



Sponson BOX

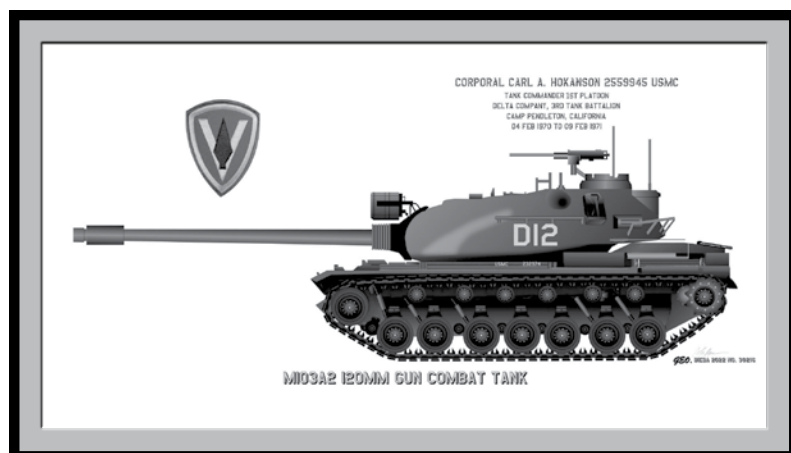
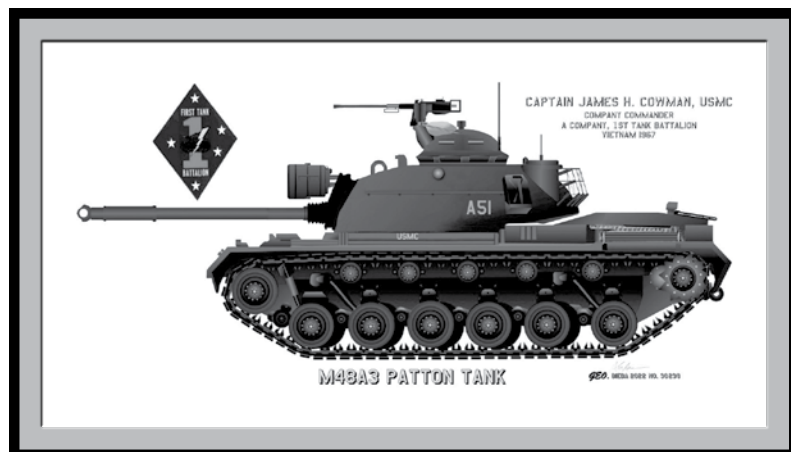
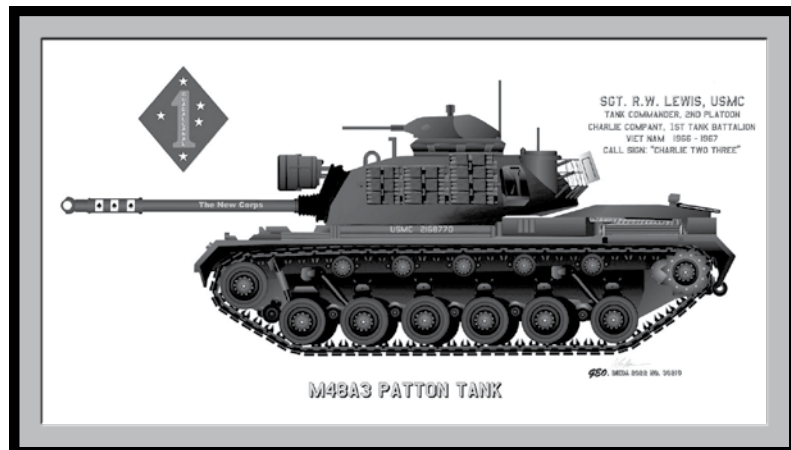
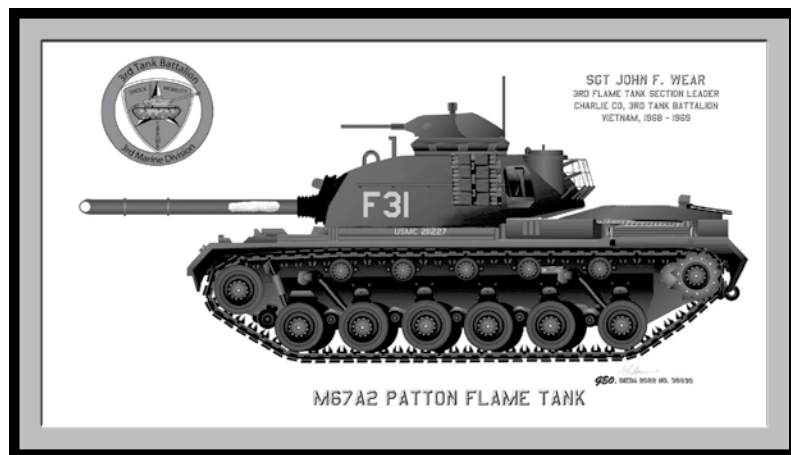
*Voice of
the USMC
Vietnam Tankers
Association*

Ensuring Our Legacy Through Reunion, Renewal & Remembrance™



It is just 60 days until we reunite in Colorado Springs!!!

	Cover Story: To The Rescue	Page 31-35
Featured Stories:	The Khe Sanh Cave.....	Page 36-37
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We found a source to produce a certificate like any of these pictured and more. If you are interested in obtaining your own personalized full color gem, please call John Wear at **719-495-5998** or email him at **johnwear2@verizon.net** so we can obtain your individual information (below) in order to create your own personalized certificate.

They come 11" x 17" plain paper rolled for \$75 + \$12 for delivery...
Or 9" x 18" matted and framed for \$150 + \$14 for delivery.

INFORMATION THAT YOU WILL NEED TO PROVIDE:

Your Name

Your Shipping Address

Print: Rolled or Framed

Tank Model

Tank Turret Number

Tank Serial Number

Name on Gun Tube

Battalion, Division Patch

Special equipment:
 Searchlight - Sky Mounted or
 Cupola .50 Cal.

Spare Track Pattern on Turret -
 20mm Cans - Other additions

*** You will receive a proof copy via email to approve before we produce and ship your certificate. **

Letter from the President

2023 REUNION: It's just two months until we reunite in Colorado Springs. We are a bit disappointed at the number of attendees. We may have been mistaken as to the wonderful draw of the Rocky Mountains, the amazing and unique sites and the sunshine that the state of Colorado provides. Perhaps our members are just too tired to travel. We certainly hope that they are not too broke, or worse too sick.

Pikes Peak Cog Railway: Don't forget that the temperatures on the top of the 14,000-foot mountain will be "winter-like" so be sure to pack a winter coat and some warm sox to bring with you and to wear at the top of "America's Mountain."

THE NEVER-ENDING SAGA: It is May 2 and I just got off of the phone with the son of a recently departed US Marine tanker who served on Okinawa during WW-2. The son (who happens to be a US Marine peacetime veteran) wanted to know if we had any information on this father's service. Without trying to be "mean," I told him that since his father did not serve in Vietnam, unfortunately the USMC VTA had zero information to impart on him about his father. Before returning his phone call, I also looked at the MCTA membership roster and did not see his father's name so I was pretty sure that any information about his father's military service went to the grave with him.

REALITY: The USMC VTA has over 400 members on our roster. Approximately 150 of you have made the effort and have taken the time to write a story that we have published ... so you are covered when your children or grandchildren are looking for some information about your military service after you report to the guard house in Heaven. The rest of you are going to be just like the WW-2 tanker: "We don't know. He never talked about it."

A GOOD BOOK: I got a call from Jim Cowman telling me of a book that he was reading about the Skipper from Echo 2/7. The book is titled "Bury Him." The book is all about the author's tour in Vietnam. It goes into great detail about Operation Allenbrook, a large-scale tank-infantry operation on Go Noi Island, southwest of Da Nang in May of 1968. Several of our members have told me about the operation ... but this book is a written testament to the heroic efforts of many of our tankers. The skipper gives great credit to the tanks that accompanied his unit and actually says that if the tanks had not been with them, his company would most likely have been totally wiped out.

As an aside, in the last issue of our magazine, there is the Silver Star citation for TJ Silva. Coincidentally in his book, the author writes about the same heroic incident. It is a really good read.

And by the by, the author, Captain Douglas Chamberlin, lives in Wyoming and has been invited to attend our gathering in Colorado Springs. I hope that he makes it.

NAPALM: As we know, napalm is an incendiary mixture of a gelling agent and a volatile petrochemical (usually gasoline or diesel fuel). The name, napalm, is a portmanteau of two of the constituents of the original thickening and gelling agents: coprecipitated aluminum salts of naphthenic acid and palmitic acid.

Naphthalene is made from crude oil or coal tar. It is also produced when things burn, so naphthalene is found in cigarette smoke, car exhaust, and smoke from forest fires. It is used as an insecticide and pest repellent. Naphthalene was first registered as a pesticide in the United States in 1948.

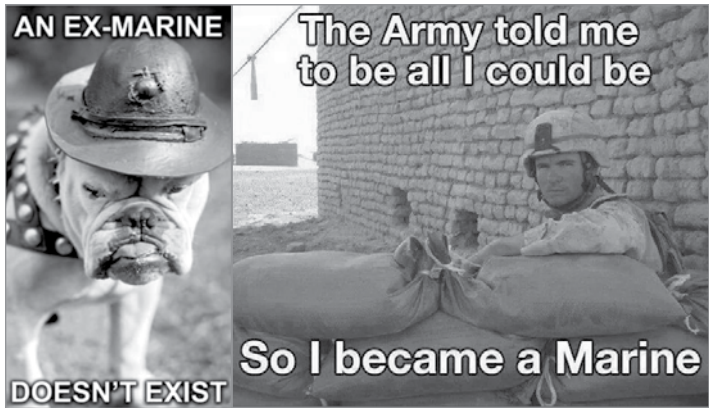
When you Google search "Does naphtha cause cancer?" The resound reply is, "YES." So, any and all of the flame tankers who stood on top of their flame tank turret and mixed a load (or twenty) of napalm where you poured gasoline into a 55 gal. drum and added napalm powder as the wind blew the powder all over you and your buddies, please note that, like me, you may have already contracted cancer.

"War does not determine who is right, war determines who is left." – Confucius

John

Everyone has a story. If your story is good enough to reminisce with your buddies then it's good enough to write down and send it for the Sponson Box and for the VTA website. If you can't type then ask your kids or your grandkids to type it for you while you tell them your words. Your story can be about the war or aboVut the home front. Just write it down the same way that you tell it and send it to John Wear. We'd love to share your story with the membership. I am pretty sure that your family will thank you too.

And please remember: If you don't write it down, your legacy will be forgotten when you report to the Great Tank Park in the Sky.



ever knowing if he was awarded the medal. So, your story has a very special meaning to me. Again, thank you John!

I will say, he was a real character! Promoted and busted many times, mostly due to alcohol related actions. But when the shit hit the fan and things mattered, TJS could always be counted on!! God rest his soul in Tanker Heaven.

Semper Fi,
1st Lt Don Scott,
Bravo Company, 5th and 1st Tanks

BAM

John Wear writes: One weekend in early December, I spent Saturday in the gymnasium of one of the city's largest high schools selling my pottery at a huge Holiday Craft Show & Sale. During the event I wore my USMC Vietnam veteran cover and a green USMC sweat shirt. Out of a crowd of folks walking through my vendor booth, a fairly good sized ... (should I say, "Big boned"?) ... younger woman looked me in the eye and said, "Ooo-Rah Marine!"

I smiled and asked, "Are you a jarhead?"

She got this huge grin on her face and as she stuck out her fist to do a fist bump, she said, "Yes, Sir!"

I countered by saying, "Oh yeah. A Beautiful American Marine!"

She said, "Yeah, a BAM!"

David and Goliath



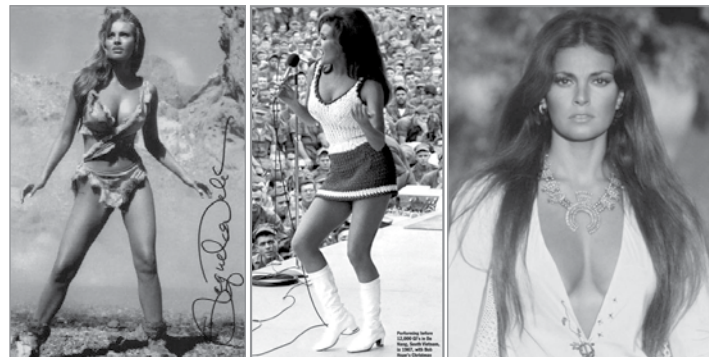
PTSD and Veteran Suicide Prevention

Rick Ellis writes: Kudos to Bruce Van Apeldoorn on his video interview! This is a good presentation on a subject

that veterans shouldn't be afraid or ashamed to address. I also think it is important that the folks working with the vets have either been in combat and can relate to the stresses the veterans are subject to, or are mature and realistic in the way they deal with the vets. Years ago, I volunteered to be interviewed by a grad student from Tulane University who was doing a study about veterans and PTSD. The student was a very young girl who thought she knew more about my experiences than I did. Her first question was to ask what drugs I used. I told her I didn't use drugs and she said, "Oh yes you do. All veterans use drugs, now be honest and tell me which ones you use." It went downhill from there. I finally realized that she had been interviewing patients at the VA who were there because they were seeking help for a drug problem among other things. Every veteran she had encountered had a drug problem, and because she wasn't as smart as she thought she was, she assumed that meant every vet was a drug addict. That is not the kind of person we need working with the guys who need help.

The last Sponson Box also had a great tribute to Bob Embesi. Thanks.

Rick Lewis remembers Raquel Welch



I got to see Raquel Welch at a USO Show at Chu Lai with John Wayne in March of '66 just before we back loaded to move north to Da Nang. She had a very tight long sleeve green top, a short go-go skirt and white go-go boots. When she came out from behind John Wayne, the massive cheer was deafening. I am sure that it could be heard all the way to the DMZ.

Years later, back in the states, my dad had been given tickets to the San Diego Chargers football game, Press Level. I found myself sitting right next to Raquel. I told her about seeing her in Vietnam.

She said, "It was so great to have seen all you boys. I am glad you made it home OK." She added that she could have hugged and kissed every one of us that had been there at that time.

At the end of the game as we stood up to leave, she turned to me and she hugged and kissed me. I told all the guys on the tank ramp on Monday. They all said, "Sure she did!"

A Realization

My grandchildren don't make me feel old, it's the knowledge that I'm married to their grandmother that does."

Remembering Marines

I have been going through past issues of the Sponson Box and most of the articles are after I left. The names that I do remember might not be members of USMCVTA. The last issue I seen the obituary on Ray Kinhead who was my XO in Charlie Co, 3rd Tanks from Oct 66 to early 67 and Robert Baxley. Both were in Dong Ha when I got there. I lost contact with Ray and now I know why. I have a picture of Baxley up in Dong Ha. I also found a picture of Dale Otto which I found out that he was KIA in late 66, I believe. I want to know if you would be interested in some pictures and names of those who served before you and some of the others that were with you. I can e-mail them to you or make copies whatever you like. I would also try to come up with a caption to explain the picture. Let me know what you think?

Semper Fi,

Adam Zlotek
C Co 3rd Tanks 66-67

Our reply to Adam: By all means please send them so we can share them in our magazine!!!

Terry Hunter says: Dover Randolph's photo and obituary was in the last issue of our magazine. I was sorry to see that he passed away in 2011 and that we had just found it out about it.

I vividly remember Dover was the very well-liked and a very competent Heavy Section Leader of 2nd Platoon, Bravo Co. during Operation Buffalo in July 1966. He and I got medevac'd together. We went to Dong Ha and not much later taken to a temporary medical facility at Phu Bai. He and I were on stretchers on an assembly line-like arrangement getting medical care. Dover was next to me and as the doctor was pulling out a large piece of shrapnel out of his back, Dover let out a really loud moan. Being the young and impressionable kid that I was, that noise freaked me out and I jumped up which knocked the legs out from under our stretchers and both Dover and I landed on the floor.

Much later Dover lived in Ashville, NC and when the VTA was conducting our 2009 reunion in Charleston, I tried to get him to come down since he had never been able to attend one of our gatherings in the past. Unfortunately, he got sick just before the reunion and could not make it. Two years later he passed away.

LEGACY of the CORPS

Guy Everest submitted this: During the Korean war the US Marines built their base and put a sign over the gate saying, "US Marine Corps, Second to None." Then the Royal Marines set up their base next to them and the sign over their gate said, "Royal Marines-None." It's all about friendly rivalry laced with a large dose of mutual respect.

The Last Man Standing Award



The other day VTA charter member Garry Hall gave us a reminder that back in the very beginning of the USMC VTA, someone suggested that we purchase the above award to be presented to the "Last Man Standing." When there is just one USMC VTA member left standing, he can open the bottle and toast his brothers of the VTA. And by the by, Garry is the "Chairman of the Last Man Standing" committee.

Dave Owen Recruits

Dave ordered a personalized tank certificate for himself a while ago ... and as he placed his order, he decided to see if Patricia Simpson, the widow of one of his tank's crewmen, Mike Simpson, would want a certificate for her recently departed husband. While Dave was helping her decide, he asked her if she'd would also like to become a member of the VTA and to receive that Sponson Box. She enthusiastically replied, "Yes!"

Here is a message from Pat: "I wanted to say thank you for allowing me to join the USMC Vietnam Tankers Association as an associate member. It means a tremendous amount to me and I know my husband is proud of me. One of the things my husband was proudest of in life was being a Marine and I was privileged enough to be a part at Parris Island on 12/2/69...a wonderful and impressive memory for myself and his family to hold on to.

I have included with my membership application, Mike's DD-214 and I will gladly provide you with any other documents that you may require if necessary (i.e., marriage license, death certificate, etc.)

Again, my deepest thanks for saying yes to "Sarge" Dave Owen's request for a membership in the tankers' association for my husband / myself. Dave has been a lifelong friend / brother for both my husband and me.

WHEN A SOLDIER COMES HOME...

<https://www.ebaumsworld.com/pictures/when-a-soldier-comes-home/81052691/>

A lady at one of my jobs asked me if I was a veteran.

I said, "Yes." And she asked if she could give me a hug.

"Of course," I said.

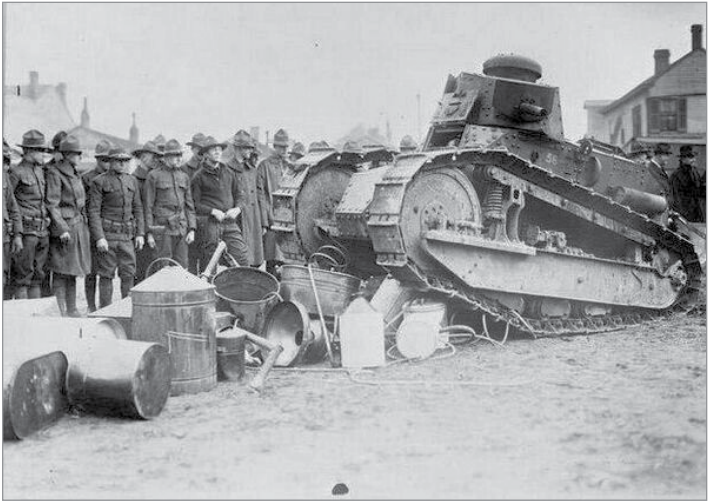
She gave me a hug and said, "I wish I could give my husband a hug."

>>

I asked, “Is he overseas?”
She replied, “No, he came home in a closed casket, I couldn’t even see him for the last time.”
Families pay the price of freedom too. It’s expensive...very expensive.

Robin Rebhan
Albany, NY 12205

FRENCH RENAULT TANK



Well, since this is a French-built Renault tank, we can

assume that the “frogs” used it for all sorts of stuff other than actually warfare!!! This photo reminds me of the post-WW2 advertisement: “FOR SALE: French army rifle. Never fired and only dropped once.”

Another Dale Dye Tale

Recently an article come out titled “Rumble in the Jungle,” written by Dale Dye. It was that military war correspondent’s feeble attempt to write a story about US Marine tanks in Vietnam. The article contained a very large amount of inaccurate information and several bald-face lies. I passed the article and my own comments to a large group of US Marine Vietnam tankers. Here is one comment:

One of my very good friends, one of the four of us who call ourselves the “Lootenants,” switched to a Public Affairs MOS. Captain Dale Dye was working for him and on TAD to Beirut, Lebanon as a PAO. Dye had a few drinks one night and was arguing with reporters. He pulled out his .45 and put a round through the ceiling. The next morning, he was on a flight to D.C. to report to Jim. Who took the good captain to HQMC where he was summarily retired on the spot. That launched his very successful career as a consultant to movie makers and occasional actor. ■

GUESS WHO Photo Contest

Can you guess who the two Marine are on this photo? The first person to contact John Wear at 719-495-5998 with the right answer will have his name entered in a contest for a chance to win a yet un-named mediocre prize.

Since Garry Hall took the photo, he is excluded...



Last Issue Winner

Last issue’s winner was Sterling “Lynn” Young who called at 1:40 PM on Easter Sunday (April 9) to identify (his “brother”) Wally Young as the Marine in the photo. Lynn also commented that he and Wally spend countless nights just shooting the bull sitting on the top of their tank’s turret while on night perimeter watch.

And as a side note, we had quite a number of phone calls (later than Lynn’s) identifying Wally. Thank you one and all for participating.

Looking For...

LT. COL. D. E. YOUNG, CO OF 1ST TANKS, 68–69

I am trying to find the Marine above. He was my Battalion Commander in Vietnam and I was the Motor Transportation Officer for H & S Co. He awarded me a Purple Heart in formation but the award never ended up in my Service Record. After all these years, I am now trying to correct that since I am writing my memoirs for my grandson.

James Burgio
Email: jimburgiojr@gmail.com
Cell: 336.669.1793

involved in at the time of his death. I have found the Command Chronology of 3rd Tank BN and it lists his death, but I’m struggling to link him to a specific combat incident or wider operation. Any help would be greatly appreciated. Best regards and thanks for your time,

Charles Black
2024 Mock Orange Ct
Reston, VA 20191
Phone: 202.256.4270
Email: cbalck@yahoo.com

2ND LT. DONALD SCHAFER

I came across your website as I was doing research on a relative of mine who was the platoon leader of 2nd Platoon, C Co, 3rd Tank BN, 3rd Mar Div. in Vietnam and was killed in combat there in May 19, 1967. 2nd Lt. Donald Schafer–From Allen Park, Michigan–MOS: 1801–KIA 5/19/1967

I wonder if you are aware of resources or contacts of yours who might have served with my relative or how I could get further information on his death and the operations he was

USMC VTA MEMBER ANDY ANDERSON

Last known address:
1030 East Miles Street
Tucson, AZ 85719

Please contact
John Wear:
Phone: 719.495.5998
or email: johnwear2@verizon.net ■

To the Great Tank Park in the Sky

“Although no sculptured marble should rise to their memory, nor engraved stone bear record of their deeds, yet will their remembrance be as lasting as the land they honored.”—Daniel Webster”

Bruce M. Manns

1949 – 2023



Bruce M. “Boston” “Tank” Manns, 73, died Sunday, February 19, 2023, at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in White River Junction, VT. Bruce was born May 15, 1949, in Manhattan, NY, a son of Clifford and Gloria (Swager) Manns. He grew up in Dedham, MA and attended Dedham High School. At the age of 16, Bruce left high school to join the Marine Corps. He proudly served three tours of duty with I-Corps in Vietnam from 1966–69, receiving a Purple Heart and an honorable discharge for severe wounds received during the TET Offensive in 1968. Bruce attended Bunker Hill Community College, later transferring to the University of Massachusetts Lowell with a dual major in history and political science.

Bruce volunteered for Toys for Tots, DAV Transportation, and Meals on Wheels. Bruce was an active and proud member of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Marine Corps League, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Order of the Purple Heart, and a longtime member of the USMC Vietnam Tankers Association. He will be interred in Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA.

Robert H. Adcock

(L to R) Bob Adcock and Bob Haller



It is with deep sorrow that we announce the death of Robert Adcock of Beaufort, South Carolina, who passed away on November 2, 2022, leaving to mourn family and friends. He was a member of the USMC VTA.

As a side note, one of Bob’s best Marine buddies, Bob Haller, mentioned that Adcock was awarded a Bronze Star w/ V and a Purple Heart in Vietnam.

Jeffrey Michael Griffith

1947–2023



It is with great sorrow that the family of Jeffrey Michael Griffith reports his passing on April 14, 2023, at the Gino J. Merli Veterans Center, Scranton, PA. Jeffrey was an Emergency Generator Technician for the Atlantic Detroit Diesel, Lodi, NJ, and a member of the Gung Ho Detachment Marine Corps League. He was a proud United States Marine Corps Veteran, having served as

a tank crewman for two tours during the Vietnam War. He was also an active member of the USMC VTA.

The son of the late Ernest and Phyllis (Lindquist) Griffith, Jeffrey was born on November 18, 1947, in Staten Island, NY. He was married to Mary Beth (Jackson) Griffith for 46 years.

Thanks to VTA member and a good friend of Jeff’s, Bob Fornwalt for the obituary.

Michael E. Simpson

1950–2022



Michael E. Simpson, 71, of Milford, Connecticut and Vero Beach, Florida, beloved husband of 51 years to Patricia Simpson, passed away peacefully at home on August 11, 2022.

He was born on November 1, 1950 in Bridgeport, CT. He served proudly in the United States Marine Corps 3rd Tank Battalion in Vietnam. He retired from VA Connecticut, West Haven Campus.

Unfortunately, Mike never became a member of the USMC VTA. His widow, Pat, just joined our brotherhood as an Associate member and she told us that she feels as if her late husband would be proud of her new VTA membership.

BGen John “Jack” H Gary, III

“Jack” Gary, 90, of Tampa, FL. He was a tanker who served as a company commander and in the G-3 during his first tour in Vietnam with the 3rd Mar. Div. in 1966. Later he served as commanding officer of the 2nd Tank BN. at Camp Lejeune. He was awarded the Bronze Star with combat “V” and a gold star in lieu of a second award. Unfortunately, he never was a member of the USMC VTA.

This was first published in Leatherneck magazine.

Carlos Salazar Trinidad

Birth 12 Aug 1946

Death 7 Sep 2022 (aged 76)

Burial Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery

San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas, USA

Plot Section C3 Row W5 Site B27

Rene Cerda writes: Carlos was the gunner on Fred Kellogg’s tank (B-12) on May 19, 1968. We called him “Loopy.”

Your Attention Please!

We would greatly appreciate it that if you recognize a name in the obits that you, please send us an email note or give us a phone call telling us about the recently departed Marine. Anything that you recall might be posted so that others will know that he is remembered by others... plus we will have another record of his memory

THE FINAL INSPECTION

The marine stood & faced god,
Which must always come to pass.
He hoped his shoes were shining
Just as brightly as his brass.

‘Step forward now, marine,
How shall I deal with you?
Have you always turned the other cheek?
And to my church have you been true?

The marine squared his shoulders & said,
‘No lord, I guess I really have not,
Because those of us who carry guns
Can’t act like a saint, a lot.

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

But I never took a penny
That wasn’t mine to keep...
Though I worked a lot of overtime
When family bills got too steep.

And I’ve never passed a cry for help,
Though at times I shook with fear.....
And sometimes, god, forgive me,
I’ve wept many an unmanly tear.

I know I don’t deserve a place
Among the people here.
Many never wanted me around,
Except to calm their fear.

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

There was silence all around the throne
Where the saints had often trod,
As the marine waited quietly
For the judgement of his god.

‘Step forward now, marine,
You’ve borne your burdens well.
Walk peacefully on heaven’s streets
For you’ve done your time in hell.’



PACT ACT VA HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY

The **PACT Act** is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. This law helps provide generations of Veterans—and their survivors—with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve.

The law **expands health care eligibility to several groups of Veterans** who may not have been eligible before and requires VA to phase in hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care for any illness to three new categories of Veterans:

Category 1: Veterans who participated in a toxic exposure risk activity (as defined by law) while serving on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training.

Category 2: Veterans assigned to a duty station in certain locations (including airspace above) on or after:

August 2, 1990, in Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, or United Arab Emirates

September 11, 2001, in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Uzbekistan, or Yemen, or any other country determined relevant by VA

Category 3: Veterans who deployed in support of:
Operation Enduring Freedom Operation Freedom's Sentinel
Operation Iraqi Freedom Operation New Dawn
Operation Inherent Resolve Resolute Support Mission

Veterans who served in these countries during specific time periods may enroll in VA health care effective on enactment (August 10, 2022).

Republic of Vietnam
January 9, 1962 - May 7, 1975

Thailand
Any U.S. or Royal Thai base
January 9, 1962 - June 30, 1976

Guam or American Samoa
(or in their territorial waters)
January 9, 1962 - July 31, 1980

Laos
December 1, 1965 - September 30, 1969

Cambodia
at Mimot or Krek,
Kampong Cham Province
April 16, 1969 - April 30, 1969

Johnston Atoll
(or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll)
January 1, 1972 - September 30, 1977

Between October 1, 2022, and October 1, 2023, **Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities** after November 11, 1998, and who were discharged or released between September 11, 2001, and October 1, 2013, may enroll in VA health care.

VA will publish more specific information on the PACT Act and exposure-related disability benefits on [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT) as it becomes available.



KEY ELIGIBILITY DATES

AUGUST 10, 2022:
PACT Act signed into law.

ON ENACTMENT (AUGUST 10, 2022):
Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, certain provinces in Cambodia, Guam, or American Samoa (or their territorial waters), or the Johnston Atoll (or a ship that called there) during specific time periods may enroll in VA health care.

OCTOBER 1, 2022 - OCTOBER 1, 2023:
Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998, and who were discharged or released between September 11, 2001, and October 1, 2013, may enroll in VA health care.

NOVEMBER 8, 2022:
Begin incorporating toxic exposure screening for enrolled Veterans.

OCTOBER 1, 2024:
Phase in enrollment for Categories 1 and 2 for Veterans discharged or released August 2, 1990 - September 11, 2001.

OCTOBER 1, 2026:
Phase in enrollment for Categories 1 and 2 for Veterans discharged or released September 12, 2001 - December 31, 2006.

OCTOBER 1, 2028:
Phase in enrollment for Categories 1 and 2 for Veterans discharged or released January 1, 2007 - December 31, 2012.

OCTOBER 1, 2030:
Phase in enrollment for Categories 1 and 2 for Veterans discharged or released January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2018.

OCTOBER 1, 2032:
Phase in enrollment for Category 3 Veterans.

Toxic Exposure Screening

Every enrolled Veteran will receive an **initial toxic exposure screening** and a follow-up screening at least every five years. Veterans not enrolled but who are eligible will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.



PACT ACT: VIETNAM ERA VETERANS COLD WAR ERA VETERANS

The **PACT Act**, signed into law August 10, 2022, expands health care and benefits for Vietnam era Veterans.



PACT Act Health Care Eligibility

Veterans who served in these countries during specific time periods are eligible to enroll in VA health care **effective August 10, 2022.**

Republic of Vietnam
January 9, 1962 - May 7, 1975

Thailand
Any U.S. or Royal Thai base
January 9, 1962 - June 30, 1976

Guam or American Samoa
(or in their territorial waters)
January 9, 1962 - July 31, 1980

Laos
December 1, 1965 -
September 30, 1969

Cambodia
at Mimot or Krek,
Kampong Cham Province
April 16, 1969 - April 30, 1969

Johnston Atoll
(or on a ship that called there)
January 1, 1972 - September 30, 1977



The law **expands eligibility for health care and benefits** for Veterans who participated in **certain nuclear response or cleanup activities.**

Enewetak Atoll
January 1, 1977 -
December 31, 1980

Palomares, Spain
January 17, 1966 -
March 31, 1967

Thule, Greenland
January 21, 1968 -
September 25, 1968

Family members or dependents of a deceased Veteran may qualify for various VA benefits due to the additional disabilities defined in the PACT Act if they meet eligibility requirements. More information for survivors is available online at [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT).

4 EASY WAYS TO APPLY FOR VA HEALTH CARE

Apply online at
[VA.gov/health-care/apply/
application/introduction](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)

Mail a completed, signed
Application for Health Benefits
[VA Form 10-10EZ](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction)

Call the toll-free hotline
877-222-8387 Mon - Fri,
8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. ET

Bring a completed, signed [VA
Form 10-10EZ](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction) to the nearest VA
Medical Center or clinic.



Toxic Exposure Screenings

As a general matter, there are several types of possible exposures or hazards Veterans may have experienced during their military service, including:

- Air Pollutants
- Chemicals
- Radiation
- Warfare Agents
- Occupational Hazards

ON NOVEMBER 8, 2022: VA will begin incorporating toxic exposure screenings. Every Veteran enrolled for VA health care will receive an initial toxic exposure screening and a follow-up screening at least every five years. Eligible Veterans not enrolled Eligible Veterans who have not enrolled will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.



PACT Act Benefits

The PACT Acts adds two new Agent Orange presumptive conditions:

- **Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)**
- **High blood pressure (hypertension)**

4 EASY WAYS TO GET STARTED WITH CLAIMS

Learn more at
[VA.gov/disability/
how-to-file-claim/](https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/)

Call the Benefits hotline
(for specific questions)
at 1-800-827-1000

Visit a VBA Regional Office
[VA.gov/benefits/
offices.asp](https://www.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp)

Work with an accredited VSO
[VA.gov/ogc/apps/
accreditation/index.asp](https://www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp)

Veterans’ Diseases Associated with Agent Orange Public Health (va.gov)
url: <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/conditions/index.asp>
accessed 12/10/2022

Agent Orange was a tactical herbicide used by the U.S. military for control of vegetation. It was named for the orange band around the storage barrel. The military sprayed Agent Orange and other tactical herbicides during the Vietnam War. Veterans who may have been exposed to Agent Orange include Veterans who served in different locations, including Vietnam, the Korean Demilitarized Zone, on Thai Air Force bases, at other locations, and who flew on or worked on C-123 Aircraft.

VA offers eligible Veterans a free Agent Orange Registry health exam for possible long-term health problems related to exposure. VA also offers health care, disability compensation, and other benefits to eligible Veterans for certain disease conditions, as well as benefits for children of Vietnam Veterans who have spina bifida. Dependents and survivors may also be eligible for other benefits.

Veterans’ Diseases Associated with Agent Orange

VA assumes that certain diseases can be related to a Veteran’s qualifying military service. We call these “presumptive diseases.”

VA has recognized certain cancers and other health problems as presumptive diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service.

Veterans and their survivors may be eligible for benefits for these diseases.

- **AL. Amyloidosis**
- A rare disease caused when an abnormal protein, amyloid, enters tissues or organs
- Bladder Cancer
- A type of cancer that affects the bladder where urine is stored before it leaves the body
- **Chronic B-cell Leukemias**
- A type of cancer which affects white blood cells
- **Chloracne (or similar acneform disease)**
- A skin condition that occurs soon after exposure to chemicals and looks like common forms of acne seen in teenagers. Under VA's rating regulations. it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.
- Diabetes Mellitus Type 2
- A disease characterized by high blood sugar levels resulting from the body's inability to respond properly to the hormone insulin
- Hypertension
- Hodgkin's Disease
- A malignant lymphoma (cancer) characterized by progressive enlargement of the lymph nodes, liver, and spleen, and by progressive anemia
- •Hypothyroidism
- A condition that causes the thyroid gland to not produce enough of certain important hormones

- Ischemic Heart Disease
- A disease characterized by a reduced supply of blood to the heart, that leads to chest pain
- Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)
- Multiple Myeloma
- A cancer of plasma cells, a type of white blood cell in bone marrow
- Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
- A group of cancers that affect the lymph glands and other lymphatic tissue
- Parkinsonism
- Any condition that causes a combination of abnormal movements. These include slow movements, trouble speaking, stiff muscles, or tremors.
- Parkinson's Disease
- A progressive disorder of the nervous svstem that affects muscle movement
- Peripheral Neuropathy. Early-Onset
- A nervous system condition that causes numbness, tingling. and motor weakness.
- Under VA's rating regulations. it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of herbicide exposure.
- Porphyria Cutanea Tarda
- A disorder characterized by liver dysfunction and by thinning and blistering of the skin in sun-exposed areas. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.
- Prostate Cancer
- Cancer of the prostate: one of the most common cancers among mer Respiratory Cancers (includes lung cancer)
- Cancers of the lung, larynx, trachea, and bronchus
- Soft Tissue Sarcomas (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma)
- A group of different types of cancers in body tissues such as muscle, fat, blood and lymph vessels, and connective tissues
- Children with birth defects
- VA presumes certain birth defects in children of Vietnam and Korea Veterans are associated with Veterans' qualifying military service.
- Veterans with Lou Gehrig's Disease
- VA presumes Lou Gehrig's Disease (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or ALS) diagnosed in all Veterans who had 90 days or more continuous active military service is related to their service, although ALS is not related to Agent Orange exposure. ■

Special Story

The Cam Lo Bridge?



In 1965 Bob Haller took the above photo (on the left) of a bridge that he thought may have been the Cam Lo Bridge that was in northern Quang Tri Providence. Upon closer inspection, the river appears to be far too wide to be the Cam Lo River. We then decided that it is probably the Cam Le River Bridge (on the right) that was down south near Da Nang.

In 1969, a few months before the photo on the right was taken of the Cam Lo Bridge, the US Army's 5th Mechanized Division had shown up to relieve the US Marines who had been guarding the bridge for years.



Within six months of that same year the US Marine engineers rebuilt the structure.. As most of the tankers deployed to northern I Corps know, the Cam Lo Bridge was not strong enough to allow our tanks to cross over it so we had to ford the river at the tank crossing.



(Continued on page 18)

What Members Are Doing

Purple Heart Scholarship Award



USMC VTA members Joe Harrigan and Tom Fenerty who are also members of the Purple Heart Assn. present a scholarship award to a MCROTC cadet.

3rd Mar. Div. Assn.



(L to R) the youngest, John Forgette, the oldest and Maj Gen Jay Barger on Commanding Gen. 3rd. Mar Div.

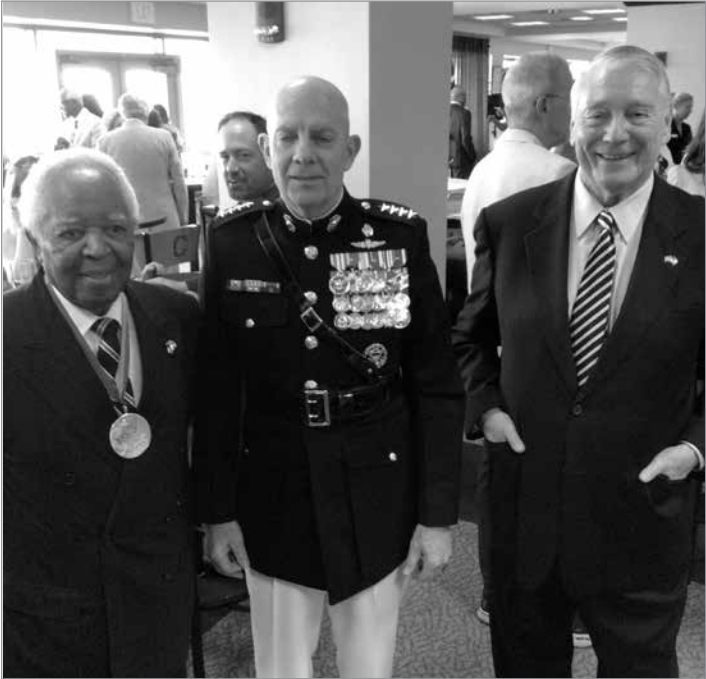
Richard Carmer writes: A number of months ago I was in San Diego at the 3rd MAR DIV Assn. reunion and of course, went to MCRD for a graduation ceremony that Saturday. It just so happened that that particular Saturday was the 80th Anniversary of the founding of the Association. They decided to have a cake cutting ceremony at the reunion hotel that evening in case we weren't around for the 100th. We got with the series gunny and had him find out who the youngest Marine was who graduated that day. They presented us with a kid who enlisted very early in his 17th year so he was the one we picked. The brand new Marine was told to report to the hotel that evening at 1700 hours for a ceremony. I'm not sure if he knew what was going on but being a good Marine that he is, of course he showed up.

I don't know about you, but a Corporal scared the crap out of me when I was in boot camp so I can't even imagine how intimidated I would be if I came face to face with a Major General.

Imagine waking up one fine morning while you are still in boot camp and that evening a Maj. Gen gives you a piece of cake and welcomes you to the Marine Corps. Wow!

The kid did great. I took a couple photos and gave them to him and told him he would need them to prove what just happened because no one is going to believe the story. He said "I don't even believe what just happened and I was there!"

Meet & Greet



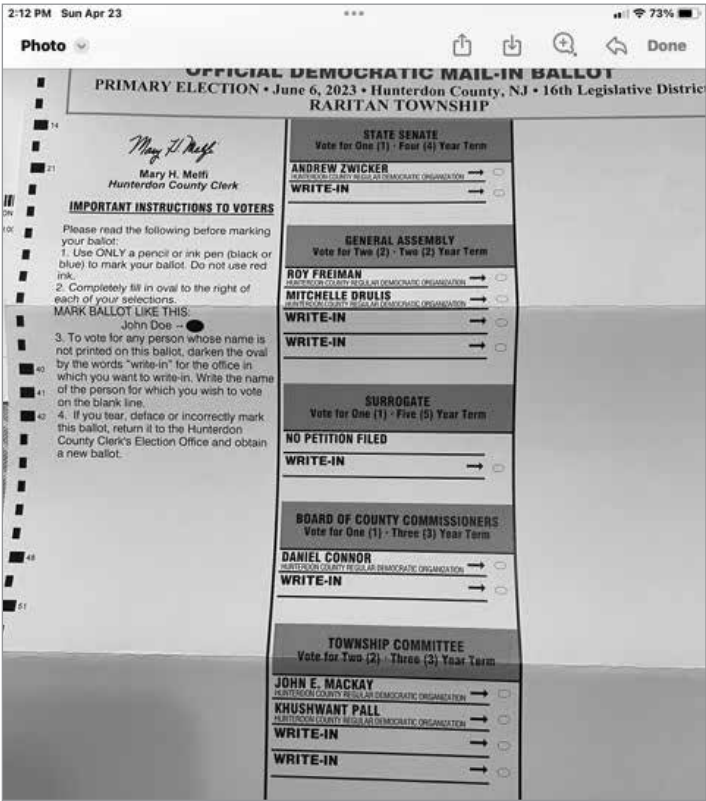
March, 2022, Charleston, SC–The Commissioning of the USS Frank E Petersen, DDG – 121. (L to R) Ambassador Ted Britton, a WW2 Marine, the Commandant and VTA member, Tom Howe.

Talkin' Tanks

Carl Hokanson and his granddaughter (she's wearing the shirt from the Wyoming tank museum).



Guy Everest is a Proud Papa



His daughter, Michelle Drulis, is running for NJ State Assembly

Honor Flight

Armando Moreno was able to join the Honor Flight from Santa Rosa, CA, to Washington, DC this past month. Armando said, "It was a three-day intense, exhausting and rewarding tour. And it didn't cost me a penny." The flight left Monday and



got back on Wednesday. They toured the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, the Iwo Jima Memorial, Arlington Cemetery, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Memorial and the WW 2 Memorial. He adds "The neatest thing was that we got to meet the Commandant of the US Naval Academy. He is a US Marine!!!"



And when we got back home, a very large crowd of family, friends and a large contingent of US military active-duty personnel welcomed us home at the airport!!!

In March of 2009 I received this postcard from Lt. Rod “Fuzz” Henderson. Imagine my surprise seeing myself pictured with the rest of the tank crew from 1967!

Left to Right the crew of Bravo 31 in 1967

Since then I've enjoyed attending several of the VTA reunions and our "Third Herd" mini reunions in St. Charles, Missouri, thanks to Ron and Jo Davidson who organized the events.

(Continued from page 15)



With The Barbarians In The Gates, We May Need Our Own Barbarians

If you have failed to realize we are living through the most significant social, economic, and political revolution in history, it can only be by a herculean effort in self-deception. So powerful is man's ability "to thrust aside what they do not desire," is it any wonder history is replete with catastrophes born of those who would substitute hope for reason?

On the Ides of March, Caesar, by ignoring the soothsayer's pleas, brought about his death, decades of civil war, and the fall of the Roman Republic. Constantine XI thought the walls of Constantinople were impregnable against the sword of Allah, but on the morning of March 29th, 1453, Christendom in the East came to a bloody and unspeakably brutal end. And after meeting with a genocidal madman, Chamberlain proclaimed "peace in our time" with an appeasement that would leave 85 million dead and end the British Empire.

In the latter case, mercifully, a country with immense resources, shared values, and the unwavering moral courage needed to save the world from a tyranny hellbent on racially purifying and enslaving the globe was still standing. That nation exists today, but only in name. As Thucydides warned, it is “men who make the city and not walls nor ships without men.” Indeed, it was the men of the Greatest Generation that manned the ships that saved the world, and they too are gone, and worse, forgotten.

What makes today's revolution different is the unholy coalescence of inconceivable powerful, yet wholly corrupt institutions; unimaginable technological capability; and the systematic indoctrination of the most depraved ideology the world has ever known.

That our institutions are corrupt and untrustworthy is beyond doubt. The CDC brazenly lied about natural immunity, masks, gain-of-function research, vaccine effectiveness, and safety; the same DOJ that eviscerated immigration law, repeatedly manufactured false allegations against a sitting president and raided his home. A New York City attorney general has indicted a former president, all while actual criminals, both on the streets and in the White House, pillage with impunity. And SCOTUS, our erstwhile constitutional protector, is denounced even by one of its own justices for “reducing constitutional law to policy-driven value judgments

Never before has resistance been so futile. Protestors, without trial, are simply swept away into the D.C. Gulag Archipelago. Bank accounts are summarily closed. Wrong speech, if not censored, will cost you your job, or buy you an armed pre-dawn raid to help get your thinking right. With a \$175 billion annual budget, the Department of Homeland “Security” has established the greatest surveillance state ever to have existed outside of the telescreen in Orwell’s dystopian novel 1984.

With dissent silenced, the unchallenged Uniparty message has infested every crevice of society, including, most ominously, the very soul of the nation.

If this weren't enough, Uniparty functionaries have embedded their pernicious and radical ideology in every classroom, every boardroom, and every newsroom with the express purpose of creating a new generation of subjects stripped of any sense of justice, any knowledge of history, and, most appallingly, any ability to reason. Thoughtful discourse has given way to temper tantrums, reasoned arguments to obscene shouting, and civility to mob violence.

The new ideology's revisionism is a direct assault on American exceptionalism. After millennia of human slavery affecting all races, the men who built a country on the principles of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," who did more to advance freedom than any who had come before, and who sacrificed their sons and treasure to end slavery forever, are now poisoned by the original sin of having been born into a world that doesn't meet the approval of its ungrateful 21st-century descendants, who have no conception that their own freedom was purchased with the blood of those they condemn.

Denounced as heresy are these same constitutional freedoms that have unleashed the immense power of capitalism which, in turn, exponentially improved the quality of life worldwide. No longer would life be, as Hobbs described, “solitary, poor, brutish, nasty, and short;” instead, men could expect the future to be better for their children than it was for them, and still better for their children’s children. Who can think this today? ■

Sacrifices

BY CLYDE HOCH

Sacrifices??? Since ancient times, people have been willing to sacrifice their lives to make the people of their society have a better life. Think it is not true in modern times? What does a soldier do? He sacrifices his life for the people of his nation. Most do not make this sacrifice but very many do.

From ancient Aztecs to early Europeans to today's soldier, they were all willing to give their life to make your life better. Look at us old Vietnam veterans. Most of us enlisted. We trusted our government to use our lives as wisely as possible to give the people of the United States a better life.

We did things we don't even talk about to others for you. Reading this you cannot or are not willing to think of the great sacrifices so many made just for you. Think of some of these men and women thinking this day or

night will be their last. Will this next step be a mine or a poisonous snake? Will the next rotation of the truck tire initiate a mine? Will a mortar drop out of nowhere? Will this be the day or night when a round finds me? Life is precious for a soldier. These men sacrificed so very much for you and no other reason than that of giving you a better life.

Think of this 18-year-old man lying in a hole he dug in the ground. He is lying there with rain coming down. He is in a land he doesn't even remember hearing of in his high school days. Between flashes of mortar rounds he can see the silhouette of people creeping towards his position. His heart is beating so loud he wonders if they can hear it. Will this night be his last?

Many great explorers take very high risks for a time and become wealthy and

famous. Astronauts become household names for a few minutes of flight. Our 18-year-old in the hole in the ground plays the same scenario day after day, night after night for a year and he is hardly recognized back home. He carries his inner thoughts and feelings for the rest of his life. They are his and his alone because there is no explaining his inner feelings to others.

Just take a few seconds of your busy day to think about what veterans have done for you. What language would you be speaking without their sacrifices? What country would this be called had they not come from all over the United States and beyond to protect the people of our country. Veterans Day is November 11, please remember to thank a veteran.

Atlanta 2022

Viet Vets in Blues

BY MSGT. BRUCE VAN APELDOORN USMC (RETIRED)

A little over a year ago, my good Marine friend Sam O called and asked if I could purchase a Blues blouse for him. We discussed rank, time in service, DD214 for awards, and of course size. Then I asked if he needed any other component of the Dress Blue Uniform and he stated that he only wanted the Blouse...why...to be laid out in. He and his wife were getting their affairs in order.

My immediate reaction was this was the worst plan ever. Each time they see his blouse in the closet it will remind them of its purpose. I told Sam what he needed to do was to purchase a complete set of Dress Blues and take his wife of 50+ years to the Ball. That way when they saw it in the



(L – R) MSgt. Bruce Van Apeldoorn, Sgt. Charles K., Sgt. Sam O. and Cpl. Stan P.

closet it would bring back happy memories.

He discussed the option with Nellie, and she totally agreed. Game on for a

fice next door. Sam, a wood worker, went home and made her a charcuterie board. He returned, in Dress Blues and presented the board to the doctor.

This story passed though the Marine community faster than word of an impending 96 hour pass. Soon Charles K called me and said no matter the cost he just had to have a set of Dress Blues. Back to Camp Lejeune for another shopping trip. Once his Blues were altered, he was requested to be the Grand Marshall for the Webster, NY Memorial Day Parade.

Then came the call from Stan P. He too wanted a set of Dress Blues. As I

was in line at the MCX with a basket full of Dress Blues and Corporal Chevrons on top I was asked by two MGySgt what I was up to. I retold this entire story about my Vietnam Veteran Marine buddies who decided to put their packs back on for one more opportunity to celebrate being Marines. They were totally blown away and told me it was the greatest story that they have ever heard.

On the 247th Birthday of our be-

Spread Out, Don't Bunch Up!

BY BEN COLE

The Ukrainian Army hit on the Makiivka building taking out a bunch of Ruskies is not the first time a rocket fired from afar found and wiped-out concentration of troops all bunched together.

Fifty years ago in March of 1971, at a small fire base called "Charlie Two" in Vietnam's Leatherneck Square, my old stomping ground, the army replaced the departing Marines and fortified and replaced our muddy improvised fighting holes and tank slots with strong earth and timber reinforced bunkers.

One evening after the Lam Son 719 operation, while the troops were waiting in their recreation bunker before chow in the mess bunker next door, a single NVA rocket found a weak spot and scored a direct hit killing 30 soldiers and wounding scores more.

From the boot camp to OCS the mantra of "don't bunch up, spread them out" is lost somewhere, and the results are predictable.

To the 241 Marines at Beirut's airport, where a single truck found most of a battalion quartered in an old con-

crete building or a HIMARS missile finds a cell phone user in Ukraine the message is same.

John Wear writes: My wife and I get the Sunday NY Times newspaper delivered to our home and have for the past 20 years. Yes, it is an incredibly liberal "rag" but it has some of the best stories and well-written articles of any newsprint publication in the US. Below is one story from the "Metropolitan Diary" that made tears well up as I read the last line.

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The Cab Ride Home

BY LEN DISESA

It was a warm August day in New York in 1969. I was 21 and just back from Vietnam.

I had been drafted into the Army two years earlier, and my second year in Southeast Asia had been the longest in my life. It ended with me returning to the World — Brooklyn — in one piece as one of the lucky ones.

I took a cab from Port Authority to Bensonhurst. I was in my kha-

ki uniform. The cabdriver, a middle-age man, kept looking at me through the rearview mirror. There was no conversation between us. I was lost in a swirl of emotions.

When we got to my block, I could see all of my neighbors sitting out on their porch steps. Someone had strung up a large banner: "Welcome Home, Lenny!" They were all cheering.

Through my tears, I could make

out my parents, my sisters and my girlfriend. I was overcome, completely surprised by the reception I was receiving from the people who had watched me grow up.

What moved me the most, though, was when I reached for my wallet to pay the substantial sum of money showing on the taxi meter.

"Put your money away, son," the cabby said. "You've paid enough. This ride's on me."

We need leaders in the Corps that will make the hard call — quickly.

BY RICK LEWIS

During my third tour in Vietnam, to my surprise I was not sent to either 1st or 3rd Tanks, I was told I would be a Platoon Sgt, of the Divi-

sion Reactionary Platoon that would a moment's notice, would be sent to reinforce any Marine unit in the 1st Marine Division AOR. I was not a

happy camper and especially after being taken to meet the platoon. To my surprise I was looking at 28 Marines from all different MOS's >>

not one was a 0311 and they were all new in country and did not want to be in the platoon. The gunny looked at all of us and said every Marine is a rifleman get over it! The gunny took us under his wing and for two weeks got us trained, not knowing what we would get dropped into. For the next two months we got set in as a blocking force not much happening a little fire fight here and there, then as the monsoon ended the action increased, the NVA picked up the attacks and probing all over the division AOR. We found ourselves in the thick of things now.

About a month later we found ourselves in an old place I had been to many times before in 66–67 with 1st Tanks the ugly Horse Shoe the gooks had owned it and now I fine my platoon taking up the right flank and digging in, orders are to not let the NVA sweep around on the grunts, to which I said to the Co I only have 29 of us how can we cover all of this ground? Our holes would be over 100 yards apart the gooks would just crawl between us. He said just get it done Sgt and left. We dug in not 100 yards apart that night was very quiet it gave us an eerie feeling, come dawn a SSgt showed up with two men to check on us and said to hold tight. About an hour later we heard voices of the NVA, so I took one man and we crawled for over 100 yards with only 45's. After listening to the gooks and watching the way they were pointing, I figured out they were coming our way they had us outnumber for sure. So, the two of us got back and I moved the whole platoon back to our original positions. I had each fireteam move about 50 meters away and dig new holes for the night. It took about two hours for everybody to dig new holes. Come night fall, I moved each team one at a time since I was trying to keep the noise down. After they all got moved, it just left me and one fireteam to make enough noise to make the NVA figure we were still

in our same positions. Then at 01:00 my listing post crawled back to let us know the NVA were on their way. I told the one team that had not moved, hold your position with machine gun and let the gooks come to you. When you hear us scream, you get up and haul ass to the new hole and do not let them get by you. We will be pushing them from behind, I hope.

The plan could have not gone any better. We walked right up behind the NVA. As luck would have it, we had a good moon for visibility. When the gooks got near the gun, we started screaming behind them and when they turned around, we lit them up big time. They took off running right into the gun team who cut them down. We sweep back over them collected a few wounded, we also kept looking for NVA officers as they carry maps and plans, we nailed 27 NVA -KIA, 2 NVA -WIA, an officer with maps and plans, 13- AK-47's plus pistols, and other weapons (like one of our own 60 mortars they had captured) We set a 360 and called for extract at dawn which was a few hours away. I was told to hold, at dawn the company Co arrived with a Major from Division S-2 with pressed utilities and shined jungle boots. The first thing the Major ask me, "Who gave you the ok to do this?"

I replied," No one. I saw what we were up against and put us in a position to win"

He said, "Sergeant, you need to call HQ first before you go off the cliff again"

I replied, "Sir looking at you. You have never spent a night in a hole to understand how it works out here, Sir"

He was pissed at me; he told the captain that he should relieve me now?

The captain said "Sir, I agree with the Sgt."

The Major was really piss then.

I said" Major did you come out

here to just get in my shit or do you want the intel that is here? Because I am sure the gooks know we are still here and with all this noise and talking, we need to move out of here in 5 mikes because they will start laying in mortars"

I showed my team leaders where we need to be for the birds to pick us up. About two mikes later the mortars started on our old position. We moved out with all the captured gear, got to the birds and they circled around and opened up on the gooks moving to where we use to be, after going around a few more times the gooks launched an RPG at the birds so we left. The look on the Major's face was one of pure, "I shit my pant".

After a few days in the rear, I was called up to the HQ of the Battalion Cmdr.'s office. He handed me a letter of reprimand from the Major for me not requesting permission before firing or setting up the ambush and moving my positions I was told to hold, plus my insubordination to him. The Battalion Cmdr. said he had talked to my Company Co and had the real scoop, he then ripped up the letter and said carry on Sgt. Two months later I was in Okinawa with 3rd Tanks as all tanks were pulled out of country the draw down had started in Vietnam.

So fast forward to the testimony given by the horribly wounded Marine sniper Sergeant from Afghanistan in front of Congress this week March 8, 2023, about the messed up draw down. He said he had the bomber in his sites and had called for permission to take the shot. But was told no. So, he called up his Battalion Cmdr., and gave him what he had and can he take the shot. Again, he was told to hold the shot. Not taking that shot cost 13 people their lives and wounded a lot of civilians the sergeant said wiping the tears from his eyes. Had that Battalion Cmdr. let him take that shot the battalion Cmdr. would

have been getting pads on his back for a good call. 13 people would still be alive.

We need leaders in the Corps that can call make the hard call! We Marines have lived by Adapting, Inno-

A Vent

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

It frosts the hell out of me. It reminded me of some of the crap we had to put up with in Vietnam. I can recall a specific incident during operation Starlite that sticks with me forever; there is no doubt in my mind that my tanks could have eliminated several hundred NVA soldiers from escaping to kill our Marines at a future date. Starlite was hand-to-combat for two solid days, we lost close to two hundred Marines during that battle including a very good friend of mine. On the third day the NVA were retreating by the hundreds,

boarding sampans and sailing down the Song Tra Bong River right past our tanks. I requested permission to sink the boats and was refused because there could be civilians on the boats. Question #1: Why did we set up a blocking force if we didn't have a reason to be there? Question #2: Why did we engage the enemy sacrificing hundreds of American lives and then allow them to escape because we didn't want to risk potentially killing a civilian? We could have sunk every one of those boats eliminating a major NVA regiment

vation and Overcoming the odds for over 200 years let's not stop now!

and potentially saving many future Marine lives. Potentially the operation could have gone down in history as one of the most successful battles in the Marine Corps annals. This incident has stuck with me and I don't believe that I will ever get over it. Wars cannot be won when you have your hands tied behind your back. How can you sacrifice Marine lives because we can't kill the enemy because we may harm a civilian.

IS THIS WHAT WE CALL POLITICAL CORRECTNESS?

ON THE SECOND OF JULY, 1967

BY FIRST LIEUTENANT HARVEY G. WISER, USMCR

First Battalion, Ninth Marines
Alfa and Bravo companies of the First Battalion, Ninth Marines were on patrol just a few hundred meters south of the DMZ in Vietnam. Bravo blundered into a well-set ambush at The Marketplace. Soon Alpha, too, was in the thick of it. The enemy consisted of a regiment of the North Vietnamese Army supported by artillery, heavy mortars, rockets, anti-aircraft guns, and surface to air missiles.

Charlie and Delta Companies were rushed to the field in support, but the outcome had been decided. The Marines were overwhelmingly outnumbered. But, worse than that, they were equipped with Colt M-16 rifles. Their M-14 rifles, which had proven so effective and reliable, were stored in warehouses somewhere in the rear.

The M-16s would fire once or twice—maybe more—then jam. The extractor would rip the rim off the casing. Then the only way to clear the chamber and resume

firing was to lock open the bolt, run a cleaning rod down the barrel, and knock the casing loose. Soon it would jam again.

This was the rifle supplied to her troops by the richest nation on earth. The enemy was not so encumbered. They carried rifles which were designed in the Soviet Union and manufactured in one of the poorest nations on earth—the so-called People's Republic of China. Their rifles fired and fired every time. They ran amongst the Marines, firing at will.

Sixty-four men in Bravo were killed that afternoon. Altogether, the Battalion lost around a hundred of the Nation's finest men. The next morning, we bagged them like groceries. We consigned their bodies to their families and commended their souls to God. May He be as merciful as they were courageous.

Today, people are still debating the issue: Was it the fault of the ammo or the fault of the rifle? Neither. It was the fault of the politicians and contractors and generals.

People in high places knew the rifles and ammo wouldn't work together. The military did not want to buy the rifle when Armalite was manufacturing it. But when Colt was licensed as the manufacturer, they suddenly discovered it was a marvelous example of Yankee ingenuity.

Sgt. Brown told them it was garbage. Col. Hackworth told them it was garbage. And every real grunt knew it was garbage. It was unsuitable for combat.

There was no congressional investigation. No contractor was ever fined for supplying defective material. No one uncovered the bribes paid to government officials. No one went to jail. And the mothers of dead Marines were never told that their sons went into combat armed with faulty equipment.

To all outward appearances those Marines died of gunshot and fragmentation wounds. But a closer examination revealed that they were first stabbed in the back by their countrymen back home. >>

The politicians, contractors and generals have retired to comfortable estates now. Their ranks have been filled by their cloned greedy inverte-

brates, every one. They should hope that God is more forgiving than I. Brave men should never be commanded by cowards.

Not R & R ... But Not Bad

BY DOUG SCRIVNER

BLT 2/7, B & C Co, 1st Tanks

I was sitting and reading my paper work from the VA and I got to thinking of all the crazy crap that happened in Vietnam, and there was enough of that to fill a 55 gal. drum, but not everyone can say they have been on an LSD that ran into an aircraft carrier in the middle of the night off the coast of Vietnam.

While I was on float with BLT 2/7, we were in from the bush and back on the ship in mid- 1968. Most of us (the tankers & motor T boys) slept on the chopper flight deck at night to watch the stars and feel the ocean breeze because our compartment below was as hot as Hades. I was dreaming of home when it happened.

In the middle of the night whoever was in charge on the bridge ran

our LSD into the side of an American aircraft carrier tearing off one of the gun mounts on the side of the carrier and tearing a big gash in our bow. We woke up to see the pitch-black side of the monster with its little red eyeballs looking down at us— they were actually the red night vision lamps of the carrier. If you think a carrier looks big tied up at a dock, you should see one of them at 02:30 from the LSD chopper deck! It was then that I realized that my damn life jacket was down below in our sleeping compartment! Somewhere in the middle of that madness, the movie “Run Silent, Run Deep” from my childhood ran through my mind. Hell, I’m supposed to be in Vietnam getting shot at, not getting torpedoed in the South China Sea by

Editor’s Note: This story was first published in the #1 – 2011 issue of the Sponson Box.

We felt that it bears repeating.

a friendly ship!

The next morning, we watched as a Navy officer boarded a chopper and flew off into the sunrise never to be seen again; the sailors said he was in charge of the bridge at the time. A couple of days later we left for Subic Bay to repair both ships which took about 10 days if memory serves me correctly. We got liberty four of those days and if you’ve ever been to the Philippines, you know that ain’t bad. We often wondered if the sailors did it on purpose. My Dad, being an old Navy vet, said don’t rule it out. My wife wonders why I ain’t interested in doing a cruise.

Editor’s Note: This story first ran in 2008. We thought that there were enough new members that has not been privileged to read it.

Tun Tavern

A Bit of History Not Many People Might Know

BY JOHN WEAR

The original site of the deeply historic and USMC beloved Tun Tavern has been sitting under the cement of the north bound lane of Interstate 95 in Philadelphia for many decades. Fifteen or twenty years ago there was a group of Marines veterans (mostly officers from the same TBS class) who had collected \$2 million in donations and grants to restore a replica of Tun Tavern down on the Delaware River waterfront.

This was around the same time that all of the restaurants and night clubs were

opening along a revitalized Delaware Avenue in Olde City Philly.

ed money to pass the building codes to start the building. Not much lat-



The group then got the City of Philadelphia to donated a very old passenger ship pier that was located just below the Ben Franklin Bridge in the general location of the original tavern. But as it turned out, the ancient pier needed over \$2 million in repairs just to make it safe to build a building on it. So, the Marines gave up on that idea since it would take all of their donat-

er the city turned the pier into some sort of a park (without bringing the pier up to date).

As all of this was happening, a commercial beer brewing company secured an exclusive agreement with the Marines to brew and supply “Tun Tavern” beer to the soon-to-be constructed Tun Tavern. When the pier deal fell through, the beer company told the Marines to f*ck themselves and since they had a signed agreement to possess the license for “Tun Tavern” beer, the beer company opened up their own

bar in Atlantic City.

In the meantime, there was an abandoned building that was also just under the Ben Franklin Bridge that used to be a water intake for the city. The Marines asked the city for that building to be used for Tun Tavern ... especially since that water works building was very close to the original spot where Tun Tavern actually stood and the fact that it was not falling down and in need of millions of dollars for repairs. The city then decided to sell the building to a de-

veloper and f*cked the Marines once again. Unfortunately, the Marines then simply gave up.

A last note: If anyone reading this story happens to be visiting Atlantic City, New Jersey, please do not visit the fake “Tun Tavern.”

Author’s Note: This story was relayed to me by one of our own members who happened to be one of the Marine officers deeply involved with the proposed (but now defunct) Tun Tavern project.

Follow up to the Murder of PFC Frieson

BY RICK ELLIS

Rick writes: I read the story in the Sponson Box about the US Marine cook who was killed by a frag grenade in the Korean compound in Hoi An. Let me give you some further insights:

I came back from emergency leave in April 1968 and was reassigned as a platoon commander in Co. B, 5th Tanks. The platoon sergeant was Bob Embesi and the section leaders were Jim Reed and John Inglet. We were sent to work in support of the ROK Marines (Blue Dragons) shortly thereafter. Before we left, I was briefed at Battalion H.Q. that the cook who was assigned to the tank platoon that we were relieving was killed by a booby trap in the troop living area, and the briefer told us they believed it was a deliberate act by the Koreans. One of our troops was told by one of the Marines we were relieving that the cook had gotten into a fight with a Korean he caught stealing in the platoon’s hooch just a day or two before the grenade incident.

We had a couple of hootches and a common hardback which had a kitchen and dining area. We were about 150 yards from the beach, and there was a trail through the wooded area between

our small compound and the beach. Our troops and troops from neighboring units would walk down the trail to go to the beach. One afternoon I was at Korean H.Q for a briefing and we heard the sound of an explosion. I hurried back to our living area and SSGT Embesi told me that our motor vehicle driver, PFC Robert Ford, had stepped on a booby trap on the trail to the beach and had badly injured his leg. Embesi had called for medivac right away. We later found out that Ford lost his leg.

SSgt Embesi and I decided to go to the site where Ford was injured. We got down side by side on all fours and probed the length of the trail using our combat knives in case there were more booby traps. It really kicked the pucker factor in gear, and in retrospect it wasn’t the smartest thing either one of us had ever done, but we really wanted to find out what happened. When we got to the site of the explosion we discovered an M-204A2 fuse assembly from an M-26 frag grenade, and pieces of wood from an ammo crate. It looked like the crate had been buried and the grenade was

placed in the crate with the pin pulled and the spoon held down by the top of the crate. The crate was then covered by a very shallow layer of sand. As you know, you can short fuse a grenade by cutting a notch in the pencil fuse near the top so it will trigger the blast almost immediately. When someone steps on the top of the box it releases the spoon and the grenade goes off causing that person grave injury.

The ammo crate was for 5.56 mm rifle ammo, and the lot number was intact on one of the pieces we found. Embesi had a pal at the main ammo dump and he called him to see who was issued ammo from this lot. As you might expect, a bunch of it was issued to the ROK Marines. I called Tank Battalion H.Q. with this information, but as far as I know it was never followed up on. There is no doubt in my mind that the Koreans killed PFC Frieson and caused the injury to PFC Ford.

There is no way to verify any of this at this late date, but I thought you might want some further background information about our “gallant” Korean allies.

Good Friends Are Almost Impossible to Replace

BY JOHN WEAR

Sixty years ago, this past September I walked into the Lewis-Palmer

High School (in Monument, Colorado) and upon entering the homeroom

of the sophomore class, there were 24 students sitting at their desks. >>

One of the kids was a tall, curly haired guy named John Lewis. John always seemed to be smiling and good natured. He was one of those guys that you could say just about anything to him no matter how good or bad it was and he'd normally just laugh and let whatever it was roll off like water on a duck's back. After a year at LPHS, I transferred to New Mexico Military Institute and more or less lost contact with all 24 kids in that class.

Fast forward to August 2017. Jeanne (my wife) and I have moved from Pennsylvania to Colorado. I always say that I "moved back home" since our new Colorado home is about 10 miles from where I went to high school back in 1962. A month after we moved back home and settled in, Jeanne and I attended the annual gathering of any former students of the Lewis-Palmer High School that occurs every August of each year ... and we bumped into John Lewis's sister, Mary Ellen. The three of us sat together during

the event and Mary Ellen told me that John had been suffering from some really serious health issues and was currently recuperating in his home ... which coincidentally was about 5 miles from my new home.

The next week I went to visit John and we renewed our old friendship. One thing that immediately bonded our revived friendship was that John was a US Army combat engineer Vietnam veteran. That alone made us closer. Over the intervening five years, John and I began and continued to have breakfast every Wednesday morning. I'd drive to his house, pick him up and I'd drive us to a restaurant in Monument or nearby. Often, we'd join a few other old former high school buddies for breakfast.

Two weeks ago, my old friend, John had not been feeling well so we skipped our regular Wednesday breakfast routine. Then just two days later, John's wife called my wife, Jeanne ... (they had become friends) ... and she told

Jeanne that the night before, John was sitting in the den by himself watching TV when he let out a horrid sound and when his wife hurried into the room, John was slumped in his chair, dead from an apparent massive heart attack. The EMT's were called and were able to revive him for a short time but he coded again and his wife told them, "Enough."

I am telling you-all this because his death hit me like a ton of bricks. I could not sleep for a few days and while I was sitting wondering WTF was happening to me ... I realized that at the age of 75 years old, good friends are very hard to come by ... and since I do not have a ton of time left on God's green Earth, I do not have a lot of time (or the energy) to find and make new friends. So even though I lost some really close US Marine buddies in Vietnam, I now realize that I was in my early 20's and I had lots of time to make new friends. Not now. UGH!!!

first time I had to yell as loudly as I could to answer a question. The list of firsts goes on. But there is one first that stands head and shoulders above all the rest: The first time my drill instructor called me "Marine" and shook my hand. I'll never forget that moment. I'll never lose the pride I felt just then.

Fast forward to this spring of 2022. My wife and I decided to take a break from the cold of northern Massachusetts, and vacation for a week at Hilton Head S.C. We had brought our golf clubs with us, and I "discovered" there is a great golf course on Parris Island. I called base information, and was told what I needed to do in order to "maybe" get onto the base. I wrote down the steps, and my wife and I started our hour-long drive to MCAS Beaufort to hopefully gain clearance. It was a gamble from the start.

All I had with me to use as a key to try to gain entry was my VA disability card. When we arrived at the MCAS Beaufort main gate, we were directed to a small building off to the side. I walked up and in, and approached the only security window. Behind the bullet-proof glass was a small elderly lady. She was the only person working there. I told her we had just driven an hour hoping to get cleared to enter MCRD Parris Island. She looked up at me, and very kindly told me that she would like to help but that her system was down and there was nothing she could do. She told me she was very sorry. Well, the Marine in me was called to action. I wasn't about to tuck my tail between my legs and limp back, dammit! No way! I decided to unleash all my powers on this little old lady, and by God I'm going to get on Parris Island! So, I locked eyes with her and asked as warmly and kindly as I could, "couldn't you



please just try calling the main gate to see if there might be something they can do?" Well, that worked. She ended up running the check via a different program, then called the MCRD main gate to alert them that we were cleared and would be showing up within a half hour.

When we pulled up to the main gate, a young lance corporal in full body armor stopped us. I had just gotten my name out when he said, "Yes sir, Mister Kelley. Wait one minute."

He turned and consulted with the NCOIC of the gate, and quickly swung back to me and said, "Sir, you are all set to enter."

I thanked him, but before I started the car forward (I couldn't resist), I asked him with a stern raised voice, "What's your sixth general order?" Well, he was caught so off-guard that he stuttered for a second before I laughed, which evoked a sheepish grin from him! It was all good-natured, and his reaction was priceless. My wife smiled too, at the exchange.

Whew! We were now on base. Google-maps took us the several miles to "The Legends" golf course. What a great course, and what a great experience! We had a wonderful time. After golf, I told my wife it would be a shame to not tour as much of the base as we could, so we set out to do exactly that.

OMG! I really had no idea of the enormity of it all. As a recruit, you're

restricted to only a small section of the island, so free-wheeling the entire island was an awesome experience. I took us to the Marine Corps Museum. As we walked the fifty yards from the car to the Museum, we heard the chanting of a cadence from a distance. The voices ringing out were female.

A platoon of women Marines was being marched toward us from a couple of hundred yards away. We took a front row seat on the bench in front of the museum and watched as they marched ever closer. Each recruit bore a very large, heavy-looking bright blue bag wrapped around her shoulders and onto her back. These bags were bigger than a sea-bag! They marched by in perfect symmetry. All arms and legs moving together perfectly. It was actually spectacular! Not only was my wife amazed; I was amazed! I have seen close order drill. I've been a part of close order drill. However, I think I had a preconceived notion that a platoon of female Marines being drilled would not look as crisp and sure as their male counterparts. That notion was blown out of the water! These female Marines were extremely impressive! So much so, that I penned a letter to Lt Colonel Dones, the commanding officer of the 4th recruit training battalion. I wrote how impressed I was, and asked her to please pass on to the officers and NCOs serving in her battalion that from this old Marine's viewpoint, the training was top notch and that I felt the Marine Corps is in good hands.

It was icing on the cake to hear my wife tell me, when we returned home, that she thought our day at Parris Island was the best day of our vacation. ■

C-Rations or Mess Hall?

BY RICK LEWIS

If one used good old hot sauce on the Ham and MoFo's, they were OK. And, of course being tankers, we had plenty of C-4 to heat them. All you guys in '68 and on had far better chow halls and better food than in '66 and early '67. Our chow halls were not that good since most of them were set up in hot GP tents. And the cooks burned the food most of time. Even in the rear we would eat C-Rats because our guts couldn't handle all that chow hall food. I found a picture of us all sitting on our tanks in the rear cooking C-rats.

I remember picking someone to

make the run to Division PX for things like the little cans of Vienna sausages made of horse meat, sardines in tomato or mustard sauce, canned tuna ... now we were living the good life out in the bush. Of course, the grunts use to say, "Man if we can smell that shit then Charlie can to, so if we get hit it's on you tankers."

But they wanted to trade for some anyway. I would trade for peaches and pound cake. I still have a can of pound cake dated 4/8/70. I remember opening the case of C's that morning after the choppers had re-supplied us

and passing them out to my platoon. I dropped one case and it burst open. I picked up the can and noticed the date, it's my birth date. I was 23, married and on my third tour in VN, this time as Platoon Sgt of grunts. I would be pulled out August of 70 back to 3rd Tanks on the Rock (Oki) as tanks were done in VN. Even back on Oki getting used to real food took a few weeks. Man, I loved milk ... but it took me a long time to handle it. Today I still love the taste of a tall glass of ice-cold milk.

Rick OUT!

Women Marines at Parris Island

BY GREG KELLEY

Ah, the memories! From the moment we recruits first stepped into the yellow footprints, to the day we graduated, it was hell-on-earth. Some of my memories are still vibrant, while

others have lost a bit of their luster; after all, it's been some fifty-six years for this recruit. I remember all the "firsts" fairly clearly: The first time I was called a douchebag, and the first time

I was called a maggot. The first time I was "put to bed" with seventy-eight others at exactly the same time. The first time I slept with a rifle. The first time I had to march everywhere. The

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMBER “13”

THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL IN ANGEL FIRE, NEW MEXICO

Long ago the decision was made that 13 photographs of deceased Vietnam veterans will always be on display in Victor Westphall's Vietnam Veterans Peace and Brotherhood Chapel. The Visitors Center has a display rack with over 1,600 photos of deceased Vietnam veterans. These are displayed in the Chapel on a rotating basis. In 1971 when the chapel was dedicated, Dr. Victor Westphall decided on the number 13 because he believed that the number 13 was very significant in his life. There were, of course, 13 original colonies in the United States. The 13-star United States flag was the one flown at the Memorial during its early history. Of great significance to Dr. Westphall was that he was born on October 13, 1913. The most significant occurrence of the number 13 is Dr. Westphall's decision on March 13, 1969, that there should be 13 photos of deceased Vietnam veterans on display in the Chapel. As with other aspects of the Memorial, there is a mystical or spiritual aspect to that decision.

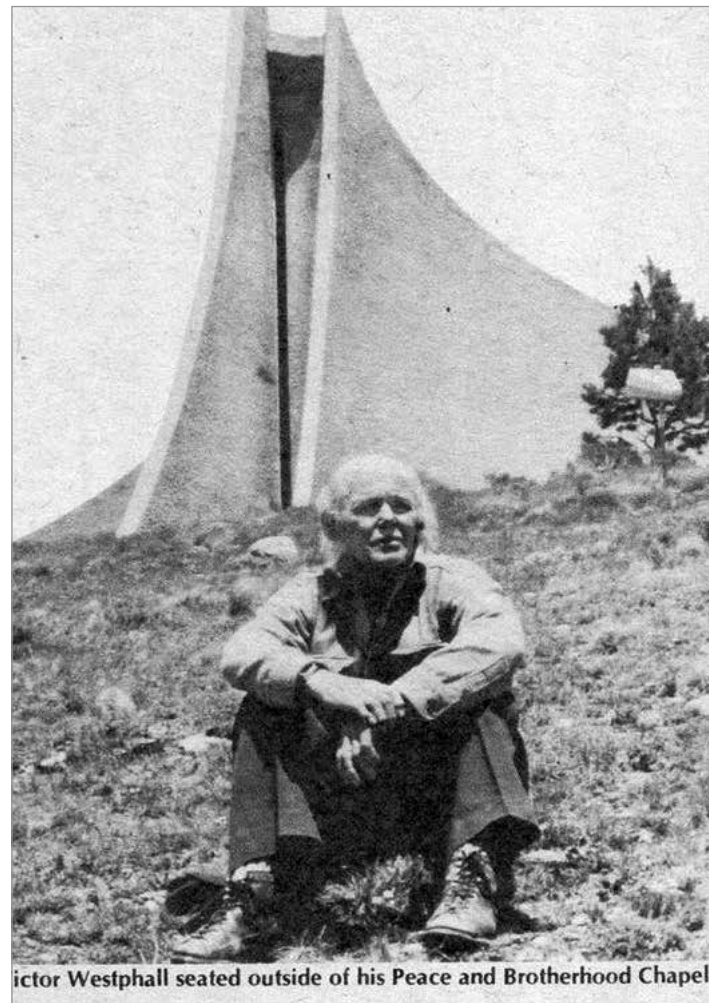
A September 23, 1982, a Taos News Article, by Steve Winston of Valverde, noted Dr. Westphall's story: "At the time I conceived the idea of 13, I was alone at Valverde. I was in the absolute depths of despond, weeping and going through David's effects, Westphall recalls. Darkness was falling outside and Westphall went into the chapel. The center stage lights had been burned out for months. But when he clicked the three-way switch, these lights came on. The date was March 13, 1969."

Dr. Westphall later learned from the Bravo Company 1st Sgt. that 13 Marines died as a result of the May 22, 1968 battle with NVA soldiers in which Lt. David Westphall lost his life. Although decades later—after Dr. Westphall’s death—it was learned that a total of 17 Marines died as a result of that battle, the original information that 13 had died was a major source of inspiration for Dr. Westphall because it was a confirmation of his insight that there needed to be 13 photos. (NOTE: Of the 17 who died that day, 13 of those Marines’ official unit was Bravo Company, and 4 were on special assignment to Bravo Company that day.)

Even after Dr. Westphall's death the number 13 continued to be significant. Following Dr. Westphall's funeral on the grounds of the Memorial in July of 2003, a group of family and friends went to the Visitors Center to view the movie *In the Shadow of the Blade*. To our great surprise, one of the military unit banners that at that time hung

from the ceiling of the main display room in the Visitors Center had fallen to the floor. The fallen banner was discovered by Luis Lopez, who is himself a Vietnam veteran and was a dear friend of Dr. Westphall and his wife, Jeanne. The banners are firmly attached to the ceiling and one had never fallen before. The banner bore the number 13 as a unit designation. Many who experienced this mysterious event believe firmly that Dr. Westphall was somehow communicating with his family and friends—as if to say, “I am okay; carry on.”

(Photo from November 4, 1979, Parade Magazine article “One Man’s Shrine to All Who Fell in Vietnam” by Satchell, a story about the early days of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire, New Mexico)



Victor Westphall seated outside of his Peace and Brotherhood Chapel

THE SPONSON BOX

USMC Vietnam Tanker Reunion

Nice secondary! On target one more time.

Volume 1, Issue 3

July/August 1998

Once a Marine Tanker...

Always a Marine Tanker...

Reunion Rescheduled

The deadline was June 1998, for the deposits to be in for registration for the November 1998, USMC Vietnam Tanker Reunion. We only needed 20 deposits to be able to hold the rooms and the special rates at the Quality Inn, Arlington, Va.

Nearly 50 of the questionnaires that were returned to me indicated that those respondents were going to attend. Not enough of you responded with deposits for me to be able to accept the financial obligations involved in reserving the block of rooms. We have sent back all deposits received and any other donations given to us.

We are now rescheduling the reunion for the summer of 1999. Location and dates are yet to be determined.

A History of Marine Corps Tanks in Vietnam

James P. Coon was the first person to respond with his first personal narrative entitled, *Tankers at Con Thien*.

Jim was with the 1st Platoon, Alpha Co., 3d Tank Bn. from September 1967, until July 1968. He was the platoon commander and had replaced ZLA. Tom Barry who had received his second purple heart in just two weeks at Con Thien.

Tom Barry is doing well. He is a financial consultant and lives in Rockville, Maryland.

Coon's *Tankers at Con Thien* is alive with factual happenings and emotional insight as to the trauma of combat and living young Marine die. He is also able to recall the names of many of those with whom he served.

Coon's account is the beginning of telling the history of our experiences in Vietnam.

107 Tank Crewmen Died in Vietnam from 1965 to 1970

06/26/65 - EUSTACE, ARTHUR B., Jr.	Sgt
Age: 25, Foxlake, IL	
06/26/65 - SCHWANDER, FREDERICK, Jr.	Cpl
Age: 20, Elizabethtown, PA	
06/26/65 - ZAPACEK, GREGORY P.	Cpl
Age: 26, Detroit, MI	
08/18/65 - LADIKAN, WILLIAM C.	Cpl
Age: 21, Cohasset, MA	
12/23/65 - ABUMAN, JOHN F.	L/Cpl
Age: 25, Scranton, PA	
03/30/66 - COLEMAN, MCCARTHER	L/Cpl
Age: 22, Massy, OH	
03/30/66 - WHALEY, HENRY L.	Cpl
Age: 23, New Haven, CT	
05/20/66 - WILZMAN, RICHARD L.	Pfc
Age: 19, Cleveland, OH	
05/21/66 - FURR, JAMES H.	L/Cpl
Age: 20, Concord, NC	
07/21/66 - BRIGHT, RICHARD	Pvt
Age: 23, Chula Vista, CA	
07/31/66 - JOHNSON, LEX G.	L/Cpl
Age: 19, Tulsa, OK	
07/31/66 - BROWN, JOSEPH C.	Cpl
Age: 20, Pasadena, MD	
08/22/66 - COON, BOBBY G.	Sgt
Age: 24, Columbus, OH	
09/09/66 - MATTHEWS, EARL JR.	Ssgt
Age: 28, Florence, SC	
09/21/66 - SENEAL, JOHN F., Jr.	Sgt
Age: 35, Severn, MD	
09/24/66 - CHILDRIS, REVILL MO.	Sgt
Age: 21, Slater, MO	
12/10/66 - MILLER, DOUGLAS J.	Sgt
Age: 20, East Lansing, MI	

The September issue will list those casualties of 1967 (the November issue will have those who died in 1968 and the January issue will have 1969/1970.

Thank you, for the Generous Donations

I have received several donations and wish to thank you for your generosity. The original donations have been returned to those donors, as those monies were earmarked for the actual reunion to be in the November. Other donations have been received asking me to continue to effort to hold a summer reunion and to be with the cost of this newsletter.

Again, thanks to all who have helped.

Marine Corps Tankers Association (MCTA)

The MCTA was kind enough to ask a reunion "group" to become members their fine organization. I received mail from Mr. Earl Huffstutler, Chief Finance Officer and Mr. Donald Gagnon, Editor of the MCTA newsletter.

Sgt. Maj. Huffstutler extended invitation to the Vietnam Marine Corps Tankers Reunion to join the MCTA. I also left the MCTA could add to the "History of Marine Corps Tanks in Vietnam".

I am in agreement with him that we should all work together as members as historians.

Sgt. Maj. Huffstutler was 1st Sgt. H&S Co, 5th Tanks when they were reverted to 1st Tank Bn. in 1966. Earl is a "triple banger" having served in W.W.I, Korea and Vietnam.

Don Gagnon suggested that he write reprint articles supplied from MCTA tankers for future issues of the Vietnam newsletter.


THE SPONSON BOX

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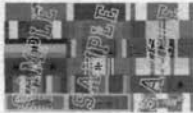
USMC VIETNAM TANKERS REUNION

July/August 1998

Get your own medals certificate to display at home or at the office



SMEDLEY D. BUTLER
SERIAL NUMBER: 13691811
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
 1965 - 1968
BRAVO CO., 3D TANK BN., 3D MAR DIV
VIETNAM COMBAT VETERAN



IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HONORARY STANDARD AND TRADITIONS SET FORTH BY THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY, THE ABOVE NAMED AS BEEN AWARDED THREE MEDALS, RIBBONS AND CITATIONS FOR ACTIONS AND BRAVERY DURING THE ABOVE PERIOD OF SERVICE TO THE COUNTRY DURING A TIME OF ARMED CONFLICT

You can now proudly display your medals, ribbons and citations that you earned as a United States Marine.

This ready for framing 8 1/2" X 11" certificate is printed on 24 lbs. white parchment in full color. Will look great at home, in the family room or even at the office.

Note: These certificates are not endorsed by the U.S. Marine Corps or the Dept. of the Navy.

The cost is only \$9.00 per Certificate + \$1.00 postage & handling.

100% OF THE MONIES COLLECTED WILL BE USED FOR EXPENSES IN CONNECTION WITH THE REUNION

COMPLETE NAME AND/OR RANK TO APPEAR ON MEDALS CERTIFICATE

SERIAL NUMBER TO APPEAR (IF WANTED)

COMPANY	BATTALION	MARINE DIVISION
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

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SHIPPING AND HANDLING \$1.00

TOTAL OF CHECK IS: \$

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:
Deck Card, 7 Bedford St., Teaticket, MA 02536

Check Appropriate Boxes

*MOH	Navy Cross
*Navy Cross	Navy Unit
*NMM	NMJC
*Silver Star	Good Conduct
*Legion Merit	USCMA
*Navy Marine	National Def
*Distinguished Flying Cross	Valiant BM
*Distinguished Service Cross	RVN PUC
*Purple Heart	RVN Gd Cross
Combat Action	RVN Civil Act
PUC	RVN Campaign

Use additional Paper if Necessary

Note: *
 Copy of DD214 is added for these Medals

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USMC VETERANS TANKERS RELIANCE

July/August 1998

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Tyson, Joe, 3d, B Co
mm909@earthlink.net

Van Apeldoorn, Bruce, C, V7768, 1st, C Co
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Whitman, John, V57766, 3d, H&S Co
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Williams, Rick L, V7, 1st, B Co
burtmoran@att.net

Zitz, Ken W, V9, 1st, B Co
kwzitz@worldnet.com

links from the turret deck, "tinning" the 30 cal, yelling "fire-on-the-hole" because you were using C4 to remove rust-from-turret lion bars, or using C4 to load your C-400. Remember changing the anchor-peg because you use too much C4 to loosen the broken turret bar, or...

The stogie hammer and the end-concorders, changing stick. I could go on but I won't, filling this bag, diging in...

Space A Travel

Veterans who are 100% total and permanent disabled are permitted to fly standby on any military air craft authorized to carry military personnel. You must have a DD Form 1173, identification and privilege card. Under box marked "Sponsor Service/Status" it must indicate your branch of service and have "D1/J755", which means, Disabled American Veteran Permanent.

There are four priorities and three categories. Total and permanent disabled veterans fall under Priority 4 under Category A, B and C.

Category A: Transportation of Military Space Available Passengers Between the CONUS and Overseas Areas.

Category B: Transportation of Military Space Available Passengers Within and Between CONUS.

Category C: Transportation of Military Space Available Passengers With and Without AC.

Priority 4:

- 1/ Unaccompanied retired military members and veterans rated totally and permanently disabled by the Department of Veterans Affairs 2/ ROTC students who are receiving financial assistance and those enrolled in advanced training in uniform.
- 3/ Unaccompanied members of the Reserve components of the U.S. armed forces in the following categories: a/ Active status with forms DD 2 and a completed form DD 1853. b/ Reserve members who have received official notification of their retirement eligibility, but have not reached the age of 60.

Questionnaires

Did you miss the questionnaire I mailed to you, or did I goof and didn't mail one to you?

Give me a call at 508-548-9887 or Email me at WarVeterans@aol.com

I'll be happy to send you a new one.

Flash Back Memories

Do you have flashback(s)? No, not the ones of incoming, cough ambushes, hitting land mines, KFP's, 60mm "short rounds" or listening posts.

I'm talking about "burning the shitters", large rats, bug repellent making your lips swell, smelling so bad you knew it had to be someone else, taking showers in the moonlight, eating kam and mothers and fighting for the fruit cocktail, or...

Using the grase gun, not the one with the 45 cal. magazine clip but the one with the real grease in it. Tightening the clutch, adjusting the road killer arm, slipping on the slope plate, wondering why they call it a "spoon-bus", picking up 30 cal ammo

868-617-5737

Page 2

Dir

USMC Vietnam Tankers Reunion

7 Bedford Street
Teaticket, MA 02536-6761
(508) 546-6887

Address Correction Requested

1-800-VIETNAM

Life Member

39722X1136

USMC Vietnam Tankers Reunion Objectives & Goals

STATED OBJECTIVES

1. TO HOLD A REUNION AND PROVIDE A FORUM IN WHICH VIETNAM MARINE CORPS TANKERS MAY SHARE WITH OTHERS THEIR EXPERIENCES BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE VIETNAM WAR.
2. TO FOSTER CAMARADERIE AMONG ALL MARINE CORPS TANKERS WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM BETWEEN THE YEARS 1965 AND 1970, AND TO FURTHER THIS CAMARADERIE TO INCLUDE ALL MARINE CORPS TANKERS THAT HAVE SERVED AND WILL SERVE IN THE PAST, PRESENT AND IN THE FUTURE.
3. TO PROVIDE AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNTING OF THE EVENTS AND THE MEN WHO SERVED IN AMERICA'S LONGEST AND MOST CONTROVERSIAL ARMED CONFLICT.
4. TO ALLOW THE HEALING PROCESSES TO CONTINUE BY SHARING THE MEMORIES AND EMOTIONS OF THOSE WHO HAVE A NEED TO REMEMBER AND GRIEVE THE UNCONSIDERABLE LOSSES OF YOUNG MEN WHO WERE AND ARE FELLOW MARINES, FRIENDS AND BROTHERS.

First Class

FARGO, ND #1 07/30/98 15:50

Mr. Russell M Walters
203 Dixon Street
Deer Lodge MT 59722

STATED GOALS

1. TO BRING TOGETHER ALL MEMBERS AND ATTACHED MEMBERS OF THE 1ST, 3D AND 5TH TANK BATTALIONS THAT SERVED IN VIETNAM BETWEEN THE YEARS 1965 AND 1970.
2. TO FURNISH A HISTORICAL ACCOUNTING OF THE INDIVIDUALS AND UNITS OF THE 1ST, 3D AND 5TH TANK BATTALIONS DURING THE YEARS 1965 TO 1970 IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM.
3. TO PROVIDE A LINK FOR ALL VIETNAM VETERANS WHO SERVED WITH THE ABOVE MENTIONED UNITS WHO MAY NEED ASSISTANCE IN ESTABLISHING SERVICE CONNECTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR INJURY, SICKNESS OR DIS-EASE CAUSED BY OR AS A RESULT OF THEIR SERVICE DURING THE VIETNAM WAR.
4. TO PROVIDE AN OPEN FORUM TO INFORM THE AMERICAN PUBLIC OF THE HISTORIES AND TRADITIONS OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS AND THE OFFICERS AND MEN WHO SERVED DURING AMERICA'S MOST CONTROVERSIAL WAR DURING THE 20TH CENTURY.

This first-hand personal account written by Lucy Caldwell, a 50-year-old widow who spent four years in-country Vietnam as a volunteer at the Da Nang USO, the Naval Hospital and traveling all over I Corps making the Marine's lives more bearable. What a wonderful and refreshing look at the Vietnam War from the eyes of a completely selfless, mature woman. There seemed to be absolutely nothing that Lucy could not or would not do for the men.

Here is one story from the book:

So little can mean so much, but for many of these men there was pitifully little from home in the way of mail or packages or even expressions of concern. After on Christmas, a young couple from West Virginia heard from a Marine Corporal who'd received a package from them through the China Beach USO. He had written them that it was the first real Christmas present he'd ever had as he'd been brought up in an extremely poor orphanage. As the friendship grew, letters and snapshots went back and forth. Bob, the Corporal, was a radioman, and his best friend was Ski.

"He used to drive a hearse in Brooklyn, and you should see him now with a jeep. Man is he wild!"

Cookies and extras of all kinds were sent to Bob and his outfit, as was a small transistor radio. Bob had written that theirs had been smashed and that though they had the money, the Marine had no way to get a new one as they never got near a PX. The West Virginia couple sent one. Then came Bob's letter asking if he could list the donors of the radio as next of kin.

Of course, I'm OK and all that. It's just that it would be good to belong to someone—not just the people at the orphanage, and besides, I left there when I was sixteen."

Janie and Joe, the West Virginia couple didn't have to think very long about that. It was wonderful. For their four youngsters, all of a sudden there was an Uncle Bob. When he went off to Hong Kong on R & R, he wrote home for a list of sizes and colors so "I'll know what I'm doing." He knew, and bought out Hong Kong for his new family.

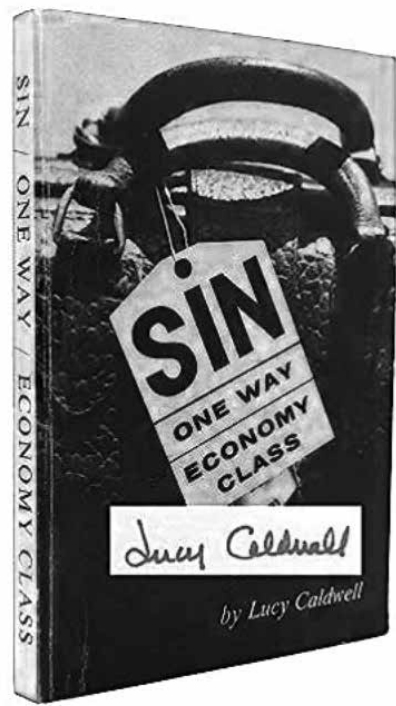
By now, Bob was "short." Twenty-three days and a wake up and he'd be on his way home to West Virginia. Everyone in the

neighborhood was in on the welcome home plans. It didn't matter how he'd gone to Vietnam, Bob was going home to a family and friends and neighbors who cared and who were very proud of him. This was heart-breaking, because it didn't work out that way. One October morning, Janie opened the door to find two serviceman – one a Chaplin – to tell her that Bob had been killed in action before the twenty-three days were up.

It isn't often any of us can give a man a family and Christmas all at once.

VTa member Michael Giovinazzo adds: I just finished the book by Lucy Caldwell—"Sin One Way Economy Class." The book was given to me from the friend I worked with in the NY City Fire Dept. and who was attended by Lucy when he was severely wounded and laid up in the Da Nang Hospital. I wonder if any in the VTA have ever come across Lucy? She was in Da Nang from the Spring of '66 until sometime in 1970.

John Wear also notes: When Mike told me about his New York City fire department buddy sending him the



Out of print, very limited availability

Lucy Caldwell book, I went on line and found a copy (the only one) on Amazon. It was autographed and priced at \$40. I snapped it up and I am now one happy camper. I have since lent the book to two different Marine buddies and they loved it as well. One of the Marines was a grunt who was WIA and he seems to think that he remembers Lucy at the Da Nang hospital. ■



TO THE RESCUE

BY SAMUEL N. THOMAS JR.

Late in the afternoon of January 14, 1967, three M48A3 tanks with the Ace of Spades painted on their fronts, rolled into the 3/1Bn. HQ CP 1st Mar, Div. also HQ of Charlie Co 1st. Tanks near Cau Ha (1) southeast of Da Nang. The tanks were the heavy section of Lt. Jim Ray's 2nd Platoon, Charlie Co. Ray was at that moment on R&R in Hawaii, the heavy section under the very capable command of Sgt. John Bartusevics, a twelve-month veteran of the fighting in-country.

At twenty-five years of age, Bartusevics was Section Leader of 2nd Platoon and Acting Platoon Sergeant. The heavy section consisted of three M48A3 tanks under commanders Sgt. Bartusevics, Cpl. Gary Soncrant, and Cpl. John McNally. With Soncrant were three young tankers: L/Cpl. Greg Auclair, L/Cpl. Rick Lewis, and Cpl. Ed Boyette. Bartusevics affectionately called the trio his "shit-birds."

Normally, the heavy section rotated back to Charlie Co, every three to five days for repairs, rearming, refueling, and to pick up a new unit of grunts before heading back out into the field; an operation that never took longer than an hour or two. It was unusual to find the tanks at Charlie Co. overnight. Since arriving so late from the field with Lima 3/1, Bartusevics decided heavy section would stay the night at Charlie Co. CP and head back out at dawn.

Bartusevics recalled that, "most of the guys slept in the tanks. It was very uncomfortable; you couldn't stretch your legs out, you either slept sitting up or propped your legs up." Boyette, the loader on Soncrant's tank, remembered that, "It was going to be our first evening off in quite a while with a real bunk."

Just after midnight, in the early morning hours of January 15, it happened. "We're sleeping in the tent," recalled Lewis, the gunner on Soncrant's tank, "when we started hearing mortars and artillery and crap like that." The explosions were quickly followed by gunfire.

The firing and explosions were coming from the Platoon Patrol Base (PPB) known as the Sand Dunes, near the village of Hai An (1) a few miles southwest of Marble Mountain, near the hamlet of Khai Tay (1). The PPB was one of several patrol bases within the "Mortar Belt," a string of platoon patrol bases covering the southern approaches to the Marine air base, Da Nang. The terrain in this Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR) was mostly tree lines, rice paddies, and sand dunes; good country for tanks. The Sand Dunes that night were manned by two depleted platoons from Kilo and Mike 3/1.

The tankers figured they'd be immediately called out, but as the minutes passed and no orders came, they couldn't understand why they weren't ordered to respond. A few minutes passed when a junior officer came running in saying that a PPB

was getting hit and they needed the tanks. Bartusevics shouted, "Everyone up! We're going back out!" The crews jumped up, grabbed their gear, ran to the tanks and climbed aboard. It was about O dark thirty.

As they climbed aboard their tanks, they could see mortar flashes hitting all over the Sand Dunes and the red and green tracers crisscrossing the base; green going inward and red going outward. The crews revved their engines and lined up prepared to pull out. After fifteen minutes, an officer emerged from the Combat Operations Center (COC) and informed Bartusevics that a reserve force of grunts and Amtracs, would be joining. So, the tankers stood down and waited, and waited. Also double checked out all the tanks' weapons and ammo to ensure everything was a go!

Twenty minutes went by, then thirty, during which time the tankers listened intently to the explosions, yelling of orders, and screams of the wounded coming over the radio. Another fifteen minutes passed and the sky was lighting up all around the PPB. Sitting there waiting, watching, and listening was excruciating.

Finally, a frustrated Bartusevics ran back into the Command Bunker declaring he wasn't waiting any longer; to just send the grunts and Amtracs, when they were ready. As he walked out, Bartusevics asked for a Krypto radio so he'd have a secure line with the grunts in the base and those back at COC. A few minutes later an operator came running out with the radio, yelling, "You guys need to get down there. They're getting overrun. They're getting wiped out," recalled Auclair, the driver of Soncrant's tank.

"The Hell with it! We're going!" Bartusevics barked to the crews. "Put the grunt radioman up on the lead tank." Not one of the tankers hesitated. With the radio operator positioned behind the turret next to him. Bartusevics turned to the radioman, "Tell the Amtracs, to catch up!" With that, the tanks took off.

Under normal circumstances, tanks moving without infantry support was an operation fraught with danger. But these weren't normal circumstances. Bartusevics, on the lead tank, lurched forward; the three Iron Monsters of the Ace of Spades M48A3 tanks roared out of 3/1 HQ CP to the rescue. They would adapt, improvise and overcome as they headed to (PPB)—orders or no orders – it was 01:55

The distance between 3/1 HQ and the Sand Dunes was about 4 to 5 clicks, Bartusevics had been in-country long enough to know that the most likely route between Battalion and the PPB was undoubtedly mined, with pockets of NVA positioned along the way ready to spring an ambush on any reinforcements sent in relief. So, instead of striking off in >>

a beeline for the base, Bartusevics set off across the rice paddies and solid terrain, then jumped over onto the MSR. By criss-crossing back and forth on the MSR, then turning west near Ngan Cau (3), Bartusevics believed they'd flank any ambush awaiting them in the wide-open sand dunes just south of Nui Kim Son.

"We went as fast as a 54-ton tank can go, recalled Auclair. The tanks bounced along, at one point plunging down a 12-foot embankment. "That's one time I found out you could actually go weightless in a tank," remembered Lewis. "One second, I'm sitting in the gunner's seat and the next I'm floating up to the top of the tank. It was quite an experience when we hit."

As they approached the base from the southeast, they all saw the sand dunes on their left flank flashing with green tracers confirming the decision that an ambush was awaiting the direct route. Once they got within sight of the base, Auclair remarked that it looked like Christmas with all of the explosions and red and green tracers going everywhere.

They realized that the situation within the base was becoming more dire by the second. The tankers heard the constant chorus of firing, explosions, yelling, and screaming over the radio. Boyette recalled that someone came on the radio shouting, "They're all over the place!" Every tanker knew they were about to be in the toughest fight of their young lives.

Pulling up at the concertina wire perimeter, the tanks came to a full stop. They were amazed at the intensity of the battle. "The scene was complete chaos," reported Boyette. The base was alive with red and green tracers crossing back and forth. Almost immediately, rounds from inside the perimeter began bouncing off the tanks. It was 02:05.

With rounds ricocheting off their left flanks, the tanks moved a little further up along the perimeter and attempted to enter through the gate which was nothing more than a jumble of concertina wire strung across the entrance. Pfc Jack Mitchell of Mike 3/1 rushed out of his bunker located just to the right of the entrance and tried to drag the gate open. Boyette jumped down to assist. Both immediately came under withering fire as they struggled to clear the entrance.

Frustrated that it was taking so long, Bartusevics yelled over the radio, "We're going over the wire!" Tankers know that you don't go over wire as it can get caught up in your sprockets and pulled in until the tank is stationary and nothing more than a sitting duck, but Bartusevics knew that they needed to get inside as quickly as possible. He also knew that if you went straight in, you lessened the chances of becoming mired in the wire. So, with the tanks in column and bullets bouncing off the sides, the three Ace of Spades tanks punched straight in over the wire just to the left of the gate, running over a number of Viet Cong in the process.

Once inside the wire, the crews were greeted with the sight of bodies and body parts everywhere. The Viet Cong recognized they were not prepared to deal with tanks. Pfc Butch Kempka of Mike 3/1 remembered that "Not too long after

a couple of tanks arrived, the VC starting making their way back to the trees as fast as they could." The NVA, however, were more seasoned and more determined than their compatriots.

Bartusevics split the column, sending McNally and his crew to the left while Soncrant's tank proceeded to the right. Bartusevics elected to move straight forward. As he was splitting them off, Bartusevics' reminded his crews to be careful where they went as the field was strewn with dead and wounded Marines. Bartusevics also ordered the crews not to use their 90mm guns as they were liable to take out as many Marines as NVA. Instead, they went in with their machine guns and any side arms they had.

Soon after entering the compound, Sgt Roger Lipscomb, the Platoon Sergeant of Kilo 3/1, climbed aboard Bartusevics' tank and designated locations and targets for Bartusevics. Lipscomb also alerted Bartusevics to the presence of a four-man patrol outside the wire to the north of the base that was surrounded and had two badly wounded Marines. Bartusevics alerted the crew of Soncrant's tank of the patrol and ordered them to render assistance.

Everywhere they looked there were Viet Cong, NVA, and Marines mixed together in brutal combat, much of it hand-to-hand. The M48A3s waded into the fight with their machine guns blazing. As they split off, each tank was on its own. Each moving through the base, acting as mobile foxholes. Taking the right flank, Soncrant was firing the sky mount 30 cal. machine gun, while Lewis was in his seat firing the coax 50Cal. machine gun. Auclair was forced to stand up in his hatch so he could see where he was going, making himself a perfect target for enemy fire. As he did so, he took out his .45 and began picking off NVA rushing towards them.

The NVA were everywhere mixed in close action with Marines while groups started rushing the tanks. Soncrant recognized they were in eminent danger. "Traverse right!" he yelled to Lewis. The turret immediately swung sharply to the right. Lewis, viewing his whole world through the narrow view of his scope was stunned to see directly in front of him a Marine and a NVA soldier in hand-to-hand fighting. Suddenly, in a split second, another NVA soldier ran up and shot the Marine in the back. Lewis pulled on the trigger of the 50Cal. coax and gave the two NVA soldiers a burst that nearly cut them in half. "I kept traversing right and picked up a wave of NVA rushing our right flank," recalled Lewis. "They were so close you could see their eyeballs. I just laid on the gun switches and kept firing until Soncrant hollered at me to ceasefire." Pfc Don Reed of Mike 3/1 remembered: "When the tanks came in, there was a second wave of Viet Cong and NVA rushing us. Some guy on a 50Cal. started up and dropped every one of them; saved our hides."

All three tanks were equipped with the new Xenon searchlight and Bartusevics ordered the crews to turn them on. "I thought the lights would lighten up the area and also blind the Viet Cong and NVA." The tactic worked as incoming shots

started going either too high or too low.

"Now we started hunting," remembered Boyette. "We ran over a number of Viet Cong as we moved about looking for pockets of NVA fighters." Soncrant's tank continued along the perimeter with the bunkers on their right, firing at any enemy targets. Still on the sky mount 30 Cal. Soncrant was joined by Boyette, who was now out of his hatch firing an M14 and his .45, while Auclair continued unloading his .45 while maneuvering the 54-ton tank through the obstacle course of dead and wounded Marines, blown bunkers, and debris.

Bartusevics recognized that the heaviest firing was coming from the mess hall directed at the Command Post (CP) bunker. That became Bartusevics' immediate priority. As they moved forward the tank started receiving heavy fire from three sides. John Koski, the loader, emerged up through his hatch firing in all directions with his M14, "picking off guys that were trying to get on the tanks," remembered Bartusevics. A group of NVA were observed on top of the CP by both Bartusevics and Koski and just as quickly dispatched by both.

Bartusevics saw the NVA in the mess hall setting up a machine gun to fire on the CP. Lewis recalled later that he heard Bartusevics yelling over the radio, "They're in the mess hall tent! They're in the mess hall tent!" Setting his sights on the target, Bartusevics ordered his driver, Joe Deluca, not to button up "just drop the hatch and hunker down." As the tank moved forward, Bartusevics shouted to Deluca, "Go straight! ... Now, step on it! ... Don't stop till I tell you to!" With that, the Iron Monster ran full speed ahead – right over the mess hall, crushing it and the machine gun – and all the NVA in there as well.

Pfc Mario Rojas of Kilo 3/1, saw a tank and ran to it where he found Sgt. Robert Demark of Kilo 3/1 already on top. This was the tank commanded by John McNally, proceeding around the southern perimeter of the compound. Holding out his hand to Rojas, Demark pulled him aboard. Soon he was joined by four other grunts. "We had a turkey shoot then," remembered Rojas. "NVA soldiers kept trying to jump on the tanks and we just kept kicking them off and shooting."

Meanwhile back on Soncrant's tank, Auclair moved the tank forward until they had bunkers on their right and on their left. Suddenly the M48A3 lurched forward to a complete stop. Sgt Bobby Raymond of Kilo 3/1 jumped onboard and pointed out the location of the patrol directly across from their position outside the wire, 50 yards into the tree line to the north.

"There's just Viet Cong in front of us," declared Auclair. "I'm going forward!" The tank swerved to the right and pulled forward to an opening blown in the wire by a Bangalore torpedo. Boyette immediately climbed out of his hatch, moved across the tank, jumped off the front fender, and ran through the opening in the wire, "hauling ass and firing his .45 as he ran to the tree line," remembered Lewis.

Boyette found the patrol just inside the tree line. He soon returned with one of the wounded grunts on his shoulders, fir-

ing as he came in. Laying him on the back of tank, he turned to Lewis and asked for another clip for his .45. Lewis obliged. Boyette replaced the empty clip, chambered the round, and went back out to the tree line to retrieve the second wounded grunt. "I grabbed him, flung him over my shoulder and took off for the base," recalled Boyette. With the two wounded grunts aboard, Soncrant's tank backed up to the assembling medevac area.

All three tanks worked their way out of the perimeter and began an outer perimeter circle. Most of the NVA and Viet Cong were outside the perimeter by now and the tankers were freed up to turn their 90mm guns on them. About this time, Bartusevics received word that the Amtracs and infantry coming from Battalion were lost. Ordering Soncrant and McNally to help with mopping up at the base, Bartusevics set out in search of the Amtracks, Bartusevics radioed the Amtracks that he was going to briefly shine his searchlight straight up into the sky for a few seconds, then off, then on, then off. He did this periodically until the Amtracs were able to get their bearings. Locating them, Bartusevics escorted the reinforcements back to the PPB. By the time they got to the base the fighting was all but over.

It was about 04:00 when the choppers began arriving to medevac the wounded. After sweeping the area, the tankers assisted the grunts in the recovery of bodies. After the wounded were collected, they took stock of the base. One mortar was knocked out, the recoilless rifle was destroyed and two gun positions were wiped out. The 67 Marines in the base that night endured explosions, automatic weapon fire, and hand-to-hand fighting with bayonets and K-Bar's. The After-Action reports stated that 45% of the bunkers were destroyed by explosions from mortars, satchel charges, and Chicom grenades.

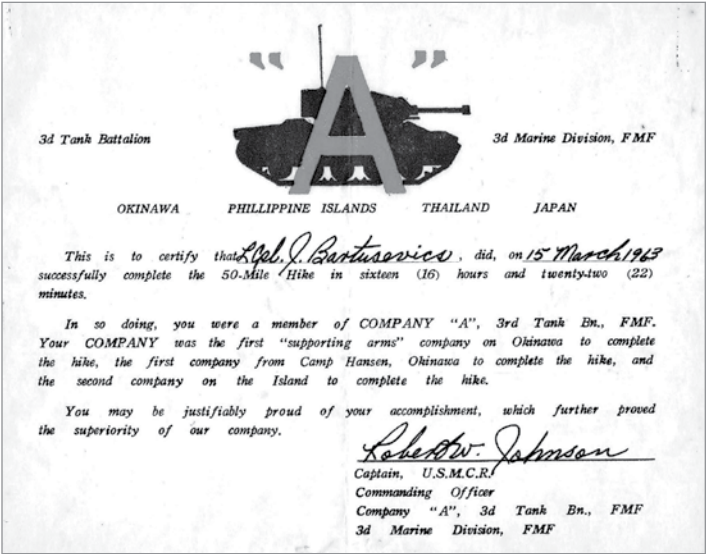
Of the Marine defenders manning the Sand Dunes that night, 16 were killed and 33 were wounded. The tanks were credited with 20 confirmed KIA and 10 probables. However, all of those involved in the fight agreed that those numbers were greatly under counted. The total number of Viet Cong and NVA casualties were officially reported as 61.

If it hadn't been for the critical and decisive action taken by the heavy section of 2nd Platoon, Charlie Company, 1st Tank Battalion in the early morning hours of January 15, 1967, to disobey orders and set out on their own, the grunts who survived the fight agree that they would not be here today. Auclair remembered that night at the Sand Dunes as "the most terrifying night I ever spent in Vietnam!"

The following day, late afternoon the tanks mounted up and with the Amtracs following along, the column returned to 3/1 Bn HQ. Yet the NVA left a calling card, the Ace's C-23 hit a mine on the left front of the tanks, Lewis who had been inside for hours was up riding outside by the loaders hatch was lunched off the tanks and suffered a concussion and two bloody ears, he was medevac'd via Amtracs. Reserve forces moved in and began the process of rebuilding the base. The tankers got a well-deserved rest that night. The follow- >>

ing morning, fully resupplied, 2d Platoon, Charlie Co, 1st Tank Battalion was back out into the field. The Iron Monsters are always on guard.

Editor's Note: This article is published here with the express permission of the author. It was also fist run in the August 2022 issue if VIETNAM magazine ... and the story is an excerpt from an up-coming book



Images of tanks with the Ace of Spades on the searchligh cover



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Sam Thomas is a military historian, published author, and museum director of the T.R.R. Cobb House in Athens, GA. He got involved in the history of the fight for the Marine platoon patrol base known as the “Desert Position” on 15 January 1967 because his wife lost her big brother “Steve” that night. James Steven “Steve” Camp was a PFC machine gunner with Mike 3/1. Steve turned 19 one week prior to the engagement. The family never knew the circumstances surrounding his death and the youngest of Steve’s three sisters, who was only 1 ½ at the time, pestered Sam for years to research and write something up on Steve. The research began in 2019 and quickly evolved into a search for more on this little-known battle as there is barely a mention of it in official records. A project that began as a memorial to his brother-in-law has turned into the story of all 16 of the KIAs from that night and their 63 Marine brothers from 1st Platoon, Kilo and Mike Companies, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines and the heavy section of 2nd Platoon, Charlie Company, 1st Tank Battalion who were all victors that night. The tentative title of the forthcoming book is DEVIL DOGS OF THE DESERT.

Rick Lewis adds: This story of this dark night in Vietnam has taken Sam four years of research to put all the facts together, interviews with 21 of the grunts that made it that night. I was able to use contacts at the History section HQ Marine Corps to help, plus phones calls trying to find the rest of the heavy section of tanks only to find out 5 of us are still taking up space. I guess the kicker is that tank C-23, all of us are still standing. Auclair (driver), Boyette, (loader) Lewis (Gunner), Songrant (TC).

Also, John Bartusevis was the Section leader. Sam’s museum will host a reunion of the grunts and the five tankers this coming spring in Athens, Ga and we will do a book signing passing books around for everybody to sign. I told Sam that this will be just like the high school yearbooks.

I asked Sam to give me an intro to the story so our USMC VTA brother will understand why he is writing the book. There is a lot more to the back story on what we have found out about the cover up of that night by the Corps, we are hoping with help of the history section to correct it, They are waiting unill Sam can turn over all the interviews, one of which is the Lt. who was inside the wire that night. >>

Tanks & Medals of Valor

John Bartusevics

HOME OF RECORD:

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Silver Star

AWARDED FOR ACTIONS DURING Vietnam War

Service: Marine Corps

Rank: Sergeant

Battalion: 1st Tank Battalion, 1st Marine Division (Rein.), FMF

GENERAL ORDERS:
CITATION:

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Sergeant John Bartusevics (MCSN: 1897519), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as a Section Leader with the Second Platoon, Company C, First Tank Battalion, FIRST Marine Division (Rein.), FMF, in connection with combat operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. Early in the morning on 15 January 1967, Sergeant Bartusevics was directed to move his tank section to a position in support of elements of the Third Battalion, First Marines

which were under attack by an estimated battalion of North Vietnamese troops augmented by local Viet Cong guerrillas. After arriving at the besieged area, he assessed the situation and quickly located the enemy within the defensive perimeter. Skillfully and aggressively, Sergeant Bartusevics directed the movement of his three tanks against the enemy. Realizing that the proximity of friendly troops eliminated the use of 90-mm. tank fire, he cautioned his tank commanders to attack the enemy forces



using only their machine guns. Blinding the enemy with searchlights and directing extremely accurate fire, he aggressively led two of his tanks into the midst of the enemy forces. With complete disregard for his own safety, Sergeant Bartusevics boldly maneuvered his tank through the enemy positions until they fled in panic and confusion. Unhesitatingly, he directed one of his tanks to rescue four Marines, two of whom were wounded outside of the compound area. Continuing his attack, Sergeant Bartusevics led his tanks in pursuit of the fleeing enemy, inflicting heavy casualties and preventing them from reorganizing. Subsequently, he returned to the defensive position where he provided security for the evacuation of the wounded. Throughout, Sergeant Bartusevics’ tank section, under his skillful and resolute leadership, accounted for

at least one third of the sixty-one confirmed enemy dead and sixty probably dead. By his exceptional professional skill and daring, he inspired all who observed him and contributed immeasurably to the successful accomplishment of an extremely hazardous mission. Sergeant Bartusevics’ extraordinary courage, bold leadership, and unswerving devotion to duty in the face of grave personal danger upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service. ■

THE CAVE AT KHE SANH

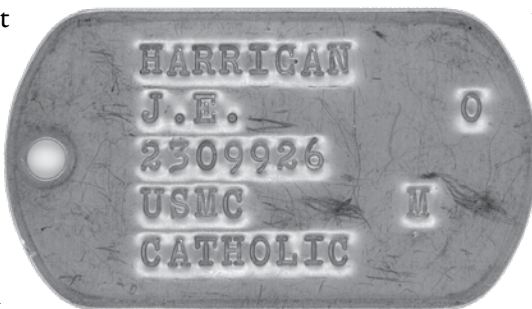
BY JOE HARRIGAN

So, upon returning to Vietnam from a 19 May 67 medevac (which I note is also Uncle Ho's birthday). Later in the 90's I got in touch with Bob Stokes by landline and he informed me I had some dates mixed up due to International Date Line and that we were 10-day wonders when we were wounded in May. So, it's actually late September or early October 67 and I'm back in-country at 3rd Tank Battalion that is north of Phu Bai. Upon meeting with the battalion Master Gunnery Sgt, I was told Alpha Company's manpower is in good shape so now would I mind going to Bravo Company that is at Khe Sanh. I was kind of happy that he gave me the option. At the time I had never heard of Khe Sanh and so I replied, "Whatever the Master Sgt says, Sir."

Not really wanting to see the TRACE (the DMZ) again. Also, while I was in the hospital and at Casual Companies where I had been recuperating for the last three months, everyone seemed to have been wounded at either Con Tien or Gio Linh (both located on the TRACE). So off I went to meet Lt James "Fred" Cole and Gunny Orien K Martin ... also known as "Bull" Martin in 1st Tanks where he served in '65, '66, '67 and with 3rd Tanks in '68.

I was assigned to B-34. This tank was first to enter Vietnam early in the war when it came in-country with the 9th Marines in March of 1965. I had met the man that drove it on to the beach during that first landing, Joe Tyson, a few years back through a VFW brunch. Wow! Small world!

The TC, "Ike" was a short timer and he was called "Wild Thing." He



was from Texas. I don't remember the drivers name but he rotated back to the World within a week or so. Frank "Fox" Archer was loader and I was made TC.

Soon Teddy Black, who was from D.C. became the part-time driver until a new replacement came around at the end of October. Dale "Arkansas" Sandifer and Ralph "Guns" Gonzales.

There was not much man power on base at the time. Only 1/26 but they had three hill outposts to take care of on a somewhat rotating basis. These hills are 950, 861 881

and as I think back the hills were under-manned as well. Rumors, as always, were rampant on base since "scuttlebutt" is Marine tradition.

It turned out Recon was seeing lots of movement out there as were the grunts situated on the three hills. My best friend from high school "Philly Cheesesteak" Steve came back from Hill 861 in November. He was the point man for his 3rd Platoon. The day they came in, their Gunny made them march up and down the airstrip for a long time. I recall that Steve's squad was bitching about it. And speaking of "tradition," I remember watching them and wishing that I was on deck with them when I saw the movie "The Few and the Proud." Like the day when we brand new Marines graduated from bootcamp at Parris Island or San Diego. And how about 8th & I? Y'all know what I mean?

They probably felt like the "Hungary and Dirty" after two months on Hill 861. It was probably a lot colder up there too, being approximately 1000 ft higher than the Khe Sanh combat base. The airstrip was at about elevation 540 meters. I never made it to a mountain over there, but from base most times they were in the clouds and rain. I do recall a conversation with Gunny Martin about hiking out there to see what it would be like to drive a tank to the hill but that never happened. I am pretty sure that 1-13 Engineers would have taken on that task.

So, time marched on. The Marine Corps Birthday was a feast as well as was Christmas. Things are changing though. 3/26 moved on base and into the hills and 1/26 has taken over the base. Also, word was passed that

helmets and flak jackets to be worn at all time. Even the rats seemed to stay a little closer to the ground. The weather started to change a little too. Also, there are several fire fights on Hills 881 & 861. Yes, things are getting worse.

Moving on to January, 2/26 flew in and they reinforced Hill 861 mak-

ing the new Hill 861 Alfa. Plus, they established another outpost Hill 547 that is northwest of 861. All those Jarheads were far from any supply and only choppers could help them.

So, finally it happens, the base gets "lit up" on 21 January 68. Don't think that anyone really knew how many rounds of NVA arty, rockets

mortars landed and then there were the probes on the wire. Around 0530 when the ammo dump started cooking off, Ralph "Guns" asks, "Anyone know a prayer?" I immediately said the "Our Father," "Act of Faith" and the "Act of Contrition." Since I had twelve years of Catholic schooling, I was well practiced. Plus, I think I was praying silently before he asked. It seemed like the prayers worked because the incoming stopped for a while but it turned out it was just coffee break and they kept hammering us for the next several months.

Then, to make matters worse, 1/9 flew in and it's my understanding they had a North Vietnamese Division attached to them. They were given a northwesterly area called "the quarry" where the Seabees got stone and good compactable material when they in re-did and elongated the air stripe in early fall of 67.

The "Walking Dead" (1/9) started to arrive on 22 Jan 68 and mounted up to the quarry on 25 Jan 68. Corporal "Fox" Archer left on one of the C-130's that 1/9 had come in on. Tanks B-34 & B-33 went to the Quarry. Gunny Martin was the TC and Jerry Salono was gunner; Smithy was loader and the driver was named Larry Bosco. He's now Reverend Bosco. Vargo was with B-34 now as driver. When Chris joined us, "the caves" that we were building in the side walls of Quarry were developing well. We used a long carriage bolt from the 90mm ammo boxes to start it and a week or so we had a decent cave. Both caves would sleep 3 or 4 comfortably and 8 to 10 in misery. But it seemed better than diving under a tank every time we got incoming enemy fire. From inside the cave, you could yell out "Those MORTER FRAGIN' (MoFo) ROCKETS ain't gonna get me!"

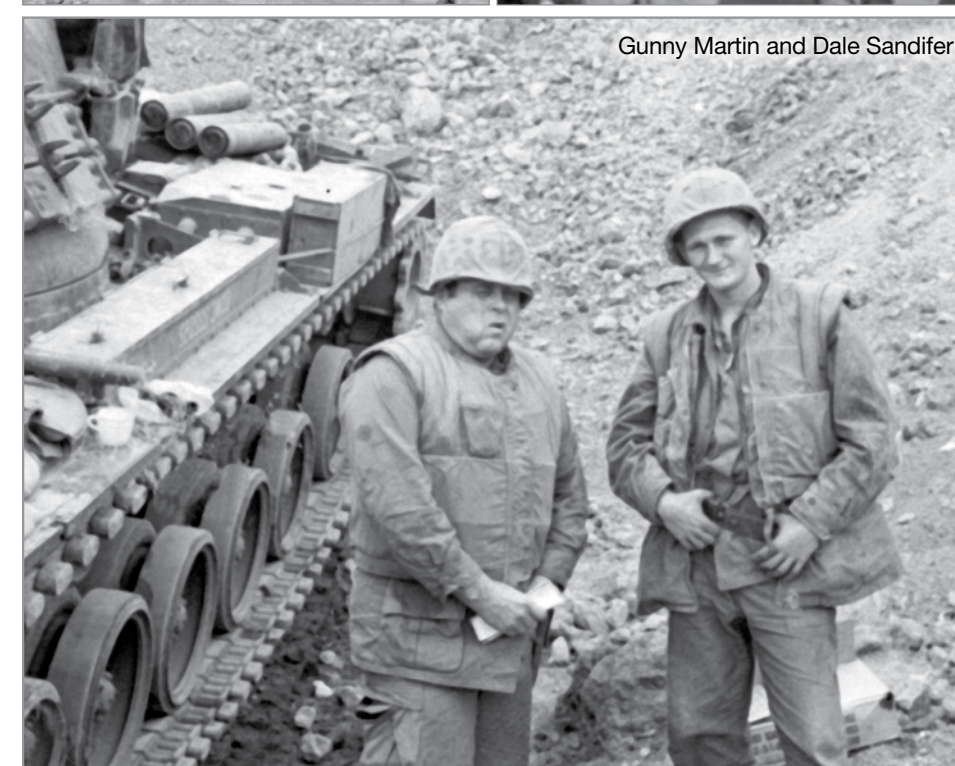
Thanks for reading this! And thanks to the US Army who gave 1/9 a Mule. We used it frequently to go into base for food mail and for stuff. ■



Joe and the Cave



Dale Sandifer & Frank Archer



Gunny Martin and Dale Sandifer

Saving Doggie Tankers

BY BOB SKEELS



(my recollection that it was “Big Red One,” 5th Mechanized (?) that was engaged with enemy of unknown size and desperately needed assistance. My first reaction was surprise that the Army was operating in our AO, maybe only a 1/2 a click from where we had hit the mine. The pilot gave me the radio frequency of the Army unit and upon reach-

It seemed like February 1969 was a month of stepped-up activity for us in 1st Platoon, Bravo Co, 3rd Tanks. We were on a typical patrol sweep with maybe a squad of ARVN'S about five miles NW of the village of Cam Lo and we just started to penetrate the jungle high ground by using some canister rounds to blast a pathway when all of a sudden we hit an anti-tank mine. I remember feeling uncomfortably vulnerable like I was many times in my months with the Marine infantry employing single file tactical formations as a grunt Marine with a machete at point (tactical suicide formation and no noise discipline whatsoever). Anyway, we got the tank track buttoned up again (after twelve mine hits you do get this wonderful experience) and since it was getting late, we started to head back to Bravo Co, HQ at Vinh Dai.

We are half way to home CP and a I get a chopper pilot on my radio frequency who told me to look back over my shoulder as an Army Cavalry unit

ing them they said they were getting hit hard and, of course, I could hear that over the radio, so I told him that I could get my tanks and APC's up on the high ridge line on their left flank and support them.

Once we got up on the ridge line, it was like a “turkey shoot” as the huge enemy element was cascading down the mountain toward the disabled Army tanks. We were running out of .50 cal. and everything else, so I am sure glad we had called back to the CP in Vinh Dai and pre-briefed them so they soon came out with the ammunition resupply. Upon their arrival at our POS, Captain Miller elbowed his way into my TC hatch and took over the .50 cal. and I jumped off the tank and lifted up the new cartons of .50 cal. for him and he went “nuts” on that gun. It was all almost surreal, but it was just one of the many days on the dark side of my tour. The results of this action were that both the now unclassified, USMC Command Chronology (records of war/after

action reports that is below) on the excellent USMC Vietnam Tankers website, <http://www.USMCVTA.org> and my daily Vietnam Tankers' diary was similar and that was that the Army Cavalry unit gave us 60 confirms, enemy KIA!

FROM USMC 3RD TANKS COMMAND CHRONOLOGIES:

B Co tanks and APCs with H/2/3 on sweep on grid 0962 to help out Army Cav unit heavily engaged with unknown sized enemy unit at vicinity of grid 1063. B Co tanks and APCs engaged enemy units with 90mm, .30 cal., 7.62 and .50 cal. machine gun fire. B Co units received 6–60 mm. rounds, intense small arms fire and automatic fire. B Co units fired estimated 100 HE, 30 APERS, 30 CANN, 20 HEAT, 20 WP, 15,000 .30 cal., 1500-.50 cal. and 2500 7.62 rounds at enemy troops in valley below. Results of this action were 60 enemy KIA and 4 USMC, WIA.

I guess, because I served as the platoon leader of this exceptional group of US Marine Vietnam tankers (Larry Parshall, Mike Bolenbaugh, Al Soto, Dale Sandifer, Dale Reichert, Gilbert Ramirez, Wayne Smull, Andy Anderson to name a few) that I would have liked to have seen that 1st platoon had received more credit by its platoon name or at least a mention for their excellent performance during certainly the initial stages of this battle. Additionally, I would certainly like to hear from the ARMY units as to how they made out in this engagement.

God Bless the Marine Vietnam Tankers and God Bless the USMCVTA.ORG and all its efforts for us members!

SF,

Bob Skeels

robertfskeels@aol.com

Phone: 860.658.2164

■

There Was Another Bakhmut

BY BEN COLE

FIFTY-FIVE YEARS BEFORE THE SIEGE OF BAKHMUT IN UKRAINE A SIMILAR BATTLE PLAYED OUT IN ANOTHER WAR. IT WAS ON A SMALLER SCALE BUT THE PLOT WAS THE SAME. FORCES BACKED BY RUSSIA AND CHINA WERE TRYING TO OVERTHROW A SMALLER COUNTRY WITH A FLEDGLING DEMOCRACY.

LIKE UKRAINE, THE DEFENDERS WERE DUG IN AND UNDER CONSTANT SHELLING FROM RUSSIAN GUNS BY THEIR NORTHERN NEIGHBOR.

Con Thien was a muddy little hilltop along the northern border of South Vietnam, where a few battalions of US Marines were fighting the North Vietnamese army attacking its southern neighbor.

It was a strategic strongpoint and the key to a defensive plan to stop the North Vietnamese army from sweeping into South Vietnam along Highway One. Unfortunately, that was exactly what happened eight years later, after most of the American forces had gone.

But in the summer and fall of 1967 Americans were sent to this most northern part of Quang Tri province to counter the NVA army massing there.

Isolated strong points were built as part of the McNamara Line—a plan by LBJ's defense secretary—to create a bulldozed strip cleared of vegetation a few hundred meters wide and stretching from the coast to the Laotian border. It was to have the latest electronics

to detect the invaders from the north, but many were already there.

Con Thien or the “Hill of Angels” was described as a “shell-pocked red clay ant hill”, and was manned by a depleted battalion of Marines that lived like moles in muddy bunkers and fighting holes. Being the highest point along this portion of the controversial fire break, it dominated the strip and the demilitarized zone to the north.

Unfortunately, for the Marines, this outpost was clearly visible and well within the range of the many Sino and Soviet guns in the Demilitarized Zone and North Vietnam.

During the summer and fall of 1967 there were days when they were hit by over a thousand shells, but their few howitzer crews braved the barrage and responded in kind.

Marine tanks, the only vehicle that could move in yard-deep mud, had to retrieve supplies and water left outside the wire after North Vietnamese gunners shot down a resupply helicopter

inside their perimeter.

Air support was vital in equalizing the battlefield helping the outnumbered Marine units as they sparred and held forcing Ho Chi Minh's finest to eventually shift their focus elsewhere.

A few months later during the Tet Offensive of 1968, Khe Sanh and Hue became their targets and the beginning of the end of the American involvement.

The Americans had never lost a major battle but ultimately lost this war because of the lack of popular support back home at this critical time.

Although tactically similar to Con Thien Marines, the Bakhmut fighters have solid popular support as they defend their families and homes. They also have the vital tangible and moral support from the free world that is keeping them in the fight.

The big question is how long will this support last. From five decades past we know what could happen if it doesn't last long enough. BC ■

This is About as Deep a Soul Searching as I Have Ever Done

BY FRANCIS LAWRENCE REMKIEWICZ (A.K.A. "TREE")
USMC 1968-1970

I recall seeing a clip called "Trying to Find My Way Home" and a couple of thoughts struck me. So here goes:

Maybe, just maybe, this is what I am trying to do. The experiences I had, the lives I took, the warriors I fought with ... forever changed me. But after I got back to the States and for all (he wormed?) nothing has really changed, except me. Unlike WW2 ... but very much like WWI, Korea, Iraq, Afghanistan ... the people at home go on like nothing has happened. In WW2 everyone was affected—the entire world was at war, and everyone knew it.

In Viet Nam (and the others) everyday lives back home continued without any interference from the war(s). So, I get back home and I am supposed to fit right back into my daily life as if I had simply taken a vacation and then returned. You know? Unpack your suitcase, wash your clothes, clean up and go back to work.

The tune says, "The child I was is dead and gone and no one out there realizes it." Normal sounds like backfires from cars, door slams or a child's cries and smells like barbecues or garbage are all routine, normal everyday sights and sounds for the rest of the world but for me backfires are mortars, barbecues are flame tanks, garbage is someone is nearby, door slams are rattle shots, and a child crying is a dead mother.

In war, the ordinary, everyday is not a normal every day. Each day brings threats, problems, potential harm and death. No one in the "real world" knows enough to care because their lives have not been disrupted by the breadth and depth of conflict each and

every minute of each and every day,

When I react to some of these sights and sounds others think I may be nuts. Drop to the ground when an M-80 firecracker goes off on the 4th of July in the middle of your neighborhood and you begin to understand.

And so, the expectations of me (or someone like me) are that you will be just like you were before you left. And so, you try to be just like you were when you left—it just cannot happen. Try as one might, "the child in me is dead and gone."

The struggle exists between who I am now and who everyone around me thinks I am. I want to be that same person but no matter how hard I try I just cannot make it work. For example, many of the folks that I know and grew up with (and married?) cannot figure out why I am not the happy person I used to be. Remarks like, "Why do you always feel sad" or "You just celebrated your birthday but you don't seem happy" are reflections of who the people around you think of you—the person before the experience. I want to be that person, I just cannot.

This may seem trite and/or petty but these little things bombard you all the time. Every day I use all my ability to forget the past in hopes I can pick up where I left off before I went to Viet Nam. This seems to work until the next sight, sound, smell appears. The vague threat that something is about to go wrong—it usually doesn't but that's not the point. That is exactly who I am now—not who I want to be or who everyone else thinks I am. It is who I am. However, to the outside world I am just another crazy Viet Nam veteran.

And they say, often time to my face, "Why can't you just get over that?" It is not a bump or bruise or splashed water or getting cutoff on a freeway. It all becomes an external threat based on my time in the bush.

However, the outside world says get over it and much as I try, I cannot. Once again, trying to live up to the old expectations and failing to do so. Then everyone wonders why I am depressed. And by trying to explain it to someone who thinks you can just get over it is futile—two very different frames of reference on two very different tracks that simply pass by each other. They do not collide; they just pass by. And still, I try to fit in. And the more I try, the more bizarre the feeling as if there is their world and my world, like we live in two different dimensions.

This becomes, to some extent, maybe in the totality why there is nothing that can ultimately be done. Some things may make it easier to live in this dimension, some things may relieve the pain, but nothing can fix it. Nothing can put it right. See, the outside world just doesn't get it and I can't change it—that is, I am the sum total of my experiences and I can't change the sum. I can relate easier with my fellow warriors, but they can't change it either. They understand immediately but they are trapped in the same dimension I am—and they can't change it either.

Ultimately, I am who I am and the best I can do is accept who I am, be patient with the outsider that doesn't get it and stops trying, love those few who really can understand but are trapped just like me, and move forward. ■

Photos from Vietnam



Rick Walters writes: Hue City 3rd platoon Feb 15th, 1968 this is from Sgt Spaulding, 1967- 1969: I think that is Sgt Garten and my Ontos. I say this because the left inside gun had been blown up on the first night of Tet. I don't remember the right one being removed. Maybe it was for balance. We went to Hue on the LST's. Garten, Swanger and me plus his OC on the same boat. I don't remember Don's OC. They delivered 2 more guns by helicopter sometime later. Sgt Spaulding is supposed to have saved a bridge in Hue on 1/31/68 from numerous ground attacks. This Ontos lost the left bank of 106's from B-40's, Charlie 1/5 had to stay back due to the back blast of the 106's. I don't recognize anyone in the photo and don't know anything about the brown uniforms. I was the driver on A-35 which worked with his Ontos A-34 in 1969.

As an aside: Gustav Hasford wrote about the Ontos & Spaulding in the Sea Tiger newspaper.

Photo about Vietnam



The Harold Washington Library Center in Chicago displays the dog tags of 58,307 US service men killed during the Vietnam War.

Photos from Korea



1950 – Walmido Island (near Inchon), South Korea – North Korean Prisoners and USMC tank



Marilyn Monroe at several USO Shows 1954 in Korea



2023 Colorado Springs
Reunion Schedule

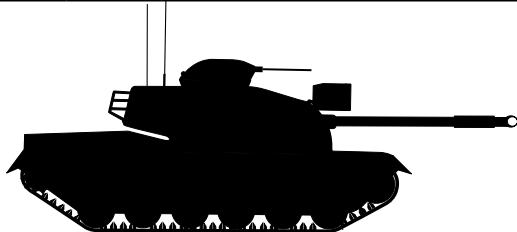
Wednesday, September 13 – Monday, September 18

Wednesday (Sept. 13)	0900 – 2330	Arrival Day – Register and pickup Welcome Packet outside The Slopchute hospitality room (in the Atrium). Sign up for VTA History Interviews; Writing Workshops; Podcasts
	0900 – 2330	The Slopchute is Open Lunch & Dinner on your own
Thursday (Sept. 14)	0600 – 0815	Complimentary breakfast buffet (in the Atrium)
	0830 – 1200	Ladies Coffee (in the Slopchute)
	0900 – 1200	Reunion kick-off and VTA Business Meeting (in the Atrium) <i>Enter to win a FREE hotel room for reunion!</i> <i>Must submit ticket before 0900 in the meeting room and be present for the drawing to win.</i>
	1200 – 1630	Free Time and lunch on your own
	1100 – 1630	The Slopchute Open
	1700 – 1800	Italian Buffet Dinner Cocktails–Cash bar (in the Atrium)
	1800 – 2000	Live Auction! (in the Atrium)
	2000 – 2300	Slopchute Open
Friday (Sept. 15)	Wear your reunion T-shirt today!!!	
	0600 – 0815	Complimentary breakfast buffet (In the Atrium)
	0915 – 0930	Load buses for the WW-2 Museum of Flight (Load on the west – mountains side of the hotel)
	1000 – 1200	Tour – 2 hour museum tour
	1215	Load buses for Airplane Restaurant
	1230	Lunch – VTA sponsored western buffet
	1400	Load buses for return to hotel
	1430	Arrive at hotel
	1500 – 2300	The Slopchute Open Dinner on your own

(See reverse side)

2023 Colorado Springs
Reunion Schedule

Saturday (Sept. 16)	0600 – 0715	Complimentary breakfast buffet (in the Atrium)
	745 – 0800	Load buses for the Pikes Peak Cog Railway
	0800	Buses Depart
	0920	Cog Railway Depart to top of Pikes Peak
	1300	Load Buses for Old Colorado City and lunch
	1300–1500	Lunch on your own and tour Old Colorado City
	1530	Load buses for return to hotel
	1600	Arrive at Hotel
	1600 – 2300	The Slopchute Open Dinner on your own
Sunday (Sept. 17)	0600 – 0815	Complimentary breakfast buffet (in the Atrium) Open Day–All Day Interview Schedule Posted in Slopchute Lunch on your own
	1000 – 1530	The Slopchute Open
	1600 – 2030	FAREWELL BANQUET (The Slopchute Room) NOTE: Dress for this function is a shirt with a collar, dress slacks, shoes and socks. Coat & tie optional. Wearing of military ribbons or medals on a jacket is highly encouraged.
	1600 – 1645	Cocktails – Cash Bar
	1700 – 1715	Presentation of Colors and remarks
	1715 – 1800	Dinner Served
	1800 – 1805	05 minutes – Head Call
	1805 – 2030	30 minutes – Guest Speaker 45 minutes – Fallen Heroes 05 minutes – 2024/25 Reunion
	2030 – 2400	The Slopchute Open – Last Call.
Monday (Sept. 18)		Departure Day



OFFICIAL REGISTRATION FORM
2023 Colorado Springs Reunion
Embassy Suites

Want to save \$30?
Mail your registration before July 30
to avoid the Late Fee

Please Print All

Member's Name: _____

Guest's Name (s): _____
and relationship _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Cell Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Vietnam Tank or AT Bn: _____ Co: _____ Years in-country: _____ to _____
(Circle "Tank" or "AT" above)

Are you a first time attendee? YES _____ NO _____ MOS _____

Would you like to participate in our personal interview program? YES _____ NO _____

Your USMC VTA membership dues must be **current** in order to attend the reunion. If your membership is delinquent please mail your dues with this registration (or the dues will be collected at the sign-in desk). No partial payments of the registration fee are accepted. Fee covers planned food functions (banquet), bus transportation & lunch, meeting facilities, hospitality room, beer & sodas and other expenses associated with the cost of hosting the reunion. Registration fee does not include your sleeping room, taxes or air fare.

Reunion Refund Policy: If you find that you cannot attend the reunion after you have pre-paid your reunion fees, the USMC VTA will refund your total reunion fees if you notify us prior to July 30, 2023. If you notify us of your cancellation after that date, we are sorry but we cannot make any refund offer.

Pre-July 30 Form

NAME(S) as you want them to appear on your reunion name tag

Men's T-Shirt Sizes S – XL = \$15 each
(\$5.00 extra for XXL & XXXL)

SHIRT SIZE

SHIRT SIZE

SHIRT SIZE

SHIRT SIZE

TOTAL REUNION FEES

My Registration Fee: \$170 = \$
(After July 30th the late registration fee is \$200 each)

My T-Shirt..... \$15/\$20 = \$

Number of guests X \$170 = \$
(Early registration fee for each guest is \$170.00 and
late registration is \$200 for each guest)

Guest T-shirt X \$15/\$20 = \$

Guest T-shirt X \$15/\$20 = \$

Cog Railway X \$60 = \$

SUB TOTAL = \$

Optional: Would you like to donate a few dollars
to help with expenses? \$

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$

You must make your own hotel room reservations by August 30th to get the reunion room rate! Call the hotel directly: **719-599-9100** and be sure to mention “**USMC Vietnam Tankers Reunion**” (**Code XVT**) for the special room rate of \$149.00 per night. The special room rate is good for three days prior and three days after the reunion dates as well. Please note the regular hotel room rate is \$217 per night.

CAUTION: Do not confuse the above hotel booking deadline date with
the early registration offer which has an July 30th deadline.

YOUR HOTEL ROOM RESERVATIONS MUST BE BOOKED BY JULY 30, 2023

HOW YOU CAN SAVE \$30.00

Submit this form along with your payment by July 30th to purchase a reunion t-shirt and save \$30 off of the Reunion Registration Fee of \$200.

Send check or money order made out to: **USMC VTA** and the completed registration form to:

USMC VTA
c/o Ron Knight
6665 Burnt Hickory Drive
Hoschton, GA 30548-8280



Red Beach

(near Da Nang) March 8, 1965



SEND IN THE MARINES! On March 8, 1965, some 4,000 yards offshore in the harbor, U.S. Marines prepared to come ashore from ships of Amphibious Task Force 76.

Pictured: Marines debarking from the USS Vancouver.



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

USMC Vietnam Tankers Association

16605 Forest Green Terrace, Elbert, CO 80106-8937

Please note: If the last two digits of "EXPIRES" on your address label is "22" or lower, then your 2023 membership dues are payable now. If you do not pay soon, this may be your last issue.

**Make your check out to: USMC VTA for \$30* and mail to:
USMC VTA c/o Bruce Van Apeldoorn, 99 Shoreline Drive, New Bern, NC 28562-9550**

***Over & Above donations are always gratefully appreciated.**

**Friendship
is when
people know
all about you
but like you
anyway.**

-Anonymous