife hauled me to Urgency Care. They felt around and sent me to the hospital for a CT Scan. After the scan they told me to wait in the waiting room for the doctor to call about what the scan revealed. Minutes later they directed me to the emergency room. People may have bad things to say about Kaiser Permanente but I am very happy with all of the care they have given me over the years.

Urgency Care in Vancouver	12:30 PM
Ride to hospital in Portland CT Scan around	1:30 PM
Results read	2 PM
Surgery	3 PM

I had suffered sudden on-set appendicitis. They caught it before rupture (the lower section had actually become gangrenous). Recovering fine (God Bless OxyContin). I am just mentioning it because I am really impressed how fast they moved on a Saturday.

Fred Kellogg

## STURGIS SD MOTORCYCLE RALLY 2015



**Note:** Doc (in the center) has on his 2011 San Diego VTA reunion t-shirt!

**Doc Gene Hackemack wrote:** I must say that the bikers who I met were nothing by FIRSTCLASS! But all in all, I am glad I left Sturgis SD last weekend, when I did. Those already showing up early told me that this milestone year (75th Anniversary) and ONE MILLION bikes were predicted to show up!!!

## Working Hard or Hardly Working?



Here is Guy Everest working diligently at cleaning his swimming pool. >>



# MORE What Members Are Doing

## Tiger Comp 2015

(Left to right) Jeff Griffith, Bruce Wahlsten, Kenneth Smith, Wally Young, Bill Wright, Jack Nolan, Rick Beirne, LCpl Victor Ruiz (Driver), 2nd Tank Bn SgtMaj Burkhardt, Sgt John Hunter (TC), Lt Col Rob Bodisch (CO, 2nd Tank Bn), LtCol Lee Rush (CO, 1st Tank Bn); Cpl. Christopher Aguilar (Gunner), LCpl Andrew Ghataora (Loader)—(Of note, this is the 3rd place tank crew), Bill Davis, Clyde Hoch, Garry Hall, Joe Tyson, Dennis Fresch.

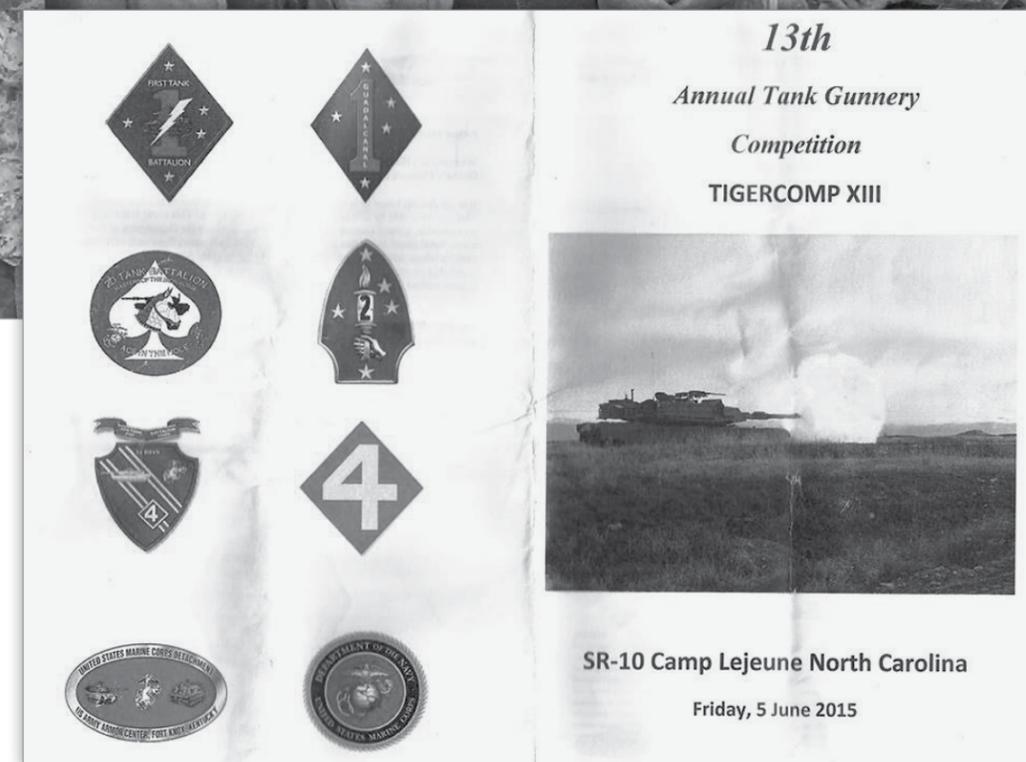


**Garry Hall wrote:** It's been 47 years since I left Vietnam. When I look back to our day and think of the World War II vets getting together with their various units, I thought it was remarkable that those old troopers were still able to get together with their buddies after all those years. Alas, they were doing so just a little over 20 years since the end of WWII. But nearly 50 years after Vietnam a group of our USMCV-TA members were honored to attend the Deactivation of Delta Company, 2nd Tank Battalion, 2nd Mar Div. at Camp Lejeune NC and Tiger Comp 2015. LtCol Bodisch, CO of 2nd Tank Battalion and his entire staff including Sgt Buchanan, GySgt Childress, Master Gunner Sanchez and the Marines of 2nd Tank Battalion extended a VIP wel-

come to our group. I recommend, if we are invited again next year, for many more of our members to come and see the dedication and fitness of our young Marine Tanker Brethren. The Corps has never been in better, more ready status than today. These young men and women make me proud to be a Marine!

**John Wear adds:** According the Lt Col Bodisch, the USMC has not decided the exact location of Tiger Comp 2016. When and if we find out, we will alert the membership so anyone who'd like to attend can make advanced plans.

See Accompanying Story on Page 26.



Program submitted by Clyde Hoch

# Tiger Comp XIII 2015

## .....a visit to the new Marine Corps

BY DENNIS FRESCH

A few short weeks ago, I received an invitation from 2nd Marine Tank Battalion via USMC Vietnam Tankers Association to attend their annual tank live fire competition. It was short notice but I pulled out all the stops to get to Camp Lejeune by June 4th for the shoot out the next day on range S10. Master Gunnery Sgt. Sanchez replied to my endless emails and answered my questions. I was even able to bring my lifelong friend, Mel Barrera, an aspiring photographer who had done a great job shooting many of my car races.

Each year the tankers wring out their 244 tank crews to come up with the top crews from 1st, 2nd, and 4th Tank Battalions, sending the best from each to slug it out at Tiger Comp where they offer simulated engagements with the tanks' main gun and machine guns at rotating military sites in the US. They are judged by speed of engagement, accuracy, and crew communication.

It had been decades since I was a gunner and then TC with 2nd platoon, C. Company, 1st Tanks in 1967-68 in Vietnam. Just like the Marine saying, "Once a Marine ... Once a tanker, always a tanker!" I was really looking

forward to seeing the changes in both Marines and their combat equipment. I had operated M48A3 Patton Tanks and today's were M1A2 Abrams. I have to tell you, what a world of difference since the mid-60s!!!

Today the tanks have bigger guns (90mm versus 120mm), better armor, faster better engines (diesel versus turbine); today's "Star Wars" sighting and communications systems and all the improvements with a weight gain of only 8 tons!

I had 9 hours of travel to get there with about 3 hours sleep before getting up at O' Dark Thirty to make it out to the range. We got there before I had gotten through my coffee-to-go cup. I had the opportunity to meet the 1st Tanks crew and swap some sea stories and get answers to a few of my questions. One surprise was the fact that RPGs were still able to get inside due to improved warheads. I knew that massive IEDs had been able to blow them up in Iraq, but I thought the new armor had all but defeated vulnerability to the common RPG. Not so. Tank crews have not changed as much as their gear. Still close-knit, young, and a bit cocky, it was as if I were jawing with my old crew. Only difference

was these tankers were wearing Nomex (fire retardant) jumpsuits and were a bit more tech savvy.

The competition was about to begin so I wished them good luck and then, as we walked away, I changed my mind, turned around and yelled "No, Fuck that! Just win it!"

Things kicked right off, after a brief explanation of the course of fire, random problems of pop ups and moving targets that the crews would have to engage, both from defilade and on the move.

The crews took their turns on the course, engaging and hitting targets at excess of 2500 meters, starting with firing from fixed defilade positions to the left and right of the range, and then running deep into the range to fire on pop-ups both to the left and right of their line of approach. The muzzle flashes arrived a few seconds ahead of the Booms and Braaaap sounds of the gunfire. I watched some of this deeper action through some 8 power German field glasses. Without the hand-held optics, most of the spectators were missing this fast and furious action going on well down range.

THE CREWS:

**1st Tank Bn. = Third Place Winner**

CO: LtCol. Lee Rush

TC: Sgt. John Hunter

Gunner: Cpl. Christopher Aguilar

Loader: L/Cpl. Andrew Ghataora

Driver: L/Cpl. Victor Ruiz

**2nd Tank Bn. = First Place Winner**

CO: LtCol. Robert Bodisch

TC: S/Sgt. Joseph Lowery

Gunner: Cpl. Charles Smith III

Loader: L/Cpl. Ryan Foster

Driver L/Cpl. Keondre Mitchell

**4th Tank Bn. = Second Place Winner**

CO: LtCol. John Valencia

Inspector-Instructor: LtCol. Ronald Storer

TC: 1st Lt. Andrew Bender

Gunner: Cpl. Johnny Mitchell

Loader: Cpl. Soren Shay

Driver: L/Cpl. Jakxon Wolfe

Dennis continues: After the crews took their turns they performed a demonstration with the addition of a fourth tank staggered on line across the entire width of the course. The symphony of multiple 120mm main gun and Ma Duce fire almost took me back to Vietnam. It was music that I will always enjoy and appreciate the sheer power of the "Queens of Battle."

Best show ever, and ... the best job I ever had! ■



**Lt Col Bodisch (CO, 2nd Tank Bn) wrote:** My winning crew holding the McCard Trophy. Left to Right: LCpl Mitchell (Driver), SSgt Lowery (TC), Cpl. Smith (Gunner), LCpl Foster (Loader) and myself.

**The following article is some of the “propaganda” that appears on the Internet about the Republic of Korea (ROK) Marine Corps deployed during the Vietnam War:**

At the request of the United States, President Park Chung Hee of the Republic of Korea agreed to send military units into Vietnam, despite opposition from both the Assembly and the public. In exchange, the United States agreed to provide additional military funds to Korea to modernize its armed forces, totaling about a billion dollars.

The Republic of Korea Army units' Area Of Responsibility (AOR) were the southern half of the II Corps. The Marine Corps units were deployed on the I Corps alongside with U.S. Marines.

Initially, the AK47-equipped Vietcong and NVA outgunned Korean soldiers, since they were armed with World War II-era weaponry. But soon they received more modern weapons from the United States military.

The three main units deployed to Vietnam were the ROK Army Capital (Raging Tiger) Division, the ROK Marine Corps 2nd (Blue Dragon) Brigade and the ROK Army 9th (White Stallion) Division. Various ROK special forces units were also deployed.

Most of the operations never exceeded battalion-size, but they also conducted divisional-size operations. Before conducting missions, Koreans laid out their plans much more carefully than their allies, with greater fire discipline, effective use of fire support, and better coordination of sub-units. They also had in their favor the distinguished combat leadership of the company and platoon commanders. During village searches, ROK soldiers would subject the settlement to a series of detailed sweeps while interrogating subjects on the spot. By comparison, American units tended to favor a single sweep followed by removal of all civilians for screening. Such a painstaking approach certainly paid dividends in terms of weapons seizures and reduced VC activity in



ROK areas. Koreans quickly learned pidgin Vietnamese language for fear that most Vietnamese translators were spies for Vietcong and NVA. Koreans also had better field intelligence than their American counterparts. Koreans conducted counterinsurgency operations so well that American commanders felt Korean AOR was the safest. This was further supported when Vietcong documents captured after the Tet Offensive warned their compatriots to never engage Koreans until full victory is certain. In fact, it was often that the NVA and Vietcong were ambushed by Koreans and not vice versa.

Their most notable operations in Vietnam were “Operation Van Buren” and the Battle of Hoi An. During “Operation Van Buren”, an ROKMC platoon of about 13 soldiers wiped out an elite North Vietnamese Army regiment, resulting in only two Korean casualties, while more than 400 NVA soldiers were killed. The initial gun battle had devolved into bloody hand-to-hand combat. The ROKMC boasted an overall kill ratio of 25-to-1 in the Vietnam War.

**Now the truth be told in the following four stories by our own Marine Corps tankers:**

## THE LAW WEST OF THE SONG THU BON

BY EL-TEE DICKEY PEE  
(AKA, Dick Peksens 1st LT / USMCR)

In late 1969, my platoon, 3rd Platoon/Charlie Company/1st Tank Bn., was operating with the ROK Marines around the ancient city of Hoi An. Hoi An bordered the coast of the South China Sea south of Danang. Due to the geography, our operations were mainly north of Hoi An in the sandy “Riviera” located south of 2/1’s cantonment (a few clicks south of Marble Mountain) and west of Hoi An, across Route 1 into the TAOR’s of the 7th Marines at Hill 55 and the 5th Marines at An Hoa. During the 17th century, Hoi An, at the mouth of the Thu Bon River, was the largest trading port in Vietnam. In 1969, the City of Hoi An was home to small Vietnamese shops and militia, units of the 1st ARVN Division, and a Navy Riverine Force that was stationed at the Thu Bon delta. The largest unit, however, was the main Korean contingent in Vietnam, the Korean “Dragon Brigade.”

Every day, a convoy from Danang would arrive at Hoi An loaded with ammo and kimchee for our Korean allies. The same convoy would leave later in the day to “allegedly” return most of the goods unopened to awaiting Korean freighters. With this setup in place, the Koreans were very stingy with the use of both ammo and supplies. In charge of the Marine tanks was a USMC colonel attached to 1st ANGLICO (Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company) who spent his time advising the Koreans on the use of borrowed amtracks, tanks, artillery and air and naval gunfire. The Koreans would then venture forth on their many operations.....all code-named Victory Dragon....into areas that, hopefully, were previously prepped by US firepower or troops. Also, on operations such as Allenbrook and Taylor Common, the Koreans would act as a blocking force along Route 1 as Marines swept retreating NVA east across Go Noi Island and Dodge City.

Highway access to Hoi An from Danang was south along Route 1. To the south was the Americal Division stationed at LZ Baldy which would be replaced by Marines in 1969. An alternate route to Hoi An for tracked vehicles was along the beach starting at 3rd

Amtracks (Marble Mountain) along the South China surf to the ROK beachside bunkers at Hoi An. Travelling this dangerous route required firepower. Our tanks would often travel in pairs or accompany small convoys consisting of amtracks and jeeps. The convoy would run along the beach with one track in the surf and the other in the hard-packed wet sand to prevent mine incidents, while keeping the 90mm loaded with canister rounds and the .50 caliber MG pointing towards the berm and adjacent treeline.

The Riviera was the most heavily mined and booby-trapped zone in Vietnam. Shortly after I left Hoi An, our corpsman was returning with a visiting Company GySgt who had decided to forego the tank escort. Along the way, they were ambushed and our corpsman was killed when he left the jeep to disconnect the damaged trailer. I had transferred to 1st Ontos on Three Fingers where I also lost a corpsman when his jeep hit a mine en route from our outpost to Battalion. Our corpsmen in tanks were often used as our main couriers travelling between remote outposts and battalion. With the roads mined daily, the frequent trips were far from secure.

If travelling with only tanks, we would often stop for a swim in the surf while one tank remained on guard duty. The water was the clearest and most beautiful water that I had ever witnessed. The surf was a far cry from the frozen and dirty waters of Revere Beach in Boston where I had once worked as a lifeguard. At Hoi An, while watching the offshore cruiser, the New Jersey, firing their 16 inch shells, we would often ride the surf and fish using frag grenades to stun the local sealife into submission. Our hooches were comfortable wooden structures just behind the beach berm and we lived the “good life” within the compound. We had access to the beach and beer with no nighttime “bunker duty”. We even had two adopted dogs called “Black Fang” and “White Fang.” We wore Korean camouflage fatigues and were sometimes entertained by visiting Korean entertainers.

My initial arrival at Hoi An was via a traditional >>

jeep along Route 1 into the Main Gate of the ROK Marines. This was also my first introduction to ROK Marine SOP's, when I witnessed the bodies of two recently killed NVA who had been tied to the telephone support poles which held the sign indicating the presence of the 2nd ROK Marine Brigade...the "Blue Dragons"! Near the entrance of the compound was the famous symbol of the ROK Marines, a Golden Eagle on a pedestal surrounded by the flags of our various allies. If you read on, you will discover the tragic fate of this Golden Eagle at the hands of an infamous American Indian in my employ, PVT Pumpkinseed!

The Koreans were a bit strange in terms of both their tactics and interactions with Marines. On one of the many Victory Dragon ops, we were pinned down by a small NVA/VC unit. The 1st ARVN armored cavalry was called, and their vehicles swept into the treeline and promptly departed without policing either bodies or weapons. When we entered the treeline, there were a dozen bodies and an equal number of AK47's and SKS's. Soon, a helicopter arrived from Hoi An to offload additional weaponry to include a Chinese HMG and "additional captured weapons". These weapons "were staged" with the bodies, and US journalists were invited to view and write about the Korean "victory." Marines were told not to talk to the reporters.

In addition to security and road sweeps, our tanks would often be used as a blocking force. With the aid of Starlight scopes, we were often able to score significant numbers of night-time kills. Two tanks under the command of SGT Coco and CPL Clemson, wiped out a company of NVA crossing a river south of Hoi An during a nighttime ambush east of Route 1. Both TC's received the Bronze Star for this action. Another E-5, whose name I have forgotten, was written up for a Navy Cross when his tank hit a mine within the city and came under fire from NVA. After abandoning the tank, he found that the driver was trapped, as he was unable to drop his escape hatch. The SGT ran back with his .45 and killed two NVA trying to blow the tank and rescued his driver. His award was reduced to a Bronze Star by Division!

Operating with the ROK's was always eventful. While at An Hoa, I would make visits to the Officer's Club for lunch which always consisted, much like their C-rations, of fish and kimchee. We would then debrief the General

concerning the day's activities. This was similar to my debriefings at the 5th Marines, with the exception that "fists were often flying" during the Korean debriefs! Senior officers displeased with losses (lives, ammo, or supplies) would think nothing of physically attacking their subordinates to "bring home the point." As I mentioned earlier, the Golden Eagle was the revered symbol of the Blue Dragon Brigade.

I had a loader on one of my tanks who was a full-blooded American Indian by the name of Pumpkinseed. Private Pumpkinseed loved his whiskey, and, although banned for Marines, would somehow procure the "fire water" from our allies. One day, after returning from the field, I was told to "check out" Pumpkinseed who was currently "passed-out" on his bunk. That is when I discovered not only Private Pumpkinseed, but also the purloined Golden Eagle! Apparently, while stumbling back from the Korean area, he had plucked the Golden Eagle from its pedestal. That evening, at debrief, the Korean General was livid and promised that every effort would be made to recover the Brigade's greatest treasure! After discussing the situation with my NCO's, SGT Hoch and a few others buried the "bird" deep in the sands adjacent to our tank park in proximity to our ammo bunker. I have always wondered if it would be possible to return to Hoi An in search of this "lost treasure" which could be returned to a grateful ROK Brigade. Interestingly, our ANGLICO unit was awarded the Korean PUC ("Korean Meatball") for our intrepid actions during the various Victory Dragon operations. As we were a small unit, the award was turned down by HQMC. Would this award have been given in light of the stolen "bird?".....I think not....the Koreans were not a forgiving people.

On a roadsweep south of Hoi An, the Koreans discovered a number of old women carrying booby-trap wire. While my TC's watched, the women were forced to dig a hole with entrenching tools and were then beaten to death with these same shovels. The Koreans didn't fool around and were fond of making "examples" of the local NVA sympathizers! At an overnight lager, I was once asked by a Korean captain, who was painted in camouflage, if I wanted to sneak into a nearby village that evening to find women! This was a serious request! Often a Korean officer would jump onto my tank and fire rounds at the feet of his men to get their attention.

They would ask to shoot the .50 caliber or 90mm as if they were play toys.

Once, while providing security for two tractors creating a fire base, the tractor operators were shot at from a buried bunker complex. Our flame tank was called up to burn out the bunker. After the napalm had done its work, the Koreans pulled four bodies from the bunkers who were dressed as NVA regulars. The Koreans set about to conduct a "photo shoot" with the dead bodies. They propped up the bodies, placed cigarettes in their lifeless mouths and set them up for group photos. When they were done, we searched the bodies and found hundreds of dollar-equivalent piasters and significant intelligence including photos, maps, diaries and code books. The Koreans had never bothered to search the bodies! We sent the packets to 1st Tank Battalion's S-2, but never heard the results or received kudos for the effort.

Later that same day, two Koreans tripped a mine while performing security duty. One had lost parts of all four limbs, but was talking with a seemingly unconcerned tone while medics applied tourniquets. That incident burned a hole in my psyche and ranks along with the injuries that I witnessed when Chesty Puller's son tripped a mine and was struck in the back with a boot containing a foot while jumping into a bunker at An Hoa. In addition to the captured intelligence, we used the piasters from the "NVA Paymaster" to purchase local beer from a shop near the Navy docks.

Once, while operating with the Koreans in the Riviera, we received some sniper fire from a distant copse of trees. I pulled my tank near the Korean major and was asking for the sniper location. As it was difficult to hear, I leaned out of the turret just when the sniper fired. The bullet hit my raised cupola and somehow I exited head first and landed on the major. After regaining my composure, I got back on the tank and fired one HE round toward the hidden sniper. Unfortunately, the gun had come "out of boresight" and the round flew over the top of the trees. As was the custom, I radioed to Charlie Company that we were firing rounds. I received a "panicked" reply stating that 2/1's location was under attack as an artillery round had just burst outside their berm. Looking at my map, I quickly realized that my "overshoot" was their "incoming round." Neither I, nor the sniper, fired another shot. Evidently my overshoot had scared the bejesus out of

both the sniper and our communication tech at Charlie Company .....and, belatedly, me!

On that same operation, our lead units came under fire from a distant hill. As rounds were flying, we pulled our three tanks to the front and tried to identify the source of the ambush. As we pulled forward, the gunfire ceased and we realized that the fire was probably "friendly" as a 2/1 Marine squad on patrol had mistaken the Koreans for NVA. Fortunately, we popped a green smoke before any damage was done to either side. This was one of "many times" during my tour that "friendly fire" came close to injuring my tankers or the supporting grunts.

One incident remains in my mind after all these years and involved the death of a young girl. While on a sweep, a Korean officer saw someone disappear into a "spider hole." I dismounted from my tank along with a few crewmen. Once at the hole, I yelled "Dung Lai" and "Chu Hoi" and heard a response that I couldn't translate. The Korean officer was on one side of the hole and my loader on the other. As the individual slowly came up through the hole dressed in the black PJ's of the VC, she was holding her AK47 above her head. When she was halfway out, my loader, with an M16, shot her at point blank range, killing her instantly. I was shocked, as she was in the process of surrendering. The Korean officer wasn't concerned, but I asked my loader why he had killed the young girl and he stated that he thought that she might have been booby-trapped. She was not officially a prisoner; but, also, she didn't seem to be presenting a danger. I decided not to charge my crewman, but I and the other witnesses were traumatized by the senseless death. Obviously, nobody else emerged from the buried bunker and, after tossing in a frag grenade, we used a tank to "flatten" the area.

Another curiosity at Hoi An was the weaponry of the Koreans. At their basecamp, they defended bunkers with "Guadalcanal vintage" water-cooled .30 caliber MG's and BAR's, which I had only seen in John Wayne movies. Instead of C4, they used TNT to cook their C-rats. Burning small amounts of TNT to cook food, unlike the burning of C4, would produce a pungent smoke that, if breathed, would cause dizziness. It was only after leaving the Corps that I learned that we were breathing nitrous oxide, "laughing gas." If we had only known! The Koreans would also "hump" a 106mm recoilless rifle into the "bush" using 12 grunts carrying the >>

weapon on slings. Tough work in Vietnam!

As an officer, I was often invited to the traditional “drinking contests” that the senior Korean officers enjoyed. They seemed to love old Scotch whiskey. We would sit around and drink “shooters” from a shared glass to see who would be the first person to either vomit or pass out! I once survived the contest but



Dick Peksens (with glasses) on ops with the ROK Marines

was unable to navigate a successful return to my tank. Crawling along the “track lines” in the early AM, my crew found me facedown in the mud only 30 feet from the tank. . . I had “almost made it!”

I believe that, in the tradition of Marine LT’s, I was unable to perform any additional useful functions for the next 24 hours!

## My Experience with Korean “Rock” Marines in Viet Nam

BY RICK LEWIS

1st Tanks, 1966



During the summer of 1966, while serving with the heavy section of 2nd Platoon, Charlie Co., 1st Tank Bn, 1st Mar Div, we were assigned to support the ROK (Republic of Korea = Rock) Marines that were operating down at the mud flats outside of Da Nang. The word was that the mud flats was a hot bed of enemy action. The sit-reps that the Rock

Marines had been sending in were that major firefights occurred daily and that they were piling up NVA and VC bodies by the truck load. We were told to get the tanks ready and prepare for some serious combat action. I remember that we had lots of extra .30 cal. ammo and several 5-gal. water cans stuffed down inside the turret. At the time, I was the gunner and I had no room to move around the inside of the turret for all of the extra gear inside. On the outside of the tank, it looked like the “Beverly Hillbillies” going down the road since we had so much ammo and extra supplies tied anywhere that it would fit.

I recall that we arrived mid-morning to the Rock CP and they had us park the tanks in the back of the perimeter next to a tented area. The Rock Marines gathered around the tanks and started asking for C-rats, cans of sardines and smokes. They seemed to want everything we had. Then, a Rock Marine officer came over and yelled some orders in

Korean which made the troops move away and go back to their daily duties. The officer spoke broken English, but it was sufficient enough to understand what he wanted us to do, which was nothing.

Our section leader asked him, “Where do we move the tanks tonight?” and “What are the future plans for a search and destroy mission in the morning?”

He just looked at us and again said, “You just stay parked right here till I tell you what to do.”

I do not remember which one of the TC’s said that we need to scout this place out and get the lay of the land. One crewman stayed on guard on the tanks, to ensure the Rocks didn’t rob us blind while the crew was away from the tank.

Nothing happened that night. In fact, it was scary quiet with no pop-up flares or firing from the perimeter. There was nothing but arty way out in the distance. And all night the Rocks played cards, lit up smokes, and walked around the area talking in loud voices.

The mornings were even louder in the CP area. A couple of trucks rolled out with supplies. The Rocks had their morning colors, burned shitters and the quiet calm of their daily routine was so unreal to us. We wondered had the war ended and nobody told us? The Rocks sure acted like it.

Over the next 3 days we got caught up on maintenance on the tanks. We still set up our perimeter watches at night, but you can sleep a little better than being out in the bush. The one really good thing was they had ice cold Cokes and beer which the Rocks would send over to us by a runner. They never asked for MPC to pay for the drinks; they just

wanted us to stay put. In fact, they did not want us walking around the CP. They said, “Just stay by your tanks.”

The morning of our third or fourth day that we were there, the radios squawked loudly. It was our platoon commander wanting to know what in the hell was going on. Listening to him on the radio, I heard him ask our section leader, “What is going on? Charlie-6 has been waiting for a sit-rep from you. Why haven’t you requested ammo, fuel or anything else? What in the hell do you mean you haven’t moved?” Then he said that he was coming out there to see us and find out what the hell was going on.

Later that day, the Lt. arrived. He was up-dated by our section leader and then he went to the Rock HQ. When he came back to our tanks, he said that it was all bull shit. “These guys are just out here sitting on their dead asses.” He added, “These gooks are making it up as they go along.”

The Lt. took off back to Charlie Co., and the next day a company of Marines from 3/1 trucked in, and within an hour we were on a sweep that turned out to be a big find. Within 500 meters of the Rock CP was an NVA ammo dump that included massive amounts of hospital supplies and “duce” gear. Charlie was not expecting us and he just got out of our way. I remember using the 90 main gun to blow up bunkers and giving the grunts our C-4 to blow up other underground bunkers. Luckily, no contact was made with the NVA/VC that day. At the day’s end everybody headed back to the 3/1 CP. . . So much for the “Rock” Marines being bad asses.

## The Korean Marines Setting The Record Straight

BY CWO4 MARINE GUNNER ROBERT EMBESI, USMC (RET.)

It was common knowledge throughout I Corps during the Vietnam War that the Republic of Korea Marine Corps (ROKMC) were highly regarded and considered the fiercest fighting unit in Vietnam. They had the highest kill ratio per capita of any allied unit in country including the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, Australians, ARVNs and the Vietnamese Marine Corps. It was common knowledge that the numbers were posted on a plastic covered wall chart back at MACV. But unless you worked with them, you have no idea just how fierce they really were.

I worked under the commanding general of the Blue

Dragon Brigade for 3 months supporting their combat units with our tanks when needed. Over time it became obvious the Koreans had a different take on the war than we did, but that will come later. I am writing this to set the record straight, but first I need to provide the reader with some history.

A brigade made up from the 2nd ROKMC Division (ROKs for short), calling themselves the “Blue Dragons,” landed in Vietnam at Cam Ranh Bay in September 1965, 300 miles south of Da Nang in Khanh Hoa province in southern II Corps. A year later, they moved up to I >>

Corps to Chu Lai and Hoi An. Hoi An was about 20 miles south of Da Nang and was the brigade HQ.

At the end of my first tour in late 1966, I was a Staff Sergeant assigned as a platoon sergeant in the newly forming 5th Tank Bn. at Los Flores in Camp Pendleton. The 5th Marine Division was in the process of forming another of its regiments, the 27th Marines, its 26th Regiment shipped out to Vietnam in July of 1966. Alpha Co., 5th Tanks, also deployed but never ended up supporting the 26th Marines. Therefore, at Los Flores, we were forming Bravo, Charlie & Delta Companies of 5th Tanks, none of which were up to T/E (Table of Equipment) or T/O (Table of Organization).

I had been back in the States for 15-months and knew it would be a short time before getting orders for another tour; in fact, I was overdue. On January 30th, 1968, the Tet Offensive broke out throughout all of Vietnam. Fourteen days later, the 27th Marines received orders to mount out in two days; the third day found them in Vietnam. A couple of days later, Bravo Co., 5th Tanks, was quickly brought up to T/E and T/O by grabbing anyone who had time left in the Corps; some were as short as 6-months. We loaded aboard the LSD, USS Thomaston from Camp Delmar, and arrived in Vietnam 21 days later; each tank platoon was assigned to its respective battalion of the 27th Marines. Since we were the 2nd Platoon of Bravo Co., our home would be with 2/27 at its CP. It was in the middle of an area known as "Dodge City", about 20 miles SW of Da Nang.

May 5th found us on a sweep supporting 2/27 and 2/7 on Goi Noi Island; it was a Search & Destroy mission later named Operation Allen Brook. After three weeks of heavy fighting, we were pulled out and returned to 2/27's CP. Two weeks later, without any notice, we were ordered to Hoi An, about 20 miles south of Da Nang. The orders specifically stated to proceed with all possible speed to the HQ of the Republic of Korea Marine Corps in Hoi An. We were to replace a tank and amtrack unit from 1st Tank Bn. We assembled a column of 5 tanks and 8 amtracks and departed the next morning. We anticipated working with the renowned ROK Marines. We had no doubt we would see action with this highly regarded ally.

We departed the next morning; 2 hours later we arrived in the ROK Marine HQ compound. We found the American tank and amtrack area inside the ROK compound right on the beach of the South China Sea. We were surprised and disappointed to find the area empty; the Marine tank and amtrack unit we were to relieve had already departed. We

had expected a briefing as was customary when replacing a unit. We were looking forward to learning what it's like working with the notorious ROK Marines and what their habits were and what to avoid. Lt. Rick Ellis, the Platoon Leader, and I were quite annoyed; there would be no "changing of the guard" if you will. We found out they had left en mass at dawn two days earlier. It was odd. Something just didn't feel right.

Late that same morning, Lt. Ellis and I reported to the ROK Command & Control bunker. The Korean Commanding General conducted two daily briefings inside a very large underground structure built by the CBs. It housed the KMC (Korean Marine Corps) Brigade staff and all the American supporting arms staff like FACs (Forward Air Control), tanks, amtracks, artillery, and a strange non-uniformed colonel who claimed to be the U.S. Army liaison officer. The bunker usually had reporters hanging around looking for stories of the toughest unit in all of Vietnam. The ROKMC's enemy kill numbers grew daily.

It was at our first briefing when we learned we were to split up our tanks; two tanks were required at a remote outpost called The Mud Flats. It was unknown to us, but The Mud Flats turned out to be a hellhole. It was just a click north of the river, across from Goi Noi Island. It was also at the western edge of the Korean TAOR (Tactical Area Of Responsibility) and adjoined the "Dodge City" area.

That afternoon I sent the light section (2 tanks) to The Flats. Sgt. Kimbrew was the light section leader and was ordered to relieve two tanks from that same 1st Tank Bn. platoon the next morning. Upon their arrival, Sgt. Kimbrew called in on the radio and said the two tanks from 1st Tanks had departed at sunrise two days earlier, the same time as the tanks at the Korean CP. I can't say it was a big surprise since you wouldn't leave two of your tanks behind. But it was still in the back of my mind; something just didn't smell right.

Inside the large bunker we had a cube area that was set up with a couple of radios; we could communicate with almost anyone. It seemed most KMC morning briefings began with the report of a firefight or ambush that occurred within the Korean TAOR the night before. These guys sounded really aggressive. As I told you, the Korean Marines had the highest enemy kill rate p/capita in all of I Corps.

A week went by when, during a morning briefing, the general announced that a large ambush and firefight had taken place outside The Mud Flats; naturally, my ears



Kimbrew & Peavey at The Mud Flats

perked up. I was wondering why I had to hear it from the general and not my section leader. The general reported 50 NVA killed, which is a sizable engagement. I immediately wanted to find out the status of my crews and how much ammo they expended and if they required a resupply.

I radioed Sgt. Kimbrew and Cpl. Peavey who were out at The Flats. They were both on the same tank with com-helmets on for our prearranged twice-daily check in. I asked for a SitRep (Situation Report) on the previous night.

"No change. Same-o, same-o," replied Kimbrew.

"Is everyone OK?" I asked.

"Yeah, I guess so. Why?" he replied.

I knew damned well there had been a major firefight at or near their outpost and I am wondering what's this lackadaisical bullshit.

"Were you involved in last night's action?" I asked.

There was a long pregnant pause . . . then they both came back on the radio, "What action?"

"The Korean general back here said there was a large firefight at your "pos" (position) with a large amount of ammunition expended and 50 NVA killed."

Again, a long pause, "When did you say this happened?" asked Kimbrew.

"Last night!" I said again. "How much ammo do you need?" I said in a raised voice.

Again, another pause, and Kimbrew says, "Say again your last?"

I was really getting annoyed and repeated what I had just said but with more volume. I was pissed they were not taking this more seriously.

Then Peavey asked, "Are you sure you have the right tanks? We're at The Mud Flats. Maybe you mean the heavy section, over."

I asked again, "You weren't involved in a firefight?"

Again a pause, and Kimbrew comes back, "What firefight?"

It was sounding like an Abbot and Costello, "Who's On First?" routine. They had no idea what I was talking about. But, eventually it became clear there had been no firefight, no ambush, and no attack. They verified that no one went beyond the wire last night or any other night since they arrived. Each tank sat in front of one of two gates leading into the compound; if anyone knew who left the compound, it

would be my tank crews.

It didn't take a brain surgeon to figure out what the ROKs were doing. They were padding the numbers. They seldom had enemy bodies and often said they had counted blood trails. Slowly over the next couple of weeks these "tough" fighters began losing all credibility with us. But why they were doing it was beyond our imagination.

I established a rotation for the crews assigned to The Flats; it was a brutally hot place. It was surrounded by solid white concrete-like mud, which reflected the heat right into the compound. Since my CP was right on the ocean, I thought it would be a good break for the crewmen. Our platoon CP was beautiful and included a couple of hardback hootches, a cook, and a few other amenities. As each crewman rotated through the CP from The Flats, I got to learn what was going on . . . or rather . . . not going on.



Aerial view of The Mud Flats

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It turned out that the Koreans never went beyond the wire. There were no night listening posts sent out nor ambush teams. During the day, they never patrolled around the base. They were more concerned at the perfect alignment of every sandbag. They would tamp each bag into a perfect brick, and carefully place each one and square it up some more. The walls looked like the work of a mason. This was a unit with too much time on its hands. What it really was, they were scared to leave the outpost. And yet they called in body counts every few days attributing them to patrol and ambush actions. And another little indicator was they never called for a medevac after one of their "actions." They had everyone fooled back at MACV. This was a chicken-shit outfit.

The few times we did field ops with them it would turn into a total cluster fuck. When entering a ville they were the bravest and most brutal troops you can imagine. They were ruthless towards the Vietnamese civilians, hitting them with rifle butts and roughing them up . . . but only if they weren't taking enemy fire. When shot at, you couldn't find a Korean to save your life; they were already in another zip code before the second shot.

After our first month, rumors began trickling in as tankers and amtrackers rotated through the CP; they got to talk with friends from other units. The unofficial word was that things had gotten very bad between the ROK Marines and the previous tank and amtrack crews. It was rumored to be so bad they packed up and left with no notice. That could explain our quick redeployment to Hoi An without any change of command. Another rumor was one of the CP's cooks sat down on his cot triggering a booby-trap losing both legs. We ruled that one out as being a little farfetched. It was said the cook died on a medevac, and that the entire incident was quietly under the rug. And they were just that – rumors.

Working in the field with them was a problem, not only because of the language barrier but their tactics. Kimbrew called me over the radio on the first op saying the Koreans would only walk behind the tanks in the impressions we left behind; they wouldn't spread out to support the tanks on the sides or up front. He said he tried to communicate with them, which was all but impossible. I instructed him to sit tight and not to proceed until he got proper infantry support.

So, the tanks sat, the Koreans sat, and they went no further than 100-meters outside the wire. Late in the

afternoon, one of the Korean officers approached Kimbrew's tank and hand gestured they had to go back; it was going to be dark soon.

A few days later the heavy section went out with a different Korean company and I got a similar call from Staff Sgt. Jim Reed, the section leader. He said the ROKs would not move out of the tank's tracks. Just as he and I got off the radio, an RPG slammed into Reed's tank from an NVA soldier who jumped up in front of him. The rocket hit the tank's searchlight, wounding his driver and loader with shrapnel. When Reed called and told me what happened I decided, "Enough of this shit!"

The Lt. and I went directly to the Korean general's personal quarters and knocked on the door . . . like a boot reporting to his drill instructor. It took the general a few minutes to answer the door, but I never stopped knocking. I was really pissed with these gutless bastards. Finally the door opened and the general was dressed in a housecoat kimono; there was also someone in the back room out of sight, I could only guess it was a "she." He reluctantly invited us into his quarters . . . and he wasn't very happy. I told him right from the git-go about the lousy support my tanks were getting and that his men hid behind them. I then told him I had lost two men because of these tactics. He spoke moderate English, so it wasn't impossible to get one's point across. I noticed a chalkboard in the room, went over to it, and drew a picture showing him how his troops must be deployed to support us and we them. He got on his radio and made some calls. We of course didn't understand a word he was saying, but he was blistering someone's butt . . . an ass chewing is a universal language. We left the general quarters and the lieutenant and I walked back to the bunker.

Reed called me on the radio to tell me the Korean NCOs and officers were kicking, punching and beating their troops, making them get in front of the tanks and to our sides. The harsh treatment of their men wasn't new to us, we had seen the horrible way they beat their men with sticks and fists. Out at The Mud Flats, Peavey told me that they had seen men staked out on the ground for 24-hours for some infraction.

Once the heavy section got back to the platoon CP, before nightfall of course, S/Sgt Reed waved for me to come over and look at his tank. The searchlight was gone, and there was a furrow plowed half an inch deep running across the top of the turret, front to back, like someone had used a cutting torch. The RPG exited the searchlight and the cone

of its shaped charge ran right between the TC's and loader's hatches. It was 12-feet long! A million-to-one occurrence!

The next morning after the Korean briefing, the civilian-dressed Army colonel approached me and said, "Don't you ever do that again! Do you understand me? You don't talk to an officer the way you did yesterday! You could have caused an international incident!" I told him as long as my troops weren't in danger there wouldn't be any need to. "But, if I get any more WIAs or KIAs due to these misfits, I will be back in that general's face . . . Sir." He didn't like my answer very much.

Since the day of our arrival, the Koreans were always coming around our compound looking for things to trade. Their idea of trading was unrealistic, for they wanted everything for nothing. Arguments were becoming more frequent between our men and the Koreans. Two weeks after our arrival things began to disappear. About our sixth week, a commotion started on the amtrack side of the CP. A fight broke out with a half dozen Korean's and amtrackers. I ran over to break it up only to find out one of the Korean's had been caught stealing. I then pushed all of them out of the compound and told them to never come back. They were yelling in Korean all the way out as I "escorted" them; they were really pissed. I then made it clear to everyone within



The decorated common area in our CP

our CP that no more Koreans were allowed in our area and all trading was to cease. I didn't give it a thought after that.

Then, five days after the fight, the unthinkable occurred.

Jim Reed and I were playing poker in our hootch when Lance Corporal Robert Ford, our jeep driver, came in to ask if he could go over to the abandoned fishing village to get some decorations. The abandoned fishing village was within our CP area and people were scrounging through the village bringing back anchors, fishing nets, large bobbers and bamboo fishing rods and reels. They would then hang them around our common area where we ate and relaxed. I had told everyone that I wanted to know before they went to the ville, this is what brought Ford into the hootch. The village was only a hundred-yard walk on a trail that we used every day.

Three minutes hadn't passed when there was an explosion inside our compound. In my heart I knew what it was as I flew out of the hootch running towards the smoke. I was first on the scene. There on the trail lay Ford. One leg was gone from the knee down, he had stepped on a mine or booby-trap. I halted everyone who was behind me and didn't allow them to approach Ford. I pulled my K-Bar and began probing the ground working towards him. I yelled for our Corpsman to throw me a morphine surette when I got up to Ford. I then yelled for Reed to call in a medevac.

Ford put his arm around my neck and said, "Why me, Sergeant Embesi, why me?" What kind of answer could I give him? He had just gotten married days before we shipped out; he was a young Marine whom everyone liked. I gave him a shot of morphine and carried him to the medevac and off he went to the Da Nang hospital. I never forgot him, and his question has haunted me many a night, "Why me, Sergeant Embesi? Why me?"

Later that afternoon, Lieutenant Ellis and I probed our way to and around where the explosion occurred. I discovered pieces of wood in the bottom of the hole. I looked closer and could see it was from an ammo crate. It looked like a grenade had been placed in a wooden ammo box and set to go off when someone stepped on it. We never found Ford's leg, it probably disintegrated in the explosion but we did find his boot in a nearby tree. Digging around the bottom of the hole I turned up more pieces of the wooden ammo box, it was stenciled, ".30 Caliber Ball." And then I found the Holy Grail, it was a piece clearly showing the stamped Lot Number.

There were only 4 units in Vietnam who used the older .30 caliber ammunition. U.S. troops had switched to 5.56mm for the M16 and .308 caliber for the M60 machine gun. The only call the U.S. had for the older .30 caliber bullets >>

was for use on tanks, amtracks, Ontos and . . . all of the ROK Marine Corps. Their weapons were WWII vintage and all were .30 caliber.

I had a friend at the Da Nang ammo dump whom I radioed to ask a favor. I explained what had happened and would he check a Lot Number of .30 cal. ammo for me. He got back to me shortly and said that particular Lot Number had been issued to the ROK Marines. I now knew why the platoon before us had left so rapidly. All the rumors were true.

A week later I was using our jeep when I noticed a convoy of American military flatbed tractor-trailers pulling into the Korean ammo dump. The trucks were fully loaded. Several matching Korean flatbed trucks pulled alongside each American semi; they were almost touching. The ammo was then transferred from one to the other; it never even touched the ground. When the American trucks left, the Korean trucks formed up in a column and proceeded out the gate going north. I decided to follow them while keeping some distance between us.

The trucks headed towards the docks in Da Nang where they were unloaded next to a Korean ship. There was a lot more than ammo on those trucks. There were uniforms, C-rations, grenades, and a lot of ammo. Now it all made sense; they were in this for the ammunition and supplies! The higher the body counts they claimed every morning to MACV meant they needed to be resupplied by Uncle Sam. I came to discover over the next few weeks that the American trucks made ammo deliveries to the ROK compound every 2 weeks! All without them firing a shot.

There was one more rumor that we had all heard, not only at the CP, but out at The Mud Flats as well. The Koreans often boasted that they were going to get our tanks, amtracks and all our support equipment when we left. U.S. Marine General Walt had supposedly promised it when he made a visit. They were adamant about it and continually wanted to know when they were getting our tanks. It became more and more obvious why that 1st Tanks platoon high-tailed out of there.

Two months went by and we were given orders to report to Marble Mt. HQs of 1st Tank Bn. It was there that we heard the 27th Marines was being ordered back to the U.S. along with its supporting arms, which would include us.

We were supplied with a date and time to leave the Korean compound. Lt. Ellis and I told the Korean HQ we were leaving on that given date and we requested infantry

support to get back to Da Nang and Marble Mountain.

The Koreans immediately demanded all of our equipment and that none of it was to leave as promised. I got back on the radio with 1st Tanks to confirm what the Koreans were telling us. Battalion said, "negative." It was all to come back with us. Lt. Ellis and I could see there was going to be a problem with our departure; the Korean's were certainly not going to give us infantry support as we took all our equipment out.

I then got on the radio with our old battalion, 2/27. I asked if they could chopper in a platoon of infantry to support us; I explained the situation to them. I then alerted the two tanks out at The Flats to get their stuff together and be prepared to leave at a moment's notice. I would have them exit The Flats the afternoon before our departure date so we would be a full tank platoon again.

The morning of our departure we had all the vehicles in column ready to leave at sunrise. Soon, an H-46 Sea Knight landed on our beach and a platoon of grunts were split up among all the vehicles. We placed them on the ocean side of the vehicles for cover in case the Korean's tried to stop us. I had decided the safest and quickest way to Marble Mountain was a run straight north up the beach. We would be gone before the Koreans knew it. I wondered if another Marine tank platoon would be replacing us; I hoped not. That was the end of our experience with the toughest combat unit in Vietnam.

To bring things up to the present, in 2000, the Korean press brought to light several atrocities committed by the Republic of Korea Marine Corps, the Blue Dragon Brigade in particular. The atrocities began in early 1966 outside the Cam Ranh Bay area, but most were in the Hoi An area. Testimony from ex-Korean Marines and Vietnamese survivors, along with human remains uncovered from mass graves, confirmed what the ROK Marines had done. The following is what has been discovered up till now:

2/12/66	Tay Vinh	1,200 Killed
2/26/66	Binh An	380 Killed
10/9/66	Dien Niem & Phuoc Binh	280 Killed
12/3/66	Binh Hoa	430 Killed
1/12/68	Phong Nhat & Phong Nhi	79 Killed
1/25/68	Ha My	135 Killed

As I stated before, the ROK Marines were vicious when not being shot at. They were also brutal to their own troops. The tanks at The Mud Flats reported several times the horrible treatment and beatings inflicted upon the Koreans

by their own NCOs and officers. This was their idea of "leadership."

I only wish to leave you with this: Believe nothing about the "fearsome" Korean Marines. It is all bullshit.

There is a good finish, however, to the story. Bob Peavey was able to track down Robert Ford in 2013 in Phoenix, Arizona. It was a surprise to all of us to find out he was working for the V.A., making prosthesis for veterans! We

talked on the phone for more than an hour. Until that phone call, he had no idea who planted the booby-trap; he assumed it was an enemy device. And yet he had no hostility towards the Koreans once learning the details. He is still the good man he was in 1968.

But it never goes away, "Why me, Sergeant Embesi? Why me?"

## Friend or Foe?

BY LTCOL RICHARD H. ELLIS, USMC (RET.)

My mother died in early 1968 while I was in-country and assigned to "A" Co, 1st Tanks. I returned home for the funeral, and after I got back to 1st Tank Battalion I was reassigned to "B" Co, 5th Tanks. I was given another platoon command, and I was especially blessed to have this platoon, because all the SNCOs and troops were extraordinary, and the platoon sergeant, S/Sgt. Bob Embesi, had the platoon tuned like a Swiss watch. In the summer of 1968, the platoon was assigned to support R.O.K. troops (The ROK 2nd Marine Division, Blue Dragon Brigade) stationed in Hoi An.

Before we went to the Korean CP, I was briefed that the Koreans could be difficult to deal with, and that they were very rank conscious. I soon found out that senior officers regularly punched out junior officers who displeased them. When I later went to Amphibious Warfare School (AWS), we had 4 Korean Marine officers in our class. The junior captain

had to act as the valet for the others, cleaning the rooms, and ensuring that their uniforms were squared away. One of the AWS staff confided in me that they never failed Korean officers because, years earlier, they did fail a Korean, and later heard that he was severely punished for embarrassing the Korean military.

When we arrived at the Korean CP, we were told that the Koreans murdered a Marine in the platoon that we were relieving. Each tank platoon that was assigned to Hoi An had a Marine Corps cook assigned, and he prepared meals which consisted mostly of "B" rations, with occasional supplementation of fresh foods when they became available. The cook, of necessity, stayed back in the platoon billeting area preparing the next meal, while the rest of the platoon worked on vehicles, did training, etc. Some of the Korean troops would come to the tank platoon area and try to swap Korean items for Marine Corps gear.

The GySgt who was in charge of the tank platoon kicked them out of the tank billeting area and told them to stay away.

One day the cook heard a noise in the squad bay and discovered a Korean rifling through the platoon's gear, looking for things to steal. He confronted the Korean who tried to beat him up. The Koreans all practiced Kimpo, a form of karate, and thought of themselves as tough guys. In this case, the cook put an old fashioned Marine Corps butt whipping on him. A few days later the cook sat down on his rack and set off a booby trap which killed him. There was no way to determine exactly who planted the booby trap but, clearly, this was payback for the Marine cook cleaning the Korean's clock, and for the Koreans being ejected from the tank billeting spaces.

When we arrived in our camp within the Korean CP, we found that there was a trail from our platoon >>

H.Q. through a wooded area to the beach. In the summer, the sand on the beach was hot enough to fry eggs, but a lot of the American troops made the trek to the beach quite regularly. It was nice to get away from the war for a few minutes and enjoy a beautiful vista.

We fell into a routine immediately. The Koreans went on short, company-size operations. They usually wanted a light tank section to support these ops. Each day I had to go to coordination meetings and a daily briefing. Quite often, S/Sgt Embesi accompanied me. There were a dozen or so Marine Corps units, such as ANGLICO, also in support of the Koreans, and the C.O.s of each of the units were expected to be at the briefing as well.

I managed to get away for 2 or 3 of the ops with my tanks, and they were interesting to say the least. I remember one time we set in for the night as it began to get dark. A senior Korean SNCO was checking post, and he found one of his young Marines asleep in his fighting hole about 10 yards in front of my tank. He made the Marine stand at attention and began to beat him with a thick bamboo walking stick that he carried. I set the bezel on my watch and timed this. It went on for almost 10 minutes. Each time the trooper fell down, the SNCO would jerk him to his feet and start again. Finally an officer came over and told the SNCO to knock it off. The SNCO stalked off in quite a snit, and the young Marine stood there for a minute, then collapsed.

The Koreans were so afraid of the punishment they would get from their seniors for making even a small mistake that they showed little initiative. This often resulted in serious problems. One of my section leaders

came in from an operation and told me that one of the Koreans on the op was wounded by an accidental discharge. The company commander refused to medevac him until they made contact with an enemy unit 2 days later, and he could report the injury to be the result of enemy action. He was afraid of what would happen to him if he reported that the wound was caused by an accident.

One day there was a fight between the Marine amtrack unit and some Koreans. The Koreans didn't get the best of it and weren't happy about that. A few days later I was at a briefing at the Korean COC. I heard an explosion near our billeting area. I went back there and was told that one of our Marines, PFC Robert Ford, had been grievously injured. Supposedly, he was walking on the trail from our barracks to the beach when he stepped on an AP mine which blew off part of his leg. S/Sgt Embesi was nearby and went to him immediately. After taking what measures he could to keep him from bleeding out, he got him off the trail and called in a medevac. We were really pissed. This area had been under Korean control for a long time, and a lot of Marines had made the journey up and down the trail to the beach without setting off a mine. It didn't seem likely to me that the explosive device that destroyed Ford's leg had been lying there undiscovered for all that time.

We made a decision that I look back on, after almost 50 years, as one of the more foolhardy things I have ever done, but which seemed logical at the time. S/Sgt. Embesi and I decided to go back to the site of the explosion to investigate; but since we didn't know if there were more such devices, we got

out our fighting knives, got down on all fours side by side, and probed along the trail to where the explosion took place. I had been shot at before, but this took scary (and stupid) to a whole new level. When we finally got to the site of the blast, we found the remains of a 5.56mm ammo box and part of an M-26 frag grenade. It was fairly obvious that "somebody" buried the ammo box in the sand in the middle of the trail, short-fused a grenade and pulled the pin. He then placed the grenade in the box in such a way that, when a victim stepped on the top of the box, it would disturb the grenade and cause it to detonate immediately. All that remained was to cover the top of the box with a layer of sand so the presence of the box couldn't be seen. I notified my C.O. as to what happened and what we had discovered, but nothing ever came of it to the best of my knowledge.

S/Sgt Embesi had a buddy who worked at the ammo dump in Da Nang. He checked the lot number of the ammo box for us, and it had been issued to the Korean Marines. There is no doubt in my mind that that one of the Koreans put this homemade booby trap on the trail in order to injure or kill one of us, just as the cook from the previous platoon had been murdered by a booby trap.

It is bad enough to have a determined enemy like Victor Charlie nipping at your heels. It becomes a lot worse when folks, who are supposed to be your allies, try to hurt or kill you. When that happens, fine young men like Robert Ford wind up paying the price.

Rick Ellis

October 20, 2014

# 75MM BBQ

BY ROBERT A. KENDRICK

Steaks: The primal drive to any outdoor assemblage dedicated to the application of heat and spices to meat. You can have your chicken, pork, fish, un-shucked corn, hotdogs, aluminum wrapped veggies or whatever. But, red meat, seasoned and laid over a hell fire of glowing, red coals is what touches the primitive parts of man and brings him out of the cave. BBQ deprivation is an understudied and underestimated phenomenon. This deprivation is often the hidden causal manifestation to unexplained and irrational behavior in men, and its source is powerful.

So it was the four of us, deprived, longingly watched through the short and narrow open entrance from the relative safety of our 'cave' as the hastily gathered, but carefully piled wood, salvaged from recently delivered ammo boxes, burned beneath an iron pellet. There we waited huddled, chilly, dirty and wet for the coals to ready and the steaks to rehydrate, both taking a tortuously great amount of time.

Rain didn't help. Expected of this season, the wood soaked it up in defiance of our efforts, prolonging the feast. We watched with satisfaction the wood-sustained fire, our hushed murmurs thickening the atmosphere in the close quarters, amplifying our impatience.

"Who's going to go first?" someone finally whispered. Then, silence for a minute or two, as the heat from the wood fire leisurely introduced itself into our cramped hovel.

"Pouring diesel fuel over the wood was a good idea," came another voice. We all nodded in agreement. A few

more moments passed and somebody asked: "How are the steaks coming?"

"Still flat and still looking like shoe leather," came a slightly delayed and disappointed reply.

"Fire feels good." Again, we all nodded, reminded of its more friendly qualities. You wouldn't think the weather would turn cold along the 17th parallel environment, but it does and, with it, rain that can sap the living warmth right out of you, testified by the solid, low overcast and the constant drizzle, not the best weather for a BBQ. But, we were motivated. We had meat.

It's not every day you can get your hands on a full, unopened gallon can of dehydrated steaks. That sort of luxury is reserved for the mess hall crowd in the rear areas. C-Rats, heated with marble size pieces of C-4 plastic explosive ignited on the armor deck of our tank, was our warm meal norm. There being 360 gallons of diesel fuel just inches below the blazing C-4 didn't bother anybody. Come to think of it, neither did the 80 rounds of varied high explosive 90mm ammo, 1500 rounds of .50 cal. and 25,000 rounds of .30 cal., all packed tightly together inside and out of the turret. Our concern, originally, was about coordinating two unknowns: The time it took to get a good bed of coals from ammo box wood (in the rain) and how long it takes a dehydrated steak to rehydrate in rain water. Making maximum use of our natural resources. By the way, that decision to use rain water, rather than bomb crater water, we're proud to say, was almost unanimous. We hadn't

figured on a 75mm recoilless party pooper somewhere to the west taking pot shots at us. This added a third element. Which of us was willing to man the BBQ under fire?

Now, for those of you not readily familiar with being on the smoky end of the famed 75mm recoilless rifle, its most notable characteristic is that both ends are smoky. That's what makes it recoilless. In other words, it's a cannon with little or no kick. Originally designed as an anti-tank weapon in WWII, we presumed the operator was attempting to hit our tank. That's why we were in the bunker...or cave. After all, we're not completely stupid. We did decide to use the rain water to rehydrate the steaks. Right?

The next question, always, is: "YOU HAD A TANK?" Why didn't you just shoot back?" One word answers that question: Politics. It just wasn't politically convenient to have an enemy 75mm cannon firing at U.S. soldiers from that particular coordinate. Technically, academically, electorally, statistically, it wasn't there. So, we decided to go ahead and have the BBQ.

Despite our restriction from firing at his smoke, the 75mm guy was under no such restriction from firing at ours. So he did. But, he wasn't very good at it. Were this a mortar team, our BBQ would have been an ash pit in the first 3 rounds. As it was, with this distance, this weapon, this training, this rain, this cold, and this guy, we had a series of anti-force multiplying buffers. Probably a trainee.

With that bit of history under >>

our belts, I now return you to the cave, where the steaks were plumping nicely and four pair of eager eyes happily noticed the time had come to put the meat to the heat. So, who was going to go first? Whoever it was had about 9 seconds to sprint 25 yards across the 75mm BBQ/gunnery range, place four steaks on the grate, and sprint back into the relative safety of the cave before the phantom gunner could readjust and fire. Our advantage was that it was indirect fire. You could hear the cannon firing first in the distance—phuuummff. Then a moment of silence, ‘\_\_\_\_\_’. Then whoosh, the sound of the artillery shell whizzing through the air just before impact; then WHUMP! Impact. Cool. We all agreed, this was very do-able. Straws, or in this case match sticks, three impartial and one not, were drawn and the game was on. The lucky pick coming to the new guy, fresh from the world. Gee...

OK. Stripped down for speed, four rehydrated steaks packed into a canteen cup, a good push out the door and off he went. Turned out the kid was a better runner than we anticipated, covering the distance to the glowing pile in startlingly quick time, arriving slightly before the faraway ‘phuuummff’ alerted us our opponent had played his hand. During the silence that followed, the three of us instinctively took cover away from the bunker’s open entrance as the next two phases arriving in rapid succession shook the ground. When the dust cleared, there were, again, four of us in the bunker. One was breathing very heavily. It was the new guy.

“Did you get the meat put on the grate?” someone asked.

“I-don’t-know,” he blurted,

confused, showing us a shaking canteen cup. It was empty. The three of us quickly looked out the door. Sure enough, there were four steaks on the BBQ. Nice pat on the back to the quivering kid. But, as the culinary aficionado among us noted, they needed to be placed more to the center where the heat was. Someone’s going to have to go back out there and do that.

The match sticks were employed, minus one. (The kid was in no shape for another run). This time the honor coming to one of the more seasoned among us. What served for a spatula in hand, “again into the breach”, a good shove, and off he went.

This runner was a tried and true, barefoot, country boy fleetly getting three of the four steaks centered before the initial ‘...phuuummff...’. During the silence of step 2, he managed to correctly reposition the fourth steak, so by the time steps 3 and 4 completed, he was safely, albeit horizontally, airborne shoulder level inside the cave, finishing with a semi-controlled crash against the back wall. Two of us quickly looked out the door (the kid was still shaking). Excellent. The meat was now cookin’. We were getting the hang of this. High five!

Somewhat recovered, we four leered out the hovel opening, as the crackling smell of cooking meat kicked our primitive into full Cro-Magnon, to the point where communication no longer required the use of a single consonant. Then, panicked grunts with the realization, these steaks are going to need turning.

This time only two sticks were necessary. I drew the long, the short stick drawing to the gunner. Gunners spend a good deal of their time in the gunner’s seat, cramped deep inside the

turret, and don’t get a lot of exercise. We expected a slower performance this time. With precise instructions on how to check the steaks before flipping them, and a brief lesson from our culinary expert about meat, we sent the lumbering gunner out the door. It was like a turtle losing its shell. We expected the worse. But, from our unworthy foe came no report! The smiling gunner arriving at the pile turned and waved at us,

“Flip the damn meat you #&\*&3\$\$xxx^##!” we shouted, regaining control of the full alphabet. It was mid-flip during the fourth steak that we heard the ‘...phuuummff...’. “RUN!” we shouted in unison, and he so did, in the wrong direction, but making a spectacular full 180 degree arc back to the bunker in the nick of time. We must have caught the 75mm guy by surprise, underestimating our cultural persistence.

Now we were running down the final straightaway and the finish line was in sight. No match sticks needed this time. The meat retrieval run was, by succession, mine. Suited now to make the dash, canteen cup clenched in hand, ready to receive the feast, but the spatula was missing. Seems the gunner had abandoned it somewhere on the battlefield. OK, no time to waste. Out the door. I’m sure our foe was completely confused by now, causing him, I imagine, to stare an extra second or two in disbelief as four different GIs, carrying first a cup, the next two a flat piece of metal, then another a cup, sprinted wildly from bunker to a mysterious pile of burning wood and back again. Quickly, the gathered hot pieces of flattened cattle, formerly vacated of all moisture in the name of eternal

preservation, were crammed into the canteen cup, punctuated by the sound of 75mm retort and the safety of the bunker achieved micro seconds before the final WHOMP! Success! It was dinner time. Biting into the meat

under any other circumstances would have been considered unthinkable. To us, it was as close to a home-cooked meal we had seen in a coon’s age. The pleased moans and grunts of practiced carnivore reigned

throughout our dwelling. Then came the sole complaint.

“Could I get mine a little more well-done?”

Robert A. Kendrick, 11/27/2014

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# Remembering Vietnam

BY CHARLES “ED” HILTZ

Nottingham, MD

Email: hiltz5@verizon.net

In the past, I believe that the Sponson Box has featured articles on several members as to where they are now and what they have been doing since being discharged from the Marine Corps. I think that it would be very interesting to get members to send in a short biography on life after the Corps. Back in the April Sponson Box 2013, I sent this information along with a photo of the family which the photo was published, but without any information. Now I’m providing some of my memories from my years in Vietnam, March 1968 to April 1969. It is in no particular order or by month that they occurred. As with age and time, my memory has faded some.

Paris Island, Recruit Platoon 1042, September 1967, then ITR and on to Camp Pendleton and Camp Delmar Tank School. From there, I went straight to Vietnam. I had no stateside duty first. I arrived in Vietnam as a PFC and later promoted to Lance Cpl.

After only a few days in-country, I was first assigned to H&S Company as the driver of Yankee 51 or 52. We were sent out to perimeter guard duty at “7 Com” (Seventh Communications). I was brand new and, on my first ever evening watch, I experienced my first encounter with incoming rockets. I learned quickly that inside the tank was the safest place to be. We also spent some time at Liberty Bridge doing a lot of convoy escort duty. This is where our tank hit a landmine

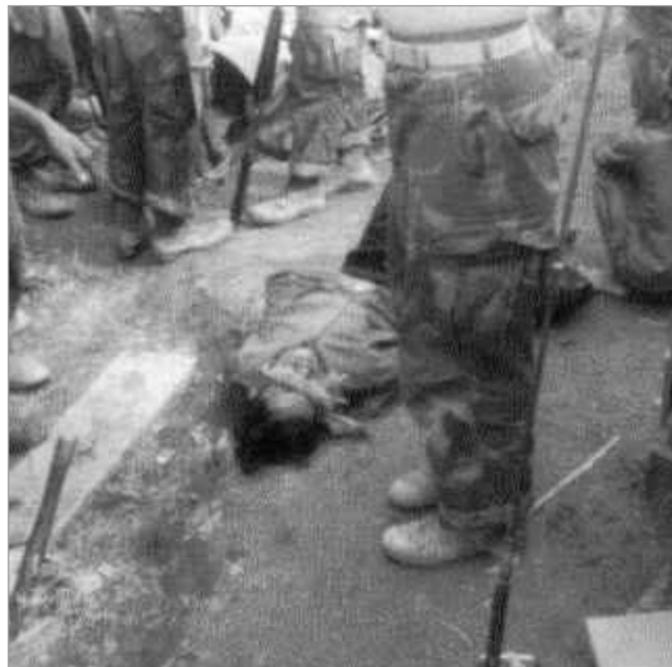


Then I was then transferred to Alpha Company at Hill 55. Lt. Hurt had the fourth platoon and we were stationed at An Hoa. I think we were supporting First Battalion of the Fifth Marines and an amtrac platoon. I got my nick name, “Nazi,” from Lt. Hurt. He figured that since Hiltz rhymes with Shultz and, since Sgt. Shultz was from the TV show Hogan’s Heroes, the name fit. Also, if you remember, Sgt. Schultz used to say, “I see nothing and I know nothing.”

We participated in Operation “Mameluke Thrust.” Lt. Hurt was TC when I saw my first combat action. We were lead tank in column when two Marine engineer mine sweepers were shot down in front of me. I immediately came to the realization this was for real and I was >>

concerned/scared. I remember dropping my driver's seat down, closing and locking the hatch. That same morning or during that day, our tank, which I believe was A-11, took an RPG down in the right road wheel area. We didn't even realize this until later on that day while we stopped in a secure area.

That same day, Lt. Hurt was telling/directing me to drive forward towards incoming small arms fire and my immediate response to myself was, "What the hell do you want to go this way for?" And, of course, we went that way anyway. We had Marine grunts behind our tank. I had my driver's hatch open, but my seat was down. An unknown Marine grunt, trying to get my attention to get me to maneuver the tank a certain way, threw a small rock into the driver compartment. My imagination simply took over and I thought that it was an enemy grenade!!! I frantically started blindly searching with my hands to locate the explosive and, much to my relief, I grabbed onto a small rock.



I really remember B-52 arch light strikes and the ground near us actually vibrating like crazy.

While in a column, the grunts found a suspected VC. They laid him down in front of our tank track and had me drive slowly forward to get him to talk.

On June 28, 1968, while moving with the 3rd Platoon "C" Company, our tank A-11 hit a landmine of approximately 150 pounds. I was the driver and Lt. Hurt was the TC. I believe he may have received a Purple Heart for injuries to his face/nose. Several other Marines who were riding on the

fenders were also injured. One WIA was severely wounded and possibly KIA. I was told many years later by PFC David Reed (who is now deceased) that, prior to our tank hitting the mine, he remembers me saying to the crew, "Something doesn't look right. The shits going to hit the fan!" This was because it was unusually quiet and there were no civilians around. Cpl. Sena was the gunner that day. I don't know where we were heading. I have a copy of the After Action Report regarding this incident. I never wrote home about the mine incident because I did not want to upset or worry my family. Just like while I was at boot camp at Paris Island, I always wrote home and said that everything was fine.

The damage to A-11 was really bad on the right side. I have photos of it while at either Hill 55 or the 1st Tank Battalion Maintenance Area, being repaired. I don't remember exactly when a tank retriever came either to An Hoa or at our location and hooked us up to be taken to Hill 55 or Battalion. I do remember that Cpl. Sena and I stayed with the tank. I don't remember if others were with us as well. Once we got past Liberty Bridge and down to the pontoon raft that we used to get back and forth from each side of the river, the tank retriever backed our tank onto the pontoon raft. Onto the raft with our tank was a shit pot full of Vietnamese civilians (including lots of children). Well, both tracked vehicles were on the pontoon when the tank retriever disconnected from our tank so that they could return to Hill 55. All of a sudden, the raft became unbalanced. The pontoon capsized forward or backward, I can't remember which, but our tank rolled off and into the water, taking with it many Vietnamese women, men and children. Several Marines, including Cpl. Sena, jumped into the water in an attempt to rescue as many people as they could. I do remember S/Sgt Hoover had to write some sort of report about this incident, and he spent a lot of time questioning us about it. I don't know how many civilian casualties there were, but I'm sure there were some. Then we had to spend quite a bit of time recovering our tank from the river.

More on operation Mameluke Thrust. I will always remember rationing out our water to the grunts. We carried three or more five-gallon water cans with us per tank, while the grunts carried two canteens. I watched in disgust as many grunts dipped their helmets into rice paddy water to get a drink. They used to form a line behind our tank while we poured them water from our plentiful supply. Sometimes they didn't get water resupplied from choppers

until much later. I remember while sitting on an unknown hill (maybe Hill Ten or 148), a Vietnamese mother carried her child up to the Marines. The infant had several canister /arrows/flachette rounds protruding from his chest. I could hear the air escaping from his lungs. I assume the corpsman attended to him.

On An Hoa perimeter guard one night, I was close to rotating back to the States, and I was the TC of the tank. I was only an E-3, but, it was because I had the most time in-country and there were no NCOs available. PFC Heagy was on watch, while I was sleeping on the gypsy rack behind the TC cupola. All of a sudden, an RPG hit the TC cupola. PFC Heagy was seriously wounded as he hollered out, "Nazi, (my nick name) I'm hit!" PFC Perez jumped into the driver's compartment and backed up the tank away from the concertina wire. I started firing the .50 caliber blindly into the area that I thought the RPG came from. I got on the radios and notified S/Sgt Hoover and Lt. Cohen (or Lt. Hurt - I don't remember which one). Right after that, I called in for a medevac and they flew PFC Heagy out. (I believe L/Cpl Ron Colucci may have more information about Heagy). Now that I think about it, it was a miracle. I even thought I was right behind Heagy but the impact of the RPG never touched me. My guardian angel must have been watching over me the whole time I was in-country!!!

Some other experiences on Go Noi Island were:

We had a friendly fire incident where an American pilot mistakenly bombed our own troops. I believe that a Marine was KIA. At the time, I had been transferred to Bravo Company and Lt. Allen Cohen was my platoon leader. While in this area, in the distance we observed an NVA flag actually up high on a tree or pole and flying for all to see. Lt Hurt, S/Sgt Hoover and others tried to shoot it down using our 90mm, but got negative results. While on perimeter that night, all four of us slept inside the tank. One morning after an overnight ambush, the grunts brought in two VC prisoners, along with a very young boy whom they thought was a possible VC. The kid looked to be around only age 12 to 13 years old. I have several pictures of prisoners on Tim's (Mayte) Bravo Co. website. In order to get the prisoners to talk, a .45 caliber hand gun was put to their head.

While we were on Go Noi Island, our tank almost wasted a company of ARVN. As it turns out, one night while on perimeter, we saw a column of troops on an open trail and they appeared to be heading towards our position. We thought that they were enemy troops and our tank

had a canister round loaded in the gun tube ready to fire at them. At the last minute, a green flare was shot up by the approaching troops. They were saved from being wiped out by a few tense minutes.

While heading back to An Hoa from The Go Noi area with a company of ARVN, the tank in front of ours hit a land mine. The few Marines who were with us immediately set up a defensive perimeter around the tank. The ARVN soldiers began to run away, but their CO took out his .45 pistol and actually fired shots over their heads to get them to stop. He then got them assembled to set up a perimeter. They then fired off some mortars. So much for their dedication to their cause.

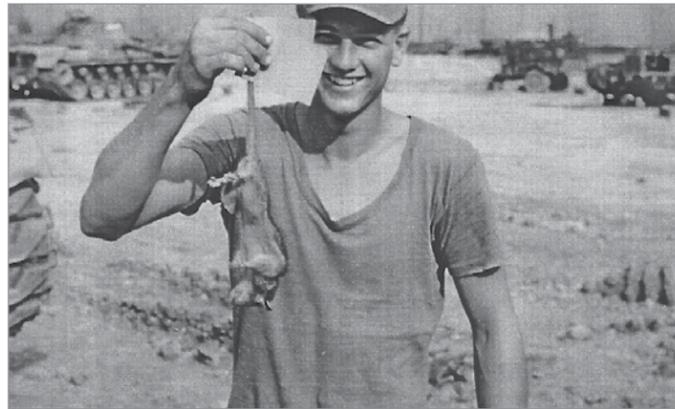
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Here is a list of names to the best of my memory that I served with throughout Vietnam, March 68 to April 69

- Lt. Morton Hurt (An Hoa) from Washington State
  - Lt. Alan Cohen (An Hoa) from Georgia
  - Staff Sgt. Hoover (An Hoa)
  - Sgt. Drysdale (An Hoa) from Michigan
  - Sgt. Piper (An Hoa)
  - Sgt. Hearon (H&S Co) from Massachusetts
  - Cpl. Hines (H&S Co) from Minnesota
  - Cpl. Turner
  - Cpl. Yacovich (An Hoa) from Kentucky
  - Lt. Ron Knight (An Hoa)
  - PFC Dimitris (An Hoa)
  - Cpl. Russ Sena (An Hoa) from California
  - Cpl. Jellerson (An Hoa) from California
  - PFC Perez
  - L/Cpl. Garcia (An Hoa)
  - L/Cpl. David Reed (An Hoa) from Michigan (now deceased)
  - PFC Epps (An Hoa) KIA from New York... His picture is on Tim's web site with some of my photo images.
  - Cpl. Richard Coonfield (An Hoa) from Virginia
  - L/Cpl. Tim Caterell (An Hoa) from Pennsylvania
  - PFC Heagy (An Hoa) WIA from an RPG on night perimeter. I was TC and he had to be medevac out that night .
  - PFC Hornbeck from California
  - PFC Ron Colucci (An Hoa) WIA
  - Cpl. Dudley (An Hoa) from Washington State
- Please keep in mind all information may or may not be accurate as well as the spellings of names I'm strictly going off my memory from 46 years ago. >>

I also remember:

1. Loading wounded Marines on the back of our tank, along with gear/equipment from any medevac.
2. Receiving H&I mortar fire from the enemy and not even bothering to run for cover since we received it so frequently.
3. Blowing out our broken tank torsion bars with C-4 explosive.
4. All of the rats at the An Hoa base.



In the photo: Ed holding up a prize.

5. **Burning the shitters (photo below)**...cut away 55-gallon drums filled with diesel fuel.



6. And at Christmas and New Years, all different colored pop-up flares that Marines shot up into the night sky.

**John's Comment:** I am going to assume that you will be in DC for the reunion next year... especially since you live (what?) an hour away. We could make a "quilt work" of stories such as yours above and add comments from others on your list if you would consider gathering up some of the other Bravo Co. tankers and share a session together when we record interviews. ■

## Photos from Vietnam



Baptism in the Field - A Marine from the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, is baptized by a 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines chaplain at the An Tan Bridge, Chu Lai, Vietnam. The Marine watching is a member of the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines. Defense Dept. Photo (Marine Corps), 3rd Marine Division, Vietnam, 1965. Photog: Sgt. Choate.



1st Sgt. Jim Langford, C Co., 3rd Tanks ('68 - '69) sent the following intel on the NVA and VC units that operated in the Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR) for the 1st Mar Div:

Quang Nam Province  
Head Quarters Quang Nam  
38th NVA Infantry Regiment, Quang Nam  
.....7th NVA Infantry Battalion  
.....8th NVA Infantry Battalion  
.....9th NVA Infantry Battalion  
141st NVA Infantry Regiment, Quang Nam  
.....1st NVA Infantry Battalion  
.....2nd NVA Infantry Battalion  
.....3rd NVA Infantry Battalion  
577th NVA Rocket Launcher Battalion, Quang Nam  
R20 VC Infantry Battalion, Quang Nam  
T89 VC Sapper Battalion, Quang Nam  
42nd VC Recon Battalion, Quang Nam  
91st NVA Sapper Battalion, Quang Nam  
V25 VC Infantry Battalion, Quang Nam  
575th NVA Rocket Battalion, Quang Nam  
8th NVA Sapper Battalion, Quang Nam  
Q82 VC Local Forces Infantry Battalion, Quang Nam  
Q80 VC Local Forces Infantry Battalion, Quang Nam  
9th VC Local Forces Infantry Battalion, Quang Nam (Note: This unit is shown as an NVA unit but with the LF designation it should be VC.)

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

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**USMC VTA c/o Bruce Van Apeldoorn, 73 Stanton Street, Rochester, NY 14611**

\*Over & Above donations are always gratefully appreciated.



We stole the eagle from the Air Force, the anchor from the Navy, and the rope from the Army. On the seventh day while God rested, we overran his perimeter, stole the globe, and we've been running the whole show ever since.