



Volume 1:5

Spring 1994

# The Khe Sanh Veteran

## KHE SANH WOMEN'S NETWORK

Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to welcome each and every one of you to the Khe Sanh Veterans Women's Network. This network is for the wives, sweethearts, sisters and mothers of the men who survived the awesome experience that has come to be known simply as "Khe Sanh."

When my husband Gary and I went to Washington in July, I was anticipating seeing friends I had met in San Diego at the Third Marine Division Reunion and four days of male bonding (talking, drinking, laughing and crying.) I came away from that experience with a deeper understanding of both my husband and our relationship, and the meaning of Khe Sanh as it applies to his life. Through his eyes and the eyes of several "new friends," I learned a great deal about friendship and commitment, war and survival. I met several wonderful women who, through their courage, intelligence and sensitivity, have supported their loved ones through thick and thin.

You never know what life has in store for you. When I was asked to say a few words at the banquet in Washington, I informed those present that I had not served in the military and that I was not speaking for the wives of the Khe Sanh vets. Please know that I do not consider myself an expert in counseling or an expert on

continued on page 6



Nelson Jones and Steve Riddle, Scout/snipers. S-2 1/26, at Khe Sanh in 1968.

### In this issue...

|                                                              | Page |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| A message from your editor .....                             | 2    |
| <b>INCOMING</b> .....                                        | 7    |
| <b>SHORT ROUNDS</b> .....                                    | 23   |
| <b>HEALTH ISSUES</b> .....                                   | 33   |
| <b>MEMOIRS</b> .....                                         | 34   |
| ...and a sprinkling of your poetry throughout the newsletter |      |

## RAY'S WORLD

Ray Stubbe

H&S 1/26

Dear Ernie,

I'll try to call you this coming weekend; it's so significant for me to hear your voice and share some of our feelings and thoughts. I get far more out of our conversations than I do in all the various therapy sessions at the VA! You are a very good friend.

Since I last wrote a batch of things for

continued on page 2



## A Message from the Editor

## AU REVOIR

Well, dear hearts, it's time to say goodbye. This will be my last issue as your editor. It is time for me to move on to other exciting projects. Apparently, our magazine is not to everyone's liking. Some of our members are offended by the content and style (or lack thereof) of our magazine. There is a debate going on as to what the editorial content and direction of our magazine should be. I encourage you to voice your opinion. Until a new editor is named, please send your submissions to Ray Stubbe. Doing the magazine this past year and a half has been very rewarding for me artistically, but it was also very time-consuming and emotionally draining. I took risks with our magazine. I make no apologies for the content or style. As for my editorial philosophy, I followed the advice of W.H. Murray.

From the Scottish Himalayan Expedition:

*"Until one is committed  
there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back,  
always ineffectiveness.  
Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation),  
there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills  
countless ideas*

*and splendid plans:*

*that the moment one definitely commits oneself,  
then Providence moves too.*

*All sorts of things occur to help one  
that would never otherwise have occurred.*

*A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in  
one's favour all manner  
of unforeseen incidents and meetings  
and material assistance,  
which no man could have dreamt  
would have come his way.*

*I have learned a deep respect  
for one of Goethe's couplets:*

*'Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it.  
Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.'*

Khe Sanh was a special place. Its magic lives through each and every one of you.

Semper Fi,

Ernie Spencer  
Editor

continued from page 1

## RAY'S WORLD

possible inclusion in our next magazine, among which was a listing of newly-discovered KIAs, I've come across another batch of KIAs that should be added. I've combined these new ones with the ones I've already sent you and attach them to this letter. They should be included.

The other items that perhaps should be included is a listing of our Life Members. Several of them have contacted either Bill Maves or myself saying they have received no indication they are life members—no card, etc. Perhaps in the future we might have a card for them but in the meantime, perhaps a listing of them would suffice—and more importantly, perhaps encourage others to become Life Members also, and thereby increase our treasury.

Also attached are copies of a Meritorious Unit Commendation to B/1/26 for the March 30th operation, the Meritorious Unit Commendation for 1/13 and a copy of the message from Westmoreland.



|                                |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| ANSELMO, SP4 Walter Harold     | 45E 53     |
| 06 MAR 68 APS-15               |            |
| BARNES, EOCS Donald Joseph     | 21E 60     |
| 06 JUN 67 NMCB-10              |            |
| BERGENSTEIN, CPL Dennis Paul   | 19E 21     |
| 03 MAY 67 E/2/3                |            |
| BRIGGS, SFC Ernest Frank       | 33E 41 MIA |
| 05 JAN 68 411-TR               |            |
| BURGARD, PFC Paul Edward       | 60W 26     |
| 06 JUN 68                      |            |
| EBRIGHT, CPL William Raymond O | 59W 1      |
| 06 JUN 68                      |            |
| FLORES, LCPL Felix Frank       | 59W 1      |
| 06 JUN 68                      |            |
| HAMILTON, CWO Dennis Clark     | 33E 49 MIA |
| 05 JAN 68 411-TR               |            |



|                               |         |            |
|-------------------------------|---------|------------|
| HANNINGS, LCPL William Elwood |         |            |
| 06 JUN 68                     | 58W 3   |            |
| HUBBARD, BUL3 Charles Austin  |         |            |
| 06 JUN 67                     | NMCB-4  | 21E 62     |
| MAHONEY, SP5 Michael Thomas   |         |            |
| 29 JAN 68                     | FOB-3   | 35E 61     |
| PALACIOS, LCPL Luis Fernando  |         |            |
| 06 JUN 68                     |         | 59W 11     |
| PORTER, LCPL Lawrence Eugene  |         |            |
| 06 JUN 68                     |         | 59W 12     |
| SANCHEZ, PFC Jose Ramon       |         |            |
| 06 JUN 68                     |         | 59W 13     |
| SATTER, PFC Donald Stephen    |         |            |
| 06 JUN 68                     |         | 59W 13     |
| SCHULTZ, WO1 Sheldon D        |         |            |
| 05 JAN 68                     | 411-TR  | 33E 53 MIA |
| STOOPS, PFC Jonathan Lynn     |         |            |
| 06 JUN 68                     |         | 59W 16     |
| STOVALL, LCPL Wilbur          |         |            |
| 09 MAR 68                     | HQ/1/13 | 44E 1      |
| WILLIAMSON, SFC James D       |         |            |
| 05 JAN 68                     | 411-TR  | 33E 54 MIA |
| WILSON, PFC Eugene            |         |            |
| 06 JUN 68                     |         | 59W 18     |

(NOTE: The 06 JUN 68 KIAs were from a CH-46 Helicopter that crashed and burned at XD 877334).



## LISTING OF LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

KHE SANH VETERANS INC. (As of 01 March, 1994)

|                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Harry L ALDERMAN        | GEN Raymond DAVIS    |
| Bryson L ALLEN          | Dr Harvey DEMAAGD    |
| Philip L AVVAMPATO      | Richard E DONAGHY    |
| John J BALANCO          | Ken DOSS             |
| Daniel L BALDWIN        | Rev Walt L DRISCOLL  |
| William J BARTKOSKI     | Pierce DURHAM        |
| David J BLAND           | Thomas EICHLER       |
| Alex "Jeff" BODENWEISER | Jim EPPS             |
| Earle G BREEDING        | J Thomas ESSLINGER   |
| Kenneth O BREWER        | Allen FERG           |
| David F BROMBAUGH       | Ronald L GATEWOOD    |
| Richard CLAIRE          | Bruce A GREENE       |
| Larry CLARK             | William GRIFFITH     |
| W T COOK                | BGEN Harry T HAGAMAN |
| Bill CORREIA            | Robert A HALL        |
| Robert M CRABB          | Randy D HARDY        |
| Pat CURTIS              | Jerome HESS          |
| William H DABNEY        | Victor HOFFMAN       |

|                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Jack H HOWE        | Ronald PARSONS      |
| Harry Allen HUNT   | 1SGT Dick PELOQUIN  |
| James N KAYLOR     | George PETERSON     |
| Frank J KENNEDY    | John PETTIT         |
| Duane KEPLER       | Gerald Wayne POST   |
| Lee KLEIN          | Donald M RAIT JR    |
| John King KNOPE    | Louis RANN          |
| Joseph J KUNDRAT   | Charles D RUDD      |
| Donald LACY        | Harve SAAL          |
| Jim LEA            | John L SCHWANER     |
| James A LAHR       | Keith SEIBOLD       |
| Jim P LAVERTY      | Don E SHANLEY       |
| Jim LEA            | Victor B SNIDER     |
| David J LEIGHTON   | Richard L SOTO      |
| G L (Red) LOGAN    | David R SPRY        |
| COL David E LOWNDS | Steven R STEIGH III |
| Albert R LUMPKIN   | Fr Thomas STOTT     |
| John J MACIAS      | Rev Ray W STUBBE    |
| William MAVES      | Mark SWEARENGEN     |
| Larry McCARTNEY    | Ralph TAKEMIRE      |
| Frederick McEWAN   | Jerome E THOMAS     |
| Lewis S MESSER     | Charles "M" THOMSON |
| Lawrence MEYER     | Charles THORNTON    |
| W Scott MILLER     | David F TOMAZIC     |
| Kelley NELSON      | Bob TURNER          |
| Greg E NITKOWSKI   | James E UPDIKE      |
| Michael O'HARA     | Leonard VERNARDO    |
| Joseph OLIVER      | Art WALBROEHL       |
| Michael J PADULA   | Kent WONDERS        |

NOTE: LIFE MEMBERSHIPS ARE OFFERED AT \$150.00

☆☆☆

ZNY HEEE  
P 100912Z APR 68  
FM TWENTY SIXTH MARINES  
TO FIRST BN TWENTY SIXTH MARINES  
BF  
UNCLAS E F T O  
A. CG THIRD MAR DIV MSG 010703Z APR 68  
CONGRATULATORY MSG

1. REF A PASSED FOR MSG FM GEN WESTMORELAND:  
QUOTE, OFFICERS AND MEN CO B/1/26 USMC  
DESERVE HIGHEST PRAISE FOR AGGRESSIVE PATROL  
ACTION NORTH OF KHE SANH ON 30 MARCH.  
HEAVY CASUALTIES INFLICTED ON BUNKERS AND  
ENTRENCHED ENEMY FORCE INDICATED TYPICAL  
MARINE ESPRIT DE CORPS AND PROFESSIONALISM.  
WELL DONE, END QUOTE.
2. I ADD MY CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ABOVE  
WELL EARNED COMMENDATORY REMARKS. COL  
LOWNDS SENDS.

BT

☆☆☆



From: Commanding Officer  
 To: Commanding General, 3rd Marine Division (Rein), FMF  
 Via: Commanding Officer, 26th Marines  
 Subj: Meritorious Unit Commendation, recommendation for; case of Company B, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines  
 Ref: (a) DivO P1650.1C  
 (b) 26th Marines Msg 100912Z Apr 68  
 Encl: (1) Copy of Congratulatory Msg from General Westmoreland

1. Section VI of reference (a) sets forth provisions for unit awards. *Company B, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines* is recommended for the Meritorious Unit Commendation for its action in a company size assault upon an estimated North Vietnamese battalion on 30 March 1968.

2. The action of *Company B* is described as follows:

a. On 30 March 1968, *Company B, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines* proceeded from the perimeter of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Under the cover of morning fog, the company moved to the assault position very near to the fortified position of an estimated North Vietnamese Battalion. Immediately upon commencing the assault, the company was brought under extremely heavy mortar, RPG, automatic weapons and small arms fire from the heavily defended and mutually supporting fortified positions. Almost immediately, the company command group was decimated by the enemy fire. The wounded company commander unhesitatingly reorganized the remaining few members of the command group and continued to press the attack. While undergoing withering enemy fire, the company brought small arms and supporting arms fire to bear upon the enemy position while continuing the attack by fire and maneuver. Numerous enemy bunkers were destroyed during the fierce attack mounted by *Company B*. *Company B* rapidly penetrated the fortified positions, killing 115 North Vietnamese soldiers and routing many others, many of whom were wounded, while sustaining only moderate casualties within its own ranks. *Company B* destroyed and captured numerous enemy weapons and items of equipment. During the mopping-up phase, *Company B* recovered the body of one Marine who had been listed as missing in action from a previous assault conducted in the same area by a platoon from *Company B*.

3. A very significant point is that *Company B* consisted principally of new men who had only recently joined the unit and had no previous experience in company size offensive tactics. This fact notwithstanding, the members of the company performed individually and collectively in a manner normally expected only of seasoned troops. This brilliant feat is a tribute to the

commander and troops alike and is deserving of special recognition.

4. Enclosure (1) was passed from General Westmoreland and is submitted for consideration.

F. J. MCEWAN

★ ★ ★

**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
 WASHINGTON D.C. 20380**

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in presenting the MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION to FIRST BATTALION, THIRTEENTH MARINES for service as set forth in the following:

★ CITATION ★

For meritorious service while providing close, continuous, direct and reinforcing fire support to Marine, Army, Navy and Republic of Vietnam forces in connection with operations against the Communist aggressor enemy in the Republic of Vietnam from 1 May to 31 August, 1968. Throughout this period, while First Battalion, Thirteenth Marines, displaced in its entirety on four separate occasions, with subordinate firing batteries displacing 22 times, accurate and responsive fire was delivered while all units were critically short of combat-essential equipment that had been destroyed by enemy fire during the siege of Khe Sanh. On numerous occasions, firing units were lifted by helicopter into precarious fire bases deep in enemy-controlled territory with little advanced notice and only minimum opportunity for reconnaissance; however, all deployments were completed successfully and were directly instrumental in the accomplishment of the operational mission. During this period, timely and accurate artillery fire was provided to Marine units being directly supported, to U.S. Army Special Forces and Regular Army units participating in joint operations, to U.S. Navy Advisors at remote locations which could be reached only by long-range fires and to Republic of Vietnam Army and Popular Force units operating within the area of operations. This varied and uncommon support of units with divergent requirements, which were dispersed over wide areas, necessitated exceptional flexibility of weaponry, extreme exploitation of communications facilities, rapid reaction to fire requests and superior coordination of delivery means. While headquartered at Cao Doi Peninsula, Phu Loc, the First Battalion was responsible for the fire support of 41 miles of National Route #1 from Hai Van Pass to Phu Bai. In rendering complete coverage of this area, which included responsibility for the support of vital daily resupply convoys between Danang and Phu Bai, 12 Combined Action Platoons, several Special Forces Forward Operating Base units and numerous reconnaissance inserts, as well as directly supported Marine forces, it was necessary to fragment firing units with only organic command and control resources to constitute the increased requirements of this dispersed deployment. By their effective teamwork and aggressive fighting spirit, the officers and men of the First



Battalion achieved an illustrious record of courage and skill while delivering 64,653 rounds during 12,162 support missions against the enemy. The ability of the First Battalion, Thirteenth Marines, to react rapidly to the hazardous and constantly changing requirements of combat, to maintain a peak of combat efficiency while deprived of essential equipment and provide close, continuous artillery fire while in a repeatedly fluid tactical situation was without parallel and transcended those accomplishments normally displayed by a unit performing similar service. This outstanding record not only achieved significant results, but also exemplified those qualities of professional skill, uncommon initiative, unfaltering devotion to duty and inspiring courage, which were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

All personnel attached to and serving with the First Battalion, Thirteenth Marines, consisting of the following units, during the period 1 May to 31 August 1968 or any part thereof, are hereby authorized to wear the MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION Ribbon.

Headquarters Battery, Mortar Battery, Battery A, Battery C

For the Secretary of the Navy,

L. F. CHAPMAN

Commandant of the Marine Corps

## WE WENT INSTEAD

*Contentment would have kept us on the farm.  
We could not place Khe Sanh on any map  
and war was not a glory that we sought.  
But when the politicians called for men,  
well - Jack had said to put our country first,  
so Lyndon's call and Richard's call were filled.*

*We had no money on the farm  
and that left Oxford and State "U" both out of reach.  
And Canada? We'd too much pride to run.*

*It didn't matter to the Draft at all.  
When someone ducked, another took his place.  
The quotas all were filled by someone's sons.*

*We didn't have Dan's pull to join the Guard,  
nor Bill's connections with R.O.T.C.,  
so we were called to take their empty place.*

*Now Dan and Bill are powers in the land - and famous men.  
We are remembered too - our names are on a Wall -  
where famous men may pass.*

Robert A Hall  
HQ 26th Marines

## KING OF THE HILL

*NVA and Marines playing king of the mountains  
in the green hills of Khe Sanh.*

*The NVA stake their claim,  
the bully Marines come in and take it away.  
It's just a game, one as kids we played;  
then we used sticks and stones,  
around Khe Sanh it was bullets and bombs.*

*I watched these boy-men day in day out,  
on my dozer pushing dirt;  
they left by helicopter and on foot.  
From the quarry my truck loaded with rock,  
I pass dirty, ragged men, fresh from the bush.  
5, 10, 15 days in the bush,  
no cot, no pillow for their body or head.  
24 hours a day they hump in them hills,  
12 hours a day I sweat working on that strip!*

*With Recon I sit,  
"What's it like in the shit?"  
Stories they tell - I soak them up like a sponge!  
Jan, Feb, March 1968 I found out,  
I was in the middle of a lot of shit!  
Who wants to be a Marine?  
Hell no, not me!  
I'm a fighting Seabee fixing the strip.*

*You boy-men go ahead and hump those hills,  
I'll set on my dozer or drive my truck!  
When Charlie shoots at me I'll dig my own hole  
in that red clay.  
Westmoreland laid claim to this patch of red ground,  
he put us here and said, "Don't back down!"  
Now you and I are king of this hill.*

*Some little yellow guy out there is challenging us for the crown.  
He's got guns and bullets made in Russia,  
mortars and rockets from friends in Red China  
and a tank or two thrown in just for fun!  
As I sat peeking out from underground,  
I remembered another piece of ground,  
it was in Korea.  
A place called Pork Chop Hill!  
Marines held that worthless piece of ground;  
history repeated itself again at Khe Sanh!*

Lewis S Messer  
CMBU 301



## KHE SANH WOMEN'S NETWORK

women's issues. You can imagine how shocked I was when our Vice President, Mike O'Hara, called me and asked if I would head up the Women's Network! He promised that space would be provided in the newsletter from now on for us to use as we see fit. In the last issue, Mike issued an open invitation for the ladies to contact either of us for more information on the network. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Ken Penn, Mike O'Hara, Ray Stubbe and Earle Breeding for being sensitive to the needs of the women and for recognizing that we are an important element within this organization.

Many of us have been supporting our men for many years. Now it is time for us to support each other. This Women's Network can serve as a starting point for us to share our concerns, our pain and our joy. It can be a forum for self-expression or a resource for sharing information. Most of all, it is a means by which we can reach out to each other (a theme we've suggested for the 1995 reunion!)

I need to hear from you. Let me know what your needs are and your suggestions for the women/children activities for the next reunion. Let's have some input on how this network should function. I'm open to all suggestions and ideas. Please remember our collective strength will enable us to be strong for those who need us most—the Khe Sanh vets!

Janet Parker  
23 North Navajo Drive  
Waretown,  
N.J. 08758.

...

*The following is the text of a speech presented at the banquet of the Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion, July 3rd, 1993, Washington, D.C.:*

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests and Khe Sanh Veterans. Less than an hour ago I found out I'd be replacing your guest speaker, Mr Bresser. I beg your indulgence for a few brief moments; I won't take much of your time.

It's an honor for me to stand before so many heroes. It's been said that there are no American heroes anymore, no real heroes for our children to look up to. Ladies and gentlemen, I am most humbled to be standing before an entire room full of American heroes and I applaud all of you, and all the Khe Sanh veterans who could not be with us tonight.

I am not in the military. I have not served. I am the wife of a Khe Sanh veteran. My husband, Gary, was in

the 3rd Shore Party Battalion. He spent some time in a faraway place called Hill 881S, where he was wounded. In the eleven years of our marriage, I have come to know what it means to be the wife of a Marine, the wife of a Khe Sanh veteran.

Each and every one of you is special. You lived through a special time and place. It was a difficult time for you, and for this nation, and I daresay your lives have been forever changed by your common experience. Each of you is at a different point along the long, difficult road of healing. I was not there. I will not stand before you and tell you that I understand your experience. Try as hard as I might, I could read and study for the rest of my life the historical accounts and documents surrounding the siege of Khe Sanh, but I will never fully comprehend your experience or your sacrifice.

I've spent the last 16 years in elementary education. As a teacher, it's part of my nature to look for important lessons of life. As I look over the faces in this room, I see there are many important lessons to be learned. You have a great opportunity here. This is our first reunion by ourselves as Khe Sanh veterans, separate from the 3rd Marine Division. I understand there was discussion in today's General Meeting of holding this gathering every other year. I don't pretend to represent the wives of all the Khe Sanh vets here. I would never be that presumptuous. After attending the Women's Meeting this morning and listening to their experiences as wives of Khe Sanh veterans, the women who were present felt it is important that we meet every year. I'll give you a quick example of why I agree.

Last night I met a gentleman who is on the road to healing. His story touched my husband and I so deeply that I don't want to wait two years to see him again, or see so many of the women here tonight. For many of the veterans and their wives, two years is too long. We simply ask that you consider keeping this an annual event. I know there are many economic and logistic issues involved in this and I don't mean to over-simplify a complex issue. Many of the wives and sweethearts voiced their concerns regarding the importance of our sharing and supporting each other. Yes, this reunion is important for you as veterans because it is a vital part of the healing process. We support that. Please understand that it is important for our healing as wives of Khe Sanh veterans as well.

In closing, I'd like to thank you for being who you are and thank you for your sacrifice and your service to our country. May God bless you."

Janet M Parker



## COMMENCE FIRING

Gen. Carl E Mundy Jr  
Commandant USMC  
HQMC  
Washington DC 20380

Dear Sir,

I am a member of the Khe Sanh Veterans. I am enclosing a copy of two letters which appear in the current winter 1993 issue of *The Khe Sanh Veteran* magazine. The letter from Mrs J Thomas Esslinger to Col. John B Sollis, Commander of Marine Barracks, I applaud. The unapologetic, insensitive, self-serving, long-winded and rambling response from Col. Sollis distresses me greatly!

Col. Sollis takes great liberty in his ramblings to convince Mrs Esslinger of the seemingly well-established tradition and procedure of Marine Barracks ceremonies. I ask you, sir, is Col. Sollis correct or is he the insensitive, self-serving ass he comes out as being?

My basic knowledge of public relations and communications makes it difficult to find an example or reason for such an insensitive and callous response to a letter written with such open sincerity and concern, especially when it comes from a person holding such a public relations sensitive and critical position as Col. Sollis does.

I feel a simple one-liner reflecting empathy and sensitivity would have fulfilled the distressed and concerned Mrs Esslinger. Instead, she gets an offensive, rambling, self-serving and aggressive *lecture* by Col. Sollis and the best example of poor judgment, poor taste and overkill!!

The Marine Corps, we its Vets and all else are in the dawn of the 21st century. Our challenges are great. I refuse to imagine that the poor judgment, insensitivity and LECTURING reflected by Col. Sollis's response to Mrs Esslinger is a model for the kind of leadership needed for facing the new century. We must do better.

Besides expressing my distress, there is little else I can do but mail a copy of this letter to Mrs Esslinger and let her know that she does not stand alone. I also hope *The Khe Sanh Veteran* will carry it in its next issue as a response to Col. Sollis.

I must tell you that I have held, like many others, supervisory positions and assure you that had anyone under my supervision ever displayed such callous insensitivity in dealing with the public as Col. Sollis did in dealing with Mrs Esslinger, their days on the job would be less than few.

The bullet used by Col. Sollis to shoot himself in the foot is ill-destined and divisive. It is something the Marine Corps Family must never afford.

Semper Fi.

Senico Varela  
13 N. Del Norte  
Roswell, NM 88201.

Ernie:

Keep up the good work! I have mailed in my membership—would have done it sooner but confusion between me and my wife set in. I guess the letter speaks for itself—you can print it if you want. I will attend the '95 convention. Hope to meet you sometime.

## SHOT-OVER, SHOT-OUT

February 10, 1994

General Carl E Mundy Jr.,  
Commandant of the Marine Corps  
Headquarters,  
United States Marine Corps  
Washington, DC 20280-0001.

Dear General Mundy,

As a founding member of the Board of Directors of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, I was saddened that my attendance at the U.S. Army War College final phase precluded my attendance at the Khe Sanh Veterans 25th Anniversary Reunion in Washington DC this past July. Having spent eleven of my eighteen months in Vietnam at Khe Sanh with the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, you can imagine my disappointment. I was there from the close of the hill fights in May 1967 until our departure on April 17, 1968. One of my fondest memories involves my time as a liaison to your old unit, the 3rd Battalion upon their return in December of 1967. Then Major Matt Caufield turned it into a very positive learning experience for me about Marine Corps leadership.

Unfortunately, the attached letters indicate to me that we have somehow lost the way from the days of yore. Mrs Esslinger's comments should raise some serious concerns. Regardless of the merits of the issues, Colonel Sollis's response indicates to me that we have somehow failed our senior officers by not providing them with sufficient training and public relations guidance. I am sure that my good friend, Colonel John Shotwell, would not approve of the elitist reference to "noblesse oblige" combined with the lack of even a qualified apology. I am personally offended by the excuse that saying a few words of welcome to veterans who went through at least 77 straight days of hell for our Corps would delay the proceedings for several hours. That is a pretty condescending remark in my book and is not worthy of a spokesman for our Corps.

As a fellow veteran of Desert Storm, I can say with  
continued on page 8



continued from page 7

certainty that Colonel Sollis has regrettably missed the mark, and in so doing has not only insulted Mrs Esslinger but all of us who served in the V ring of the Vietnam War. I realize that he was acting with the best of intentions and meant no harm, but his remarks indicate that there is perhaps an unhealthy attitude in our Corps in regard to our traditions. As you know, this is no time for that sort of thinking. It is not in the best interests of our beloved Corps to alienate our most fervent supporters in the community.

Thank you for your participation at the Reunion. As I indicated, I am sorry I missed it. I hope my remarks are taken to heart.

Semper Fi

Col. John M Kaheny

c.c. Editor, *The Khe Sanh Veteran* newsletter

ED: No response yet from the Commandant.

## "T-BONE"

Brother Ernie,

I have been meaning to send these photos to you for not more than six months and as usual, it's procrastination...! I don't know if you and your daughter had some photos of you both at the plaque and the ginkgo tree but if not—now you have some. If you already have some—here are some more!

I'm starting 1994 with a little different twist—usually I raise my expectations to an unrealistic level, you know—"this year I'm gonna..." Well not this year. What happens, happens. I was one sick puppy over the holidays; flu man! But now I'm doing better, so I figure it must get better as we move into the new year. I think this is the year of The Dog as Eastern beliefs go, so I'm happy for a New Year.

While I have no reason to complain (living in Wisconsin), the weather has been cold this week! (-15 to -25 below zero). I will be happy if it warms up. Hope you are well and things are OK for you. I'm thinking I might come down to the reunion in Kentucky this year on "my Hog." Make a nice relaxing road trip down to the Kentucky region. After Washington DC, I thought I'd had enough for a while, but here I am already planning next year. It's just not seeing you crazy fuckers that makes me want to go again and again. You guys are the best!

I saw the National Geographic video and it was great. A lot of folks in my family watched it and I think it taught them about the camaraderie all of us feel at the reunions.

Trane Company is still the job I show up for each day

but I'm sure sick of the regimen and the predictability of day in and day out. I'm obviously beyond the love part of my job and just earning a living... Oh well, things could be worse.

I'm writing this in bed and I'm starting to nod out, so will close. Happy New Year Ernie. Stay calm and don't be too much of a radical out there in San Francisco.

Love,  
Your Brother,

Bruce "T-Bone" Jones  
B/1/26

Dear Ernie,

Thanks for returning our tape. I have just received the latest newsletter of *The Khe Sanh Veteran*. Unfortunately, we missed the November 14th airing but we hope to see it on a repeat. Remember, nothing could be worse than sweating it out in your foxhole on Hill 861 at night, while the V.C. and N.V.A. are trying to shoot and shell the hell out of you. If I can be of any help, please let me know.

This newsletter is very good. I will pay my dues soon. Take care and wishes for happiness in the future.

Semper Fi.

John Finn  
D/1/26

Dear Skipper,

Am still "sorting out" the July 4th Weekend Reunion. We felt some very strong emotions during those days.

Enclosed are some photo's for your keeping and sharing.

Semper Fi

Dan McGravey  
D/1/26

P.S. Felt the need to write to Walt Chapman—will keep you advised. My compliments on the drive and spirit to keep this experience alive.

Ernie,

Got your note and picture today of our memorial service at the Wall—thanks. It was quite a weekend!

I sent all our "guys" copies of pictures that I took. I think I sent off notes and pictures to Fish, Chapman, Swede, Gagne, Noonan, Bose, Hollywood, Fulwood and Segura—and Pipes too!

Sounds like you made great progress on the Reunion



video. I'll go through some of my photos in the next few weeks and send you copies of the best ones from Khe Sanh area.

This Fall, my goal will be to get some of the guys in Jersey, New York and Penna together for a mini-cookout. I've gotten letters from Swede & Noonan both expressing interest in not waiting for another 25 years!!

Finally, your question concerning whether we (Sherry & I) had a military wedding—the answer is no. We were married after my discharge from the USMC(R).

Best,

Dan McGravey  
D/1/26

Sept. 3, 1993

Dear Ernie,

I hope this letter finds you well and all is good with you after our Reunion in D.C.

Steve Riddle called me the other day concerning the pictures I took while I was at Khe Sanh. I feel that they belong to the Khe Sanh Vets more than they belong to me. I do have a project that I have been working on since early 1985 and that is a book entitled *West Dickens Ave*. If you remember when you viewed my pictures, that is one of the shots of my fighting hole in Khe Sanh and if I ever complete the project, I had intended to use the shot of that street sign over my fighting hole as a cover shot and tell the story from there of my experiences. This project will be by no means an in-depth study of details of the battle, it will be more along the lines of one man's outlook during the battle.

I do have many shots of the base. I was fortunate enough to have borrowed that excellent Petri 35mm with a reflex lens for a couple of days and a couple of rolls of film. The limited talent the pictures show is from my father wasting a lot of money on film for me when I was a kid. He let me do my thing with a camera and gradually I developed (at his expense) the knack of what to look for through a camera lens.

The reason the project is taking me so long is twofold. I shelved it for years. My time trying to adjust back to the world as a Khe Sanh Vet and my basic trait of laziness. I will gladly send you copies of all my pictures but I would like to know how you intend to use them and if my rights to them are protected if my script ever makes it to a willing publisher. I had several people want them at the Reunion and one that was bent on taking them up to their room and making a video of them. I am, by nature, a very giving person—but I do have to take into consideration my own goals.

If you could let me know if I will be able to publish them at a later date—and that your use of them won't hinder my ambition to use them in any way—I will send them to you.

God Bless.  
Semper Fi

Jack Corbett  
81's 1/26

P.S. Do you know where I can purchase the Khe Sanh shirts they had at the Reunion?

*ED: Jackie, my lad! You are true to your word. As of this time, you have still not sent me your exquisite collection of photos. You own all rights to your pictures unless you **sell** the rights. Anyone who uses them **must** have your prior permission. I might want to use some of your photos in our magazine.*

Dear Ernie,

Well, you were pretty much on the mark when you told me it would be difficult to send these sketches to the newsletter. In the glow of the Reunion, it's easy to promise anything but a different story when you get back home and start putting everything back in its place.

When we talked at the breakfast table in D.C., I realized you were trying to prod us into expressing our feelings, letting go of what happened 25 or so years ago (not unlike the way you prodded us up, down and around those damn hills!) But just writing this note and sending the sketches is a result of the good feelings the Reunion left me. Since D.C., I've gotten letters from five different Delta guys sharing pictures and memories, so I guess they feel it too.

The sketches represent "mind pictures" I took when either a camera wasn't available or appropriate. Something to do when we came back in from the field when all the paperbacks had been read and the sandbags filled. I folded them up and sent them home in letters. These four I found later, while others were lost or just pitched.

Please use whichever ones you think are relevant to our group and send me back the originals when you're through. Drawing is again becoming an outlet for me and there's a few "pictures" from the Reunion I'd like to try. Thanks again to the Reunion Committee for a GREAT time!

Semper Fi

Dan Fisher  
D/1/26





continued from page 9

Dear Beverly,

Ernie Spencer sent me a copy of your letter which mentioned the cover art, which was a piece I rendered from a small photograph. Ernie had a collection of photos which we poured over individually and together. During this time of decision, I had experimented with several photos from which to choose for the cover of *The Khe Sanh Veteran*.

At a certain point in the process of choosing and creating the final rendering, I was taken with the photo of John Bersano. His attitude and demeanor suggested to me the image of an American hero. Confidence, purpose, pride and good humor were implied in his stride.

Starting with the simple photo, I then used color overlays, experimenting with lighting and textures—pulling the focus close in to the man, his weapon and the long-bladed grass. A little magic happened as I was working. I'm very pleased that the technical tools I use were able to assist me toward completion of an image which became personal and universal at the same time.

Ernie was pleased with the results and I gave the image (on computer disk) to Leo Wong for placement in his final layout of the magazine.

I haven't written before now since I haven't been to the "service bureau" (a place where we artists/computer users rent sophisticated equipment to reproduce our images). The last time I visited my service bureau, I printed out a "color comp" which I am mailing with this letter. Hope you enjoy it.

Campbell Buttry

*ED: Campbell did the cover art for the Summer '93 issue.*

Bill,

Enclosed is a check for \$40.00 which will cover my membership fee and someone else's. The Winter 1993 newsletter was great! I can't tell you how much I enjoyed the Reunion in Washington D.C. I was a little disappointed that I didn't run into anyone from "H" 2/26. Several of the guys from my unit were from the east coast but I haven't been able to track them down. Anyway, thanks for a great newsletter. I'm looking forward to the next one.

Semper Fi

Steve Haisley

H/2/26

211 Alexandria Drive

Vernon Hills

IL 60061

Dear Ernie,

Good to hear from you today. Thanks for the picture. Enclosed is a photo of me as requested. It was taken at KSCB in Nov-Dec '67. When you are finished with it I would appreciate its return, if possible.

I'm interested to see the video of the Reunion you're doing. My pictures came out quite well. I'll have to sit down and organize some extras to send to you, Epps and the others. I found the Reunion a great event, one that left me feeling "good" all over. I will certainly try to make others if I have the money.

I just started working on the Poilane story today. I'm typing it on my computer so I'll be able to send you "neat" copies. I'll try and put it together based upon the number of words per page in the newsletter and will aim for 1-1½



Drawing by Dan Fisher



pages per edition. I also have some insight to include. I don't know when I'll be able to finish this off, but I hope to send the first installment to you by the end of August.

Looking forward to the new issue which will cover our Reunion.

Hang in there!

Semper Fi

Nick Romanetz  
C-2, 1/26

ED: *Where's the story Nick?*

Dear Ernie,

It was great meeting you at the Reunion. It was the first time I've been with that many Marines since I left Khe Sanh. I have remained active with a few Veterans organizations and have met many Marines who served at Khe Sanh with the 26th and 9th Marines. It was like a dream meeting two of the guys from the ONTOS position that was next to my bunker. Brings back lots of memories, some good, some sad, some bad.

I appreciate all the good work you're doing for the organization. I'm the Head of the Board of Directors for my own Battalion—"Dusters, Quads and Searchlights." Keeps you going all the time. This I hope can help with some Marine history. At Khe Sanh, from its original days was a fire battery of two Dusters-Twin 40MM Ack Ack Tracks and two Quad-50 machine guns. The Dusters Unit was 1st Battalion (AW) (SP) 44th Artillery. "A" Battery served from January to March. "B" Battery served for about two weeks in March. "C" Battery served the balance, until Khe Sanh was abandoned. My Track was the last vehicle to leave. The Marine history book only shows "A" Battery. Along with the Dusters was "G" 65th Artillery (Quad-50s). I am presently putting together a listing of all Duster and Quad Tracks and Batteries that served at Khe Sanh from the beginning to the end. I am hoping to also include the names of the individual men.

Enclosed are some pictures you requested. I thank you for allowing me to be included in your video.

I read your book. I can't begin to tell the inner feelings it gave me. It's the first book about Nam I have read cover to cover. It was at times very difficult being attached to the 3rd Marine Div. I always felt that they under-used our fire power. But that was a long time ago.

I also enclose two writings I've done. I must say they were inspired from reading your book.

Sorry for all the bad spelling and bad English, but what can you expect from an old "Doggie". Thanks for

everything.

Your new pal and old buddy,

Joe Belardo  
"C" Battery 1st/44th

Dear Sir,

I served around Quang Tri in 1967, Con Thien, DMZ, Operation Buffalo with 1st Battalion 3rd Marines, A Company 2nd PLT on my second tour to Vietnam, I served with H S CO BLT 2/7 9th MAB.

I am also a life member of the 3rd Marine Division.

Sincerely,

Bill Fry  
B-P 113  
Temae Moorea  
French Polynesia

Enc: Check for \$30

Brother Ernie,

I apologize for not keeping in touch. When the sculpture business is grim I tend to crawl inside my mental bunker. This has not been a great year for my art. We're back at Suzanne's place midway between Yreka and Montague. Great view of Mt Shasta to the Southeast.

Built a small figure this week (dancing figure)—finished the thing, took a good honest look at it, grabbed the cutting torch and cut it into pieces. If it ain't right, it doesn't leave the workbench. I read somewhere that even Michelangelo had his lesser moments of creation! Back to the drawing board. Sometimes I feel like Wiley Coyote, trying to trap that damn Roadrunner—I'll get him one of these days!

Turned on the news yesterday. North Korea is getting belligerent. They want to "bloody the American nose." We've been flipping them off across the fence-line for 40 years, I guess I'd be a little irritated if I were wearing their moccasins.

Rip, from *Easysiders* magazine, came by and did a photo shoot out at the L.M.S.G. in October. Should get some good P.R. from that. He's a Korean war Vet. He gets paid to ride his Harley and write about his experiences. What a job!

Have a good Christmas—next year's got to be better.

Semper Fi  
Dennis Smith  
B/1/26



Brother Ernie,

You certainly gave my Christmas spirit a boost. I'm about to begin the first large version of "Khe Sanh." I'll keep you informed as it progresses. If the membership is slow to respond, that's OK. The work will take a little longer to complete but the mission will be accomplished.

I've been wondering about Chick myself. Our last communication was last Summer when he sent me a copy of his letter which was printed in the newsletter. Maybe Stubbe has a fix on his position.

I will be ordering at least one of the Summer '93 cover posters (my primary M.O.S. was 0331) and at least one of your Reunion videos as soon as I am able. My plan for this year is to do no travelling, just stay in the studio and work. After 25 years at the workbench, it's about time I really got my act together.

Recently I re-read *Macho Man* again. Of my entire Vietnam library, I feel your book is the most honest—and the one most relevant to my personal experience and feelings.

Thanks for the beautiful card and the encouragement, assistance and inspiration. Hope you have a very excellent 1994.

From a book of quotations: "*There is no way to peace. Peace is the way.*"

Peace,

Dennis Smith  
B/1/26

Hi Rev. Ray,

I hope everything is fine with you and yours. I'd like to say thanks for the new Vet. magazine—very nice copy, we are getting better and better.

I had a sleepless night so I put my thoughts down once again in a prose more or less. I had a friend type it over for me. I hope it might be worthy for print in a future issue. I'm broke most of the time but I can at least share poetry or stories with a letter now and again.

I know you will be going to D.C. in July so my very best wishes for a very nice trip and hope you meet my lawyer, Jessica McGuire; she will be there. Please give my best wishes to the vets and visitors and my prayers go up for you all to have a very peaceful and fun Reunion.

Semper Fi

Manuel Babbitt  
A.T's

Dear Ernie,

I received the winter *The Khe Sanh Veteran*. As usual, I can't put it down until I turn the last page. For me, that takes all day. This is the next thing to a best buddy. I seem to relate to almost every article. As I was reading this at 7.00 a.m., tears ran down my face, then the warmth of a passive poem.

It is evening here in New Mexico. I am tired from the gambit of emotions brought forth by the Brothers' articles in your publications. Please don't stop!

I have always wondered what I could do to help fill in the emptiness I walk around with daily. I am a VVA State Council Co-Chair for Veterans Incarcerated. I enjoy talking to the inmates and helping them with any and all forms to help them get benefits for their wives and children. Also, to help them get medical help for PTSD and Agent Orange problems. There are also work programs they can get into for parole. This alone is not enough.

A few years ago I figured out the highest honor and best way to help my fellow Veteran is to build a **Living Wall** for them. The problem was how to get names to put on it. I decided *not* to invade anyone's privacy by using their name without their permission. This **Living Wall** would only have the names of Vietnam era vets. This is for men and women who survived Vietnam and are surviving now. I need to get names, so I thought that by starting a VVA here, I'd get names that way. That, together with flyers at truck stops gave me names and phone calls from all over the United States. I hope that by creating a place, Veterans can bring their families and touch their name embedded in a wall at no cost to the vet. There will be a play area for the kids, shops for everyone and a museum with memorabilia and poems, songs, pictures, etc. Most of all, acres and acres for all the people who are the survivors of the Nam. A place of peace and harmony.

I would like to get more names. There are NO State, Federal, Political or Veterans organizations involved. Please call: Al Logan (505) 546-7984

You're the best,

Al Logan

Dear Ernie,

Thanks for your letter and the cut-out of your logo; are there any particular colors to it, like, is the wreath green with a red bow like a Christmas wreath and the letters could be mirror silver??? I try to stay as close to the original colors and details as possible using mirror accents or in the lettering. I use mirror silver to separate colors also.



I served at Khe Sanh with 1/9. Went in in late Jan. '68 and we were at the Rock Quarry on the NW, outside the base a few hundred yards. I got the feeling we were in the middle between 861 and the base itself. I was evacuated out on 26 Feb. and ended up in Hue at the tail end of that one and from there I went on down the highway to CAG. I was the RTO for 3rd Plt Bravo Co. and a grunt with the 3rd squad. I got to go to CAG because that was my second Heart at Khe Sanh and I had the time in to get 'skate' duty. What I didn't know was CAG wasn't skating anymore, except on thin ice.

I came home in Sep '68, stayed in until Oct. '71 and even did a tour on the drill field as a 3rd Bn D.I. I had, before my arrest, been treated for over 10 years off and on for PTSD and am diagnosed as chronic by the DAV, but have been constantly refused disability from the VA. Talk about instilling confidence in authority, you know?

I first heard about your organization back in 1988 from a guy in Florida who gave me Ernie Husted's name. I went to the reunion in Chicago in '89 that was held in conjunction with the 3rd Mar. Div. reunion, as I was then the President of the Rocky Mountain Region Chapter of the 3rd Div. Assoc., which takes in 6 Rocky Mountain states and was there to propose Denver CO. as a possible reunion site for 1991. If you are a member, you know we were successful in that, but I never made it.

As to my story, I don't know. I am not by any stretch of the imagination a writer and wouldn't know what to say. When I was first convicted, I wrote to every person I knew; Vets, friends, the VFW—of which I am a life member, the 3rd Mar. Div. Assoc., even my old platoon company, to try and raise some money to provide me with a defense. I received a grand total of \$50.00, and that was from a guy in CAG that while in-country, we didn't get along all that well. Everyone else just turned their back on me and that was it. I grew very cynical with the "Brotherhood" that everyone was espousing and blew it all off.

I will say that I am guilty of committing a crime on the 4th September '89. I committed the crime of Felony Menacing and attempted suicide. I was charged with forcible rape at gunpoint and sentenced on that crime to 30 years here, that makes me eligible for parole in 221/2 years. The rape I was supposed to have committed was against my wife of 7 years. We were going through a divorce and she wanted a bit more than what I was willing to give. She wanted everything and knew just how to get it.

I have spent the last three years fighting my case with inept Penitentiary Dispatchers (Public Defenders) and finally got it together to go to school to become a paralegal. My first customer, of course, is myself, and after months in the law library I have very carefully put together a case that I believe might do me some good. I can and

will file on my own behalf but I am still trying to get enough money for a good attorney to represent me in court. The guy I have in mind is number one on my list for two reasons. One, he believes in me and is willing to take the case if I can get his fee and two, he hasn't lost a criminal case in more than ten years as one of Colorado's biggest criminal law firms. He is also interested because of my vet status, but that's beside the point. My problem is raising the ten grand he wants for the job. I do have people on the street trying to get the money together but my mother is all alone and she is 82 years old so it isn't at all easy. She can't get a loan because of her age and my own brother who has all of the money in the world (rich) won't help because we haven't gotten along for years. He was a little old to be a hippy but he was anti-war in '67 and gave me a bunch of shit when I got home. I could take it from strangers and average assholes on the street, but my own family was just too much. Anyway, he didn't get rich by giving money away, if you know what I mean. He has copper stains between his thumb and forefingers.

Back to the mirrors I make. Each mirror is hand etched out of the back by scraping off the silvering then painting in the open areas. It is done with modified dental picks and exacto knives and takes about a week to do an easy one just to the point where I can paint it. I work with another guy in this and we only get three hours a night in the hobby shop if we are lucky. I really have already discounted the military art because some of the mirrors we do go from \$65 to \$150 each, but that is his baby as I am no real artist. I don't worry about taxes; don't need to with an income of around \$400 a year, so I don't need a tax loss. I barely get enough to pay my school bills of \$35 a month. If I could, I would pay my lawyer with mirror money, but that isn't even a thought.

What I could use is help, but I tried begging once and it didn't work then, but if anyone wanted to help out, I could arrange to get them paid back if the payments were around the same as a regular loan—\$200 a month or so. It is just that my attorney won't take payments. He needs his money in advance—otherwise we could pay him.

Enough of this shit, I have bent your ear and bored you enough with my problems and in these days, you don't need any more out there.

If any of you want a mirror, please make sure you send me the money in a money order only. I can't take personal checks or any other kind of payment or they will send it back. All money orders must be made out to me personally.

Sorry I ran on for so long but yours is the first mail I have gotten in about three weeks and I guess I was getting a little bitter.

continued on page 14



continued from page 13

Toi Se Khong Bao Gil Quen (I will not forget)

Ric Payne

B/1/9

# 63360

AVCF Box 1000

Crowley

CO. 81034.

Dear Mr Maves,

Enclosed are my 1994 dues to the Association. I'm sorry if they are late, but my financial situation has been very tight.

My goal for the year is to become a Life Member. As a Veteran of Khe Sanh; 66-68 with the Marines as helicopter crew-chief; 69-71 with the Army as helicopter pilot (both Cobra's and LOH's), including Lom Som 719, and as a helicopter pilot for Air America 72-74 in the Northern areas of South Vietnam and Laos—I find this Association as one of great honor.

We, who served at Khe Sanh, know all too well the costs that were paid by our Brothers.

Please extend my membership into the 1994 season and keep up the good work. My current address is listed on the attached page.

Dau Tranh,

James 'Sneaky' White

HMM-262-USMC

E C 1st/6th Inf, 198th LIB—Army

AVN Sec, 108th Arty Group—Army

C BTY 4th/77th ARA (Cobras)—Army

Attached to MLT-2, CCN, MAC-V-SO

C Troop 2nd/17th Cav, 101st ARN Div—Army

Air America, Da Nang, Hue, NKP (Thailand)

Dear Mr Maves,

We are an incarcerated veterans group comprised of members from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam Conflict, the Persian Gulf Conflict and peace time. Our organization is concerned with PTSD Counselling, Agent Orange benefits, reduction of recidivism, etc.

Our purpose in writing to you is to ask for a subscription to *The Khe Sanh Veteran* magazine. We have fifty members and are growing. It will be a well-read publication.

Enclosed is a package that will explain more about us. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

### Vets Helping Vets

Charles W Jackson Jr # 116902

Inmate President

Due to institutional requirements, it is requested that when corresponding with V.V.A. 655—Project Base Camp, that you use the below address exactly as listed. We hope that this does not cause any inconvenience on your part and we appreciate your participation.

President

V.V.A. 655—Project Base Camp

Baker Correctional Institution

P.O. Box 500

Olustee, FL. 32072-0500

Greetings from the wilds of Idaho!

Enclosed is a check for my '94 membership. Are you going to offer a reduced life membership on a payment plan? I was looking for my Winter edition of the newsletter since Christmas and I finally received it on the February mail plane. It was awesome! One of the best issues so far. It took me a week to get through the whole thing. I had to stop every few items because of the emotions they caused. Wish you could go to press with it more often.

Even though I've never been able to make a reunion, I'm sorry to hear there won't be one every year in the future. I think I would like to attend one but don't know if I could handle it. Is there a chance that it would be held in the Winter or early Spring months sometime in the future? Like another one in Florida in February, or something like that.

Summer and Fall are a busy time in the outfitting business here at the ranch and I can never get away then. Also, I agree that we are an unique organization and should maintain our separate identity from other service organizations. Keep the reunions fun and simple, save the bureaucracy for the Board of Directors meetings.

Most of all, thank you and everybody else involved in putting together our organization and giving us a vehicle to get in touch with each other through the newsletter. Keep up the good work.

Semper Fi,

Pat Hawn

B/1/13

Pistol Creek Ranch

Air Star Route

Cascade, ID. 83611



Hey Bill!

Nice to know you!! I'm Tom Friel, the gunner on the 60mm mortar from G 2/26 who supplied some of the illumination that dreadful night you guys were being hit Feb/March '68. I served in G company from Nov '67- Dec '68, except for 5 days R&R in Taipei in late October '68.

The Marines turned out to be a good thing for me to join—after it was all over—because being raised in the Bronx, I was constantly in trouble and going nowhere, except to jail. So becoming a Marine taught me a lot of values and self worth.

Don't get me wrong, I lost a lot of good close friends at Khe Sanh—mainly on Operation Pegasus when we swept that Hill 700 down the ridge from E Co. Mainly, it taught me a lot to be grateful for. I have four beautiful daughters (ages 22, 17, 21/2 and 6 weeks), a good job with the P.O. and retired from N.Y.C. Sanitation Department after 20 years. I truly consider myself one of the lucky ones.

See ya around the Base!!

Tom Friel (alias 'Stinky')

Hi Ernie,

While in Washington at the dedication of the Women's Memorial, I was informed that the Khe Sanh veterans had formed an organization. I wrote to the Rev. Ray Stubbe to get some scoop on how to get on board and Ray sent me the Spring and Summer issues—and the fog of time began to lift.

When I arrived in Nam, I joined "E" Co. 2/26 at Phu Bai. In January '68 we moved up to Khe Sanh and wound up on Hill 861A. Our CO at the time is your current President, Earle Breeding. With the constant turnover of men, most with nicknames, I guess the fog of faces and names will never fully lift.

I am looking forward to receiving the next Khe Sanh Veteran and am proud to become a member.

Semper Fi

Chuck Macaluso  
154 Mendota Dr.,  
Rochester, NY 14626  
Tel: 716-225-8288

Dear Ernie,

A few months ago when I wrote to subscribe to *The Khe Sanh Veteran* you suggested I write a piece about women in Vietnam. Well, I didn't do that, but I did write the enclosed article which you might be interested in. I originally wrote a slightly different version for the Red Cross newsletter but have since decided that I would like to reach a wider audience of veterans by sending it to veterans newsletters and magazines. I particularly thought of *The Khe Sanh Veteran* since so much of my attention while I was in Vietnam the first time, and so also this time, was focused on Khe Sanh and the Marines.

I am soon going to be leaving Alaska for the winter, first going to Washington for the dedication of the Women's Statue. It's going to be a great gathering! I hope your Khe Sanh reunion in July was wonderful too—I look forward to reading about it in the next issue. I will give you an address where I can be reached in the Washington area as well as my Alaska address in case you want to contact me.

Best wishes,

Nancy Smoyer  
Red Cross

#### **Alaska**

630 Lowell Road  
Fairbanks  
AK 99712  
Tel: 907/457-8473

#### **Washington**

c/o Friends of Vietnam  
Veterans Memorial  
2030 Clarendon Blvd.,  
Suite 412,  
Arlington, VA 22201  
Tel: 703/525-1107

ED: See Nancy's Memoir in this issue

Ernie,

I am Jerry Kozuch. I was Co. Gy A/1/26 Jun-Nov '67 and I attended the 25th Reunion in D.C. I am sending the  
continued on page 16



Steve Street, Pete James, Bob Harrison, and Jerry Kosuch, four members of A/1/26, meet again at our 25th reunion last summer.



continued from page 15

enclosed snapshot of the four from A/1/26 (there were five, but one didn't make this picture.)

Long story short: we all missed the company shots, so I am hoping you will be able to put us in the newsletter photo's. Thanks. (If you have any questions, please give me a call on 703/659-2482).

In the picture L to R: Steve Street, Pete James, Bob Harrison and Jerry Kozuch Co. Gy, (missing from the picture was Terry Lacy). Hope you can fit this in with the rest of the companies that attended.

If you need any help with anything or if you get in a snag on information, I'm here in D.C.—I might be able to help. Thanks again.

Semper Fi

Jerry Kozuch  
A/1/26

Hi Skipper,

My fireteam leader and very good friend while on the hills, Wayne Silva, called me recently. It was great hearing from this guy—I've looked for him for a hell of a long time.

I guess that you were speaking at a Marine Corps function Nov. 10. After you talked, Wayne approached you. He tells me he's now a Warrant Officer, in the Corps of course. You guys live in the same town, just a mile apart. Isn't that something—that's great.

Just a short note to thank you for connecting two friends who shared each other's rations.

Merry Christmas to you and your family.

Henry Gagne  
D/1/26

Dear Ernie,

My name is Ken Rodgers, and I served with Bravo Company, 1/26, 2nd Platoon from March 1967 until April 1968, including approximately 11 months at Khe Sanh. I have received three newsletters now and have found them to be very enjoyable.

When General Mundy spoke at the Dedication of the Memorial at Arlington Cemetery, I believe that his speech was left with Mr Penn. I thought that his talk was very moving and I was wondering if you might print a text of the speech in an upcoming edition of *The Khe Sanh Veteran*.

You have stated in past newsletters that if we had writ-

ten anything on our Khe Sanh experiences, you would consider including them in future issues. I have enclosed two poems that I have written on a few of the things that stand out in my memory. "Red Mud and Rats" was written in February 1993 and "Christmas" was written in April 1993. Please use them if they fit.

I picked up a copy of your book while at the convention in Washington D.C. and found it both entertaining and provocative. Provocative in the sense of the memories that came back based on the incidents you described. I have always tried to make a regular habit of remembering the Khe Sanh experience and your story reminded me of some memories I had forgotten.

Semper Fi

Ken Rodgers  
B/1/26, 2nd Plt.

Dear Mrs Norman,

Hope you are doing well as the summer season approaches. My wife is preparing final exams this weekend and completing her 24th year of teaching high school math. Our daughter is attending her school's graduation ceremonies today at the Will Rogers Memorial Auditorium in Fort Worth. Next year she will graduate and is looking forward to attending college, though she hasn't yet decided where. Also, she is going to work as a lifeguard at Wet 'n Wild. I have finally completed my course at the University of Texas at Arlington and will take the summer off from studying. Connie and I hope to attend the 25th anniversary ceremonies of the Battle of Khe Sanh in Washington D.C. during the Fourth of July weekend and then join my sisters and brothers for a family reunion.

The tribute to Hank and picture were submitted to Ernie Spencer, Editor of *The Khe Sanh Veteran* newsletter. In response, he asked me if I would be interested in doing a series about Hank. In thinking about his request, I thought perhaps you or someone very close to Hank might want to submit to the newsletter for publication a short article, personal profile, letters, additional pictures or transcriptions of the tapes Hank sent home. If you or anybody else would be interested in submitting anything to the newsletter, you could send it either to me or Ernie Spencer, whichever you prefer. We will make sure everything is handled properly and will return anything you might want to keep.

I feel that the above recommended approach is the best way to handle a sensitive matter such as this. Most of what I remember of Hank was brought out in the tribute. However, if you prefer that I write an additional article(s) based on information provided to me, I would be more than happy to do so and then have you review it before



publication.

If you are ever in the area, please give me a call anytime so that we can arrange to get together. Either you could come over to our home in Arlington or we could drive over to Garland or Mesquite.

Sincerely,

David G Rogers

A/1/13

Dear Khe Sanh Veteran,

As a fellow veteran of Khe Sanh, we shared great hardships through our tour of duty and made close ties with many men while we were there. But for most all of us, we watched those men get on a chopper, whether wounded, killed or just rotating back to the States. The moment was fading even as the chopper faded away into the clouds, but even 25 years later, these incredible experiences linger somewhere in the back of our minds and will always be a part of us.

This is why I think our fellowship amongst us is so important. Only another Brother that shared those times could possibly comprehend what we experienced during that short period of our lives.

Your organization and magazine contribute greatly to the effort of bringing those Brothers that once faded away into the clouds back together again. For this, I can't thank you enough.

I am enclosing my membership application and a small donation. I anxiously await my next magazine. Keep up the outstanding work.

Ed Troup

A/1/9 (68-69)

Dear Mr Spencer,

My name is Ronald E Poteat, and I am a new member. I have been working with the POW/MIA issue for a little over ten years now. During this time, I have created a few designs for a postage stamp to commemorate those men and women who are missing from all our nation's wars. I have finally come up with a design which I think is so effective that I had it copyrighted.

I have put together a petition drive and created a T-shirt to further promote this issue. I have pumped a new life into the commemorative U.S. Postage Stamp. I am on the right track and I know in my heart that this time we will be successful and that a stamp will be issued to commemorate those who never came home from all our nation's wars.

To make this into a reality, we must get all the Veteran's groups to stand behind this idea for the commemorative stamp and push the issue until we get honor for the POW/MIAs. I ask for your help on a national level. This is a worthy cause that needs the attention of all us Veterans and the American people. I will enclose a sample T-shirt and petition so that you can see the idea and make up your mind as to whether I can count on the support of the Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. on a national level. We can work out the details upon approval of your support.

TO REMEMBER THEM IS TO HONOR THEM. Please pray for them and their families. May God always be with them. God bless America and may she always be free.

Sincerely,

Ronald E Poteat

11 Stanton Street

Dracut

MA 01826

Tel: 508-459-1750

## LIFE SENTENCE

*"Sam", he said, looking me in the eyes,  
"you're a prisoner of your mind.  
It's time you broke free; escape!  
Don't you know you're in misery?"*

*Sam, I look at you and my reflection comes back to me.  
I look at you and see me!  
A prisoner of Vietnam.  
A prisoner of Khe Sanh.  
Twenty five years a prisoner of my mind.*

*I look for ways to escape, but none can I find.  
For years I tried to escape, two - sometimes three jobs.  
A union steward, involved in baseball.  
I am still a prisoner, but now I know my jailer,  
and I am still trying to find a way out.  
A life sentence I have been given,  
and if I give in, that life will be short.*

*In Ward 2-2c at the Topeka V.A.  
tools they have given to me.  
I will take them as I leave and hope my jailer will not see.  
A P.O.W. for the rest of my life I don't want to be.*

*Lewis S Messer  
CMBU 301*



Ernie,

How very moving and ironic that today is SOG's 30th Anniversary. I guess I should stand back today and wait this one out—but, as they say in Hollywood, "the show must go on!"

I am frequently asked why I'm not a raving lunatic, after having spent three continuous years in South Vietnam, and all I can reply is that I seldom fought in South Vietnam—more so in Laos and Cambodia. My war was truly a different war than most Vietnam assignees had been accustomed. I think I'd better let the memories flow and not comment or I'll write another novel.

Question Ernie: Did I or did I not propose a deal wherein a set of SOG books was offered for review of the SOG History? We're having trouble with our communications systems in this rather cold weather and have been unable to find a file which indicates this. Please let me know. All other similar offers came back by December last year and had been approved by the membership of each approached association. As I've said, our system is 'too cold' at this time to provide us with complete information.

In the meantime, I have enclosed the latest solicitation for the SOG History [see below]; all four books will be available for shipping in mid-February. A limited, one time special price offer will expire on 1 April 1994—at which time the books will be made available to the US public for the first time—and at full cover price for everyone (it's time for charity to benefit).

Have several other correspondences to prepare today, so Ernie, until later...

Harve Saal  
SOG

## THE PORTENT OF OFFICIALDOM

In late 1990, in the second year of preparing the history of SOG, I had compiled a sizeable list of SOG casualties—not complete by any means, but more complete than was known to the US Government or any other researcher—and the circumstances surrounding their deaths and disappearances, from eye-witness reports when available.

I was contacted and asked to co-operate and provide testimony in the area of SOG (MIAs) during the Vietnam conflict for the Senate Select Committee on PW/MIA affairs during hearings which were held in 1992. I agreed, and with many other Americans watched the hearings with anticipation and waited to be called to Washington D.C. to testify.

As the hearings progressed, I was unimpressed by the testimony being presented by "higher echelon, desk jockey" bosses. The PW/MIA Committee had neither called nor questioned *one* US soldier who was physically present in Laos or Cambodia—recon men on the ground or pilots in the air—who watched helplessly as US remains were being carried away by the NVA. The NVA had taken SOG bodies and PWs (including pilots) from Laos/Cambodia and had to know where they were—and are—located!

Paranoia and Communist dogma required exacting, extensive reports on anything and everything—the NVA would have recorded precise information about US PWs or US remains in their possession. I felt certain they not only had US remains but had the paperwork which plotted their exact locations. This was something I had yet to hear come out of testifying mouths—but did not.

| MACV-SOG                                                                                                             | Each    | Total Cost |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------------|
| Volume I Historical Evolution                                                                                        | \$24.95 |            |
| Volume II Locations                                                                                                  | \$22.95 |            |
| Volume III Legends                                                                                                   | \$25.95 |            |
| Volume IV Appendixes                                                                                                 | \$23.95 |            |
| Shipping & Handling please add \$3.00 per volume. S & H<br>(Overseas orders must include sufficient postage +\$3.00) |         |            |
| All profits, after expenses, are dedicated for charity.<br>Please allow 8-12 weeks for delivery.                     |         | Total:     |

as compiled by Harve Saal

the history of **MACV-SOG**  
*MACV, Studies and Observations Group*



Do not send cash. Make all checks payable to,  
and mail to:

Janis Jones, Techno-Comm.  
P.O. Box 18656  
Milwaukee, WI 53218-0656



Very near the end of the hearings, in December 1992, I was notified by an investigative reporter in D.C. that the PW/MIAs hearings had been convened to "whitewash" the issue of possible living PWs in Southeast Asia with the normalization of trade as the driving force. The PW/MIA Committee was finalizing an era and adjudicating all existing cases concerning the status of possible PWs, to be resolved and closed. The only sincere Legislator on the board seemed to be "Smith", who, by the way, is still concerned and involved in the MIA issue.

Three weeks before the PW/MIA board adjourned, they had not yet called for my testimony. It was the second week of December 1992. On the Monday and Tuesday, I made contact with a D.C. reporter/friend (ex-SF) and, over a period of 5 hours, divulged the information I possessed. He took the information to the PW board and because of its significance, they departed for Hanoi the next day (Wednesday). I was telephonically notified to watch the television news closely the next few days. That Friday, the PW/MIA Committee was shown on US television, via satellite coverage, receiving approximately 20 containers of US remains, each in a small wooden box. This action turned a number of US remains over to US control, perhaps the most since US PWs had been released from captivity during 1973 in "Operation Homecoming."

Shortly after the PW/MIA hearings had been closed (4 January 1993), the US Government began a policy, enforced by those such as Ed Ross (Assistant Secretary of Defense), which declared the US would no longer bargain for US remains in Southeast Asia.

It was a while after the PW/MIA hearings had ended that I was again informed by an investigative reporter that the hearings had been held in an effort to "close" the MIA issue and normalize trade relations with Vietnam. I was told that the US politicians owed debts to "selected" US businessmen and the normalization of bi-lateral trade between the US and Vietnam would provide the President with some exceptional bargaining chips to play in the political/international game of reciprocal "favors." It could be very advantageous to the first US businesses allowed free trade between the USA and Vietnam. Resultant US business profits are incomprehensible and unimaginable.

Meanwhile, in the US Labs in Hawaii, while examining the containers of supposed returned US remains, it was determined that only a few of the boxes actually contained human remains—the remainder were animal bones.

Several weeks after the hearings ended, I was contacted by an investigative researcher who had uncovered my PW/MIA testimony, complete with name, address and phone number. He said he'd been researching and gathering facts about the US's deliberate reluctance to acknowledge living US prisoners in Southeast Asia, and in

the process he accidentally uncovered my testimony in the Legislative Archives. He related to me that it was possible that someone in Washington did not want my testimony aired or discussed in public during the hearings and that, although retained in the Legislative Archives, my testimony was mysteriously unlisted in the official Senate Select Committee on PW/MIA Affairs testimony "record."

Several reports of US remains were filtering back into the USA. The reports were provided by valid, unshakable, credible sources. The reports were cross-checked for legitimacy; it was verified that the remains of downed US airmen were being hidden, protected and in the possession of persons other than the Hanoi government.

The US Government, nevertheless, steadfastly refuses to attempt recovery of US remains. Opting instead to demand that the possessor of the US remains take and turn them over to their nearest Vietnamese Governmental facility, such as a Police Station. It is known throughout Southeast Asia that any civilian who possesses US remains and turns them over to Vietnamese authorities has suffered an untimely demise. Entire families have been punished and killed for having knowledge of the whereabouts of US remains.

When known to them, it is US policy to notify the Hanoi government of the names of those who are reported to have knowledge of US remains. It is without wonder that no-one is willing to come forward and divulge their knowledge of US remains.

Therefore, in the final assessment of the PW/MIA issue, it is obviously and undoubtedly linked to the normalization of trade with Vietnam, and it can easily be concluded that the final outcome will only benefit US politicians as they provide unfair business advantage and privilege to the political cronies of their choosing. It is political rhetoric, bureaucratic insensitivity and insincerity together with a lack of moral ethics which have denied at least one family of their loved one. It is a deeply embroiled issue which is quickly dissipating within a smoke-screen of trade and profit.

This is seemingly an untenable situation which faces an uneducated, naive American public. "Damned if we let the cat out of the bag and damned if we don't—and still get caught and drown in the spiraling whirlpool."

Skid's down—exfil, lift off—till the flashing sparks of incoming gunfire subside.

Harve Saal  
SOG



Dear Bill Maves,

My name is Gary Bartle. I served in Khe Sanh during the siege with India Co. 3/26 on 881S. I was one of the men amongst many on Jan. 20, 1968, who went up 881N and ran into the NVA. That day I thought I would never again see my friends and family, but with the praying I was doing I guess someone heard me.

A few of the guys up there used to call me the quiet one. I usually always stayed in my bunker and very seldom ever came out. If someone talked to me it was like they talked to themselves. I remember one Marine, his name was Jim Payne. We went out to a downed chopper to get supplies when the NVA started to mortar us. We all took off like the devil himself was chasing us. At first, I got caught in the wire, then when I got to my bunker I just sat with my knee's drawn up to my face. Jim tried to talk to me and when I did answer, I found out we were from the same city of Utica, N.Y.

When he left in March '68 to go home I thought I'd lost the one person I could relate to. Well, in 1990, I picked up the Sunday paper and there he was! The paper interviewed him about being in the book *Siege In The Clouds*. If you haven't read it yet, try to find a copy.

I wasn't able to be at the reunion but I'd like to pay tribute to all those who died at Khe Sanh and to say to all who came home that we're all good buddies and we can at least help others know what Khe Sanh means to us.

I find it hard to bring myself to face the Wall. I've lost a lot of my memory of Khe Sanh and other parts of Vietnam I've been too also. In Khe Sanh, I had a mortar go off near me wounding several other Marines, but all I got was a bad headache and no hearing for about a week. All I heard was a lot of ringing and muffled voices. I refused to be medevaced out and stayed. The other time was somewhere outside Quang Tri. A mortar went off again and a piece of shrapnel missed dozens of others and picked me out.

These days I have trouble with names and some places where I was at. If anyone out there remembers me, I sure would like to catch up on some things. I first got on the hill Dec 15, 1968 but was in Khe Sanh Base in Nov. My MOS was 0331. I was on the side of the hill that faced Khe Sanh Base and Hill 861.

I broke my ankle at Khe Sanh when they took us off the hill. I walked around on it for two days before we found out it was broken. I do remember the LT. chewing me out.

I'm unemployed right now but will send in my dues as soon as I get back to work. I hope to hear from someone soon if they can remember me.

Semper Fi good buddies,

Gary Bartle  
RD3, Box 420 River Road,  
Camden, N.Y. 13316.  
(315) 245-5015

P.S. Let me know when the next reunion is and I hope to make it next time. Say hello to Capt. Dabney for me—I mean Col. Dabney (sorry Sir)!

## MORE FROM THE DUKE...

Dear Ernie,

From the caption and comment at the bottom of my letter, I'm led to believe that what I said has struck a raw nerve. Also, that you may have taken my comments personally. If that is the case, I'm truly sorry. It was never my intent to criticize your excellent editorial abilities nor your judgment. The letter's sole intent was to oppose, in the strongest way possible short of eyeball-to-eyeball contact, any inference of support by our organization of the present administration or any of its radical policies. A White House reception (I still don't know if there was one) would have meant just that in the eyes of many. The letter was intended as nothing more than a communication between you, Earle Breeding and myself. That you chose to publish it was a total surprise to me. Not that I mind seeing myself in print, quite the contrary. The truth, although it never needs defense, can use all possible exposure and I will continue to stand by everything that I have said. However, it does make me wonder about just what it was that motivated you to print it.

Before I go further, let me make it quite plain that this is a letter from me to you. Publish it if you like but, if you do, please don't edit it. I'll live with my spelling and grammar mistakes as long as the substance of what I'm saying remains intact. Introduction over, I'd like to respond by addressing your "ED" note at the bottom of my published letter:

- "You did your tour and I did mine": Figuratively speaking, that would seem correct. To take it a bit further, however, I extended twice on my first tour and then waived my overseas control date to go back two more times. Draw your own conclusions from that. I'm sure that I would agree, at least in part, with most of them.
- "When you take over as Editor, you can do it your way": Thanks, but no thanks. Everybody's not cut out to be an Editor. For one thing, the job calls for one to be too judgmental. I prefer to stick to the creative part of writing, such as it is.
- "The wonderful thing about the written word is that the reader has the option, at all times, of averting his or her



eyes": You really surprised me with that one. You're endorsing the "head in the sand Ostrich act", the "See no evil, hear no evil" bit. How much history does it take to convince you that not speaking out against something is the same as endorsing it? That when someone calls a black person a Nigger and you turn your head and pretend that you did not hear it, it's the same as if you were saying it yourself. That if most of Europe hadn't "averted" its collective eyes when Hitler was a mere upstart, we might not have had to suffer through a World War. As for the "written word", my feeling is that the true beauty of it is that it is permanent. People can be held to account for what they write and so be exposed for whatever they are. Except, of course, if they happen to be members of the Clinton cabinet. Nightline—Lani Guinier: "Most important, I think, is not what I wrote but who I am." Ref. National Review, Nov 15 '93 issue, p.72).

- I won't comment on the "If you don't like it, don't read it" part. As for your last word, "Simple", Contraire! Contraire! When emotions tug at mens' hearts strongly enough to cause them to act, what follows is anything but simple.

Now, for the John Wayne part. You may have a slight backlash on that one. Not from me. I like the inference, even though I understand exactly just how it was intended. I'm talking about what if more readers like Leonard Venardos or Mrs J Thomas Esslinger choose to respond to it. Resurrecting The Duke would do little against the avalanche of Woody Harrelsons, Whoopi Goldbergs, Barbra Streisands and left-over Jane Fonda freaks that engulfs us now. Besides, the spirit of John Wayne, or rather that of the characters that he portrayed over the years, lives on. Just listen to some of the folks who call in to Rush Limbaugh. One last thing about John Wayne. He was an actor, a vendor of make believe. His characters, however, are very real to many of us who feel that their values should be ours and their principles are worth fighting for. We, you and I, are the real action figures as were all the defenders of Khe Sanh. There were as many stories left imprinted in that red clay as there were men who slogged through it. John Wayne, I think, would have been proud to act in and to tell any one of them. Again Ernie, I don't mind the John Wayne analogy at all.

Semper Fi!

Your friend,  
'George' Ojars Jurjans  
USMC (Ret)

(What the hell! It seems that I've already pissed you off, we might as well be on a first name basis)

P.S. That disclaimer at the top of p.3 is a good touch. I like it. I wonder what brought it about?

ED: It is obvious you are very angry. I feel, however, that most of it is misplaced. I sense that you're very hurt about what happened to you. Why don't you share with us what really happened to YOU in Vietnam. Tell us about all your combat experiences during your multiple tours. That's what our readership is interested in, not your political ramblings.

Dear Readership,

Enjoyed receiving my first copy of your newsletter. Although our plates are full of family, work and commitments, it's nice to see that most will take the time to come forward to help each other.

I, too, can recall working up near Khe Sanh FSB as a member of the 11th Engineers (Feb 68-69). My return humanitarian trip back to Vietnam in Jan. 85 was a very positive experience for me. We walked all of those far FSB sites to include Khe Sanh. There seemed to be a stillness when we did our prayer for all who lost their lives at Khe Sanh. The American flag was once again raised during this moment in time. I have included a copy of our prayer that was placed at the Wall before we went back.

Our guide in the south was a former N.V.A. Lt "Lham", who was wounded. Can't tell you how respected the Marines are by our former enemy.

Semper Fi.

Lt. Gene T Spanos (Rosemont Police)  
Former Sgt USMC  
Charlie Co. 11th Engineers/3rd MAR DIV  
Feb 68-69

Dear John (Balanco),

Thanks for the very attractive Christmas greeting. It was certainly an appropriate one to send to linguists! We must have just missed you in Khe Sanh since we left on January 8th of that year.

We continue to get letters from Bru friends in the central highlands, in Southern Laos and occasionally from the area around Khe Sanh. Life has not been easy for them but they continue to adapt and go on.

Last year, we had a visit from two young men who had been children when we lived in a village near the border. They are now living in Laos but continue to make visits up to the Khe Sanh area, so we get news from the area. These men are hoping to come back again this year when the border is open for a major Buddhist festival.

**You asked us in your note for a suggestion about how the Khe Sanh Vets could do something for the**

continued on page 22



continued from page 21

**Bru.** Recently, we have had letters from several young people (or their families) who are pursuing tertiary education. This is a brand new thing for the Bru. At the time we were there, we never knew of a single Bru person to get beyond secondary education, and only a few who got that far. We are told that there are now a total of twelve Bru students who are in schools throughout Vietnam, either technical or university, or other institutions. It is very difficult for these young people because their families can scarcely come up with the funds needed for school supplies, let alone food and clothing. We have tried a couple of times to help some of them out in a small way but have not worked out a way to safely get funds to them.

**If this is something you think the Khe Sanh Vets would respond to, we will try to work out a channel through one of the development agencies here in Thailand which has regular programs in Vietnam to set up a scholarship fund for these Bru students.** We know of a couple of agencies which might be able to do this and can check it out with them if you are interested in pursuing this.

Our current research project here in Northeast Thailand involves several small language communities whose languages are closely related to Bru. We are enjoying getting to know these people and to once again be speaking Bru.

Looking forward to hearing from you again.

Sincerely,

John & Carolyn Miller

---

February 7, 1994

Dear Khe Sanh Board Members,

To tell you the truth, I was a little concerned that I hadn't received any correspondence from our Khe Sanh Veterans organization since the July Reunion. Well—not to worry, the Winter issue of the newsletter just arrived in the mail and I quickly sent out my dues check.

Now, to the reason for this letter to each of the members of the Board of Directors. I would like to get a running head start on planning for our 1995 Reunion. Lots of questions immediately come to mind:

- Where shall we have it?
- Should we hold the Reunion near a military base (Marine Corps or any service) or should we just look for nearby civilian type entertainment, e.g. a Disneyland type theme park?
- What should the theme of the meeting be?

- How long should the meeting be? I would assume 3-5 days and we should probably hold it over a weekend. For those who will be flying, it will be cheaper when you stay over a Saturday plus it is probably easier to get time off work.
- Not everyone brought their family to the last Reunion so a question arises in my mind—should we continue to have this Reunion open to Veterans and their families or limit it to just the Veterans?
- As far as accommodations are concerned—should we continue to hold the Reunion at a Holiday Inn or facility of that caliber or try for something a little cheaper?

That's just a short list of questions to get your creative juices flowing. As we make decisions, some questions may have already been answered by a previous question.

I see my role as Reunion Chairman as the person who is responsible for keeping things organized. This is a Reunion for the members to cater to the members wishes, but I feel it is incumbent on the Board Members to lay the groundwork and give guidance to the members.

Please review the attached questionnaire and let me have your comments. We could send this to all our members as an inexpensive one page mailer and ask them to send it back to me within 30 days. I will then summarize the results and report back to the Board.

I look forward to hearing from each of you.

Semper Fi

W J O'Connor  
61 Tucker Lane  
N. Dartmouth, MA 02747  
508/ 996-5123

---

Hello Ernie,

A very short note requesting two copies of the Spring '93 *The Khe Sanh Veteran* magazine. I found two Marine buddies—one in Texas and the other in Colorado.

Please bill me for the above request. I know they would very much appreciate them.

Respectfully,

Ben Goddard

---



Hello Skipper,

This letter is in follow-up of our recent telephone conversation regarding MCRD San Diego Museum Historical Society efforts to establish a "Navy Medical Support Pers" exhibit at the Command Museum.

It is requested that you enclose the following information in the next newsletter:

#### NAVY MEDICAL PERS ASSISTANCE NEEDED

Col. Richard Mickelson, USMC (Ret.), Executive Director of the MCRD Museum Historical Society has requested the assistance of all former and present Navy Medical Pers that have supported Marines to assist in the establishment of a permanent exhibit at MCRD. Needed are photos, Field Medical Bags, Unit 1'2, FMF Medical, Dental, Nurses and Doctors period uniforms and insignia from ALL wars. The Col. has also requested enemy related medical gear and equipment for the display. Here's your chance to clean out that footlocker or sea bag and give it to a good cause. Donations are accepted and needed in your name or in honor of another. All gear, uniforms, photos, donations etc. should be sent to:

Col. Richard Mickelson, USMC (Ret.)  
Executive Director  
MCRD Museum Historical Society  
Building 26  
P.O. Box 400085  
San Diego  
CA. 92140

Donations should be earmarked to Navy Med Support Pers Exhibit and checks made out to MCRD Museum Historical Society or contact member, Former HM2 Jim Donady Bigler on 317-472-7067.

Semper Fi and warm regards,

Jim Donady Bigler  
D/1/26

P.S. Ernie, please put the Col. on our mailing list at MCRD. You may also want to send some info to them to place in the Gift Shop for the purpose of new members.

Seeking Marines and others who served with, or were attached to 3/9 in RVN during the periods of 1965-69.

I am trying to locate all survivors of 3/9 for a reference network which eventually will be available for all 3/9 Marines. The purpose of the network is to reunite 3/9 Marines with friends and buddies who served with them and to develop a network with 1/9 and 2/9 for future regimental reunions.

All correspondence will be in *strict* confidence and will not be available to anyone outside our own 3/9 network, and then only to people who agree to have their information passed on to their buddies and friends. I am not asking for, or expecting monetary help. If there are Marines who would like to be involved with this project, please print or type on a 5 x 7 index card the following information:

NAME: First, middle initial, last (nickname)

ADDRESS: Street, city, zip

IN COUNTRY: From Mo/Yr to Mo/Yr

COMPANY SERVED WITH OR ATTACHED UNIT

On card please sign that you agree to be listed in future reference guide.

Send index card to:

Nick Hrones  
4952 Graysontown Road  
Radford  
VA. 24141

For those, like myself, who have stayed hidden for all these years, I ask you to join in reuniting lost friends and buddies and to regain the pride we had for our unit 3/9 and the UNITED STATES MARINE CORP. Please phone 703-633-2968.

Semper Fi.

Nick Hrones  
3/9 July 67-June 68

At the convention, Jerry Hudson and I got our heads together (thus=1) and came up with the idea of making a plaque for Col. Lownds. I had the privilege of visiting him at his home in Naples, Fl. and ascertained that he has a den and wall, and a plaque would fit right in.

The artist is the same Phil Hardin who did the bolos and buckles I had on display at the convention. He and I worked out an unique, one-of-a-kind design: inlay on German Silver. Believe me, there is nothing but hand work. He sent the plaque or metal work to me and I then had it mounted on the wood in Roswell, trying to keep the wood simple so as not to distract from the beauty of the artist's handiwork. In effect, it is one big flat belt buckle with a flat brass buckle under it as a presentation plate. Keep in mind that even the best photos do not do it justice.

Earle G Breeding  
E/2/26



## Lonely Soldier

*Surrounded by the enemy, with no place to go.  
Fists and rifle butts, inflicting much pain.  
Reality came quickly, how was I to know?  
I stand to lose it all, with nothing to gain.*

*My family flashes, against the terror and fear.  
Mom, Dad and Junior, what will they ever think?  
Shirley and the babies, what awful news to hear.  
Drastic change can come, in just a minute wink.*

*Forced marches were routine, they became pure hell.  
There was no relief, for my wretched burning feet.  
Sores gathered swiftly, they oozed a putrid smell.  
Malaria and Dengue Fever, tried to hasten my defeat.*

*Hemp around my elbows, my arms suffering so dearly.  
Isolation and hunger, ravaging my fragile soul.  
Hope dwindled rapidly, as monthly turned to yearly.  
My life seemed to ebb, so living became my goal.*

*Migrating from cave to cave, always on the move.  
Where was I being herded, only God could know.  
Resistance became weaker, nothing left to prove.  
Who was I to impress, with some big gallant show?*

*I still cherish that day, when I finally saw Garcia.  
Many months of suffering, but he still had a smile.  
Silver and Bronze Stars, he had won them in Korea.  
A proud old Sergeant, who'd been in for a while.*

*It still hurts today when I think of his fate.  
Infection and diarrhea had taken their ugly toll.  
When medicine finally arrived, it was a week too late.  
I buried him with honors, upon a rising knoll.*

*Rumors came filtering down in late seventy four,  
of a large prisoner release, northward in Hanoi.  
Keen to sights and sounds, I knew there still was war.  
I had given up on trust, the enemy was awfully coy.*

*Then one day came silence, it was early seventy five.  
Celebrations of victory, my captors could not hide.  
The stillness made me wonder, did anyone know I was still alive?  
Great slaughter was to follow, it was hard to abide.*

*Death was all around me, the "puppets" were being purged.  
They told of our withdrawal, it was very hard to believe.  
I had to watch my allies, who one by one were scourged.  
Life became a thread, my past was hard to retrieve.*

*Treatment started to improve, a small consolation.  
Wounds began their healing, which brought ample relief.  
I pray to my God daily with appreciable anticipation.  
Hoping he will reward me for my perennial belief.*

*The war is obviously over, I have no place to go.  
Much has been forgotten, when I dwell on my past.  
Ma and Pa could be dead, it hurts to miss them so.  
Even provided the chance, I probably wouldn't ask.*

*Shirley's even fading, where could she be today?  
She could not be expected to wait so many years.  
My heart has become so hollow, what could I even say?  
Visions of the children, oh the anguish and the tears.*

*When will they come a marching, to free me at last?  
I'm tired of propaganda, but maybe they are right.  
Perhaps I am a criminal, and suffer for my past.  
Thoughts I must avoid, if I continue my plight.*

*Twenty five years have gone, quickly before my eyes.  
How slowly they have passed, since that fateful day.  
The sun sets each eve, there is no new surprise.  
As a scared little child, I have surely lost my way.*

*My God is my hope throughout this time of pain.  
He's met me many a night to comfort my weary soul.  
Some villagers he has sent to lift me up again.  
They sneak me Bible verses to make my life seem whole.*

*Although still held captive, my spirit feels so free.  
There is a life hereafter, His medicine is my cure.  
Even though man's so evil, God's Spirit comforts me.  
I know without a doubt that His love is very pure.*

Michael A Harris



# You Can Make a Difference

## ANNOUNCING THE FORMATION OF

# The Art and Humanitarian Fund

Using their contract payments from National Geographic Society for the filming of our Reunion in Washington D.C. as seed money, Ken Pipes, Quilles Jacobs, John Balanco, Jim Morris and Ernie Spencer decided to actively support the objectives of the Khe Sanh organization by establishing an Art and Humanitarian Fund.



"Khe Sanh" by Dennis Smith

By-Laws Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.  
Article 1 – Objectives  
Section 1 – General

The objectives of the corporation are as follows:

- ◆ To promote renewed fellowship of all who lived and served in the area of Khe Sanh
- ◆ To promote artistic expression of the Khe Sanh experience

The Art and Humanitarian Fund will financially support Khe Sanh artists as well as our allies at Khe Sanh — the Bru.

### Won't you please join us in this worthwhile endeavor?

Those contributing \$50 or more will receive Ernie Spencer's independently produced video called "Khe Sanh Reunion," an artistic interpretation of our reunion held in Washington D.C. this past July. Those contributing \$75 or more will receive the video and an autographed, first edition, hardcover copy of *Welcome To Vietnam Macho Man* by Ernie Spencer. This book is out of print.

The first artistic project we will help fund will be the statue "Khe Sanh" by Dennis Smith (B Co. 1/26). We hope to place this original work of art at Camp Pendelton (ultimately at Khe Sanh.) We need approximately \$4,000 to build this statue at Camp Pendelton.

Our first Bru project will be a scholarship fund done in conjunction with our dear friends from Khe Sanh, the Millers (see their letter to John Balanco in this issue.) Those who

were at Khe Sanh prior to the siege will recall that the Marines and Special Forces personnel held a fund raiser to build a house for the Millers (they were that highly regarded by us.) Former Special Forces and Khe Sanh member, Robert Shippen, has obtained written permission from the district chief at Khe Sanh (a Bru) for us to legally operate in and around Khe Sanh. Robert and his Special Forces brothers, along with John Balanco and his CAC brothers, are developing plans to provide health care and schooling for the Bru. Currently, Bru children suffer infant mortality rates of 50%.

***Make your tax-deductible contributions to the Khe Sanh Veterans ABHF. Send your contributions to Ernie Spencer c/o Khe Sanh Veterans, 458 Holiday Hills Drive, Martinez, CA 94553. All monies will be kept and dispersed by our Khe Sanh Veterans office of the Treasurer.***





Dear Assoc. Members,

We've all had times when we've felt life has passed us by or wished we had done things differently. Whilst most of us have fortunately been able to live "normal" lives, some of our members aren't able to have the everyday freedoms we share and are in our prison systems. Right or wrong, they're there and I would hope we all wouldn't "condemn them" or forget them just because their address is a state system and their service is now a prison!

Being a retired police detective, I've had to send a few Vets to prison, but I never forgot that the hands I put in cuffs could have very well been the same hands that dug trenches and filled sand bags at Khe Sanh, or helped with wounded in 1/9. Something happened or didn't happen in their lives that took them out of society again – as was the case when they were in Vietnam. Their present situation doesn't change what they did for their country or the Corps in Vietnam. I hope we don't all forget them.

In the last two years, I've been writing to Richard Payne. He had a change of address some time ago to the Crowley Colorado prison system. Being a retired detective I admit, writing to someone in prison, purchasing mirrors made by him in prison and seeing him not being one to feel sorry for himself, I stay in contact with him regularly. He keeps himself busy working in the library and hobby shop, but as expected the pay is obviously quite limited. Having a simple coffee pot is a prized article and a T.V. is beyond hope.

This vet deserves some consideration when you have a few bucks to donate or purchase a mirror via him. Remember that 'Semper Fi' stands for all Marines – in prison or out. The rewards of friendship shouldn't stop at the prison walls. Drop Rick a letter\*, order a mirror or send him a donation to show him that even though we're on the other side of the wall, he's thought of as a Viet Marine first and not just another 'number'.

Richard Payne # 63360  
A.V.C.F. Unit # 3  
P.O. Box 1000  
Crowley  
Co. 81034

Semper Fi.

Wally Persoma  
H&S/1/9-81's

*ED: Wally is a regular contributor to our magazine. I, too, have a special place in my heart for our incarcerated brothers. I loved having "Bad Boys" in Delta Company. I'd be a hypocrite if I turned my back on them just because they continued with their behavior when they rotated home. "There but for the grace of God..." applies to me.*

To Whom It May Concern

I learned of your organization through John Finn of Rego Park, N.Y. I had an uncle, LCPL Hensley McFadden "Mac" DILWORTH who was KIA in the province of Da Nang on March 30th, 1967. He was with 1st Platoon, A/1/26. I was wondering whether you know of anybody who might have known him, or served with him. I never knew him very well – I was only three years old when he was killed.

I appreciate your help and thank you for your time.

Semper Fi.

Lewis Costley  
3/11  
406 N. 38th Place,  
Rogers, AR 72756

Skip Coggin  
National President  
Fleet Marine Force Grunt Corpsmen Assn.

To Whom It May Concern

Our new group called *Fleet Marine Force Grunt Corpsmen* are having our first reunion at Jacksonville, N.C., home town of Marine Corps Base – Camp Lejeune. We are having this reunion April 22-24, 1994. Please put a notice in your next newsletter or publication as soon as possible so that your readers will have time to respond. Additional information is available by calling me:

Skip Coggin  
(904) 645-8404

or writing to:

F.M.F. Grunt Corpsmen Assn.  
P.O. Box 19676  
Jacksonville  
Florida 32245-9676

Thank you for your assistance.

Aloha! Captain Spencer,

I have just finished reading your summer '93 issue. I was surprised by the article in 'Memoirs' titled "The Big Guns" by Doug Meredith, 175s USA.

By September '66 I had left 1/5 on Hill 54 and joined 3rd MAF. I was sent south. From September through November a small group of us operated off a small LZ near Quang Ngai and Mo Duc. We had one officer, a USMC Captain along with about 15 grunts. I was the token "Doc." The areas surrounding our position were filled with vari-



ous Marine units on varied operations. Our LZ was about one hundred yards long and about forty yards wide, carved out of the jungle 15 years earlier by the French or even possibly the Japanese. There were definite remnants of aircraft berms along the edge of the jungle clearing. Our perimeter guard were two M-60's and 14 Marines – that's it! Our Western approach was loosely guarded by a unit of ROK's (about a click and a half out). Our Southern perimeter and Eastern approach was our responsibility – the other approach was essentially wide open.

One night, Charlie took out the ROK's with mortars. We called for fire support. Huge guns lit up the night, it was like a thunder and lightning show in the Midwest. The ground shook. I asked the Captain, "What the hell was that?" He replied, "175's, I think?" He didn't know we had them. It really wasn't all that surprising since whenever we called for support, we never knew who was going to be the savior. Usually it was the Phantoms or A-4's, twice it was 'Puff' and once it was the New Jersey.

Twenty-seven years later, the answer presents itself in *The Khe Sanh Veteran* newsletter. Meredith's 175's were probably the source of retaliation upon the V.C. for their attack on our ROKS. Small war, ain't it? I remember passing the ROK contingent at Binh Son as we were moved South to our LZ. We passed them by while they were taking their ease in that little ville. Down the road we lost half our convoy in a big ambush on Route 1. What was left of us continued on to our objective.

Two or three days after the ROKS were taken out on the Western perimeter, we found an ARVN garrison completely destroyed—no-one left alive. The bodies were still lying about where they had died. The garrison was still smoldering. Bunkers were blown, a guard tower lay on its side, it's wooden pillars still burning. Many of the ARVN bodies indicated throats cut rather than gunshot or shrapnel wounds. The four of us had walked into a nightmare that had just occurred. We made a hasty didi mau back to our little LZ knowing full well that the force that did this was nearby – and much larger than us.

Following the discovery of the ARVN slaughter, we assumed that we were next. First the ROKS, then the ARVN, then 15 Marines and one scared Corpsman. It never came. We continued to get sniper fire but never had to deal with being overrun.

The force that took our ROKS and then the ARVN must have run into some of the Marine units operating in the area. They had more to deal with than us. We were inconsequential. During those months, I flew an average of 30 or more medevacs out of that LZ per month. The surrounding units were caught up in some heavy shit. I lost track of the Marine KIA's and didn't bother keeping a tally of the WIA's.

Some strange looking Marines showed up one day in their own little Cessna, painted white with black lettering. By strange I mean, how many middle-aged LT's do you see? They took one of the old berms that had caved in and filled it with red mud and water and used it to dump V.C. bodies. They concertina-ed off a small area and improvised an ad hoc screening and ITT for the busloads of prisoners being brought in.

There is much more to this memory, but I just wanted to let you know that the article on the Doggie 175's brought back another hazy memory and dropped another missing piece into the puzzle.

Next time, I'll tell you about the night on the LZ when a screaming spider monkey dragging two hysterical tethered chickens ran across the Captain in the dark while he was sleeping. He came out of sleep blazing away with his .45 and in response, the 60's opened up on the treeline. In the midst of death and destruction there is, incongruously, comic relief.

Semper Fi.

Ron "Doc" Ferrell  
1/5 & 3rd MAF

P.S. Congratulations on your 1/26 Reunion. I have decided to attend mine. It is for 1/5 in Houston August 4-8 '93. I have research to do. Aloha!

Dear Mr Spencer,

I am writing to ask if you would please run a request for me in your publication. I am trying to locate anyone who served with and knew the following person:

Cpl. Juan N Sedillo ("Johnny")  
Radio Operator  
Service No: 2269777  
Birth Date: January 30, 1948  
Death Date: April 8, 1968 (KIA – Khe Sanh)

1st Battalion, 9th Marines  
3rd Marine Division  
H & S Co.

Johnny was my fiance at the time. I would very much like to hear from men who served with him and remember him.

Also, I have really appreciated your book, *Welcome To Vietnam, Macho Man*, which I discovered only recently. Since Johnny wrote very little to me about the war, your book is valuable to me for insight into what his experiences in Vietnam were probably like.

Thank you for your assistance.

continued on page 28



continued from page 27

Barbara E Early  
8422 Richmond Hwy., # 74  
Alexandria, VA 22309.

Dear Ernie,

Finally got my reprints back and have enclosed them along with a letter from Dr Albert Castel – don't know if you are into civil war history or not but his book has received excellent reviews and is now in the bookstores.

I've contacted all of the major newspapers in the area and sent them the press release. All were very receptive to the idea of publishing the information. Like you said, this information needs to be widely disseminated to reach a majority of those who might be interested. I've also sent copies to the Houston and San Antonio newspapers and will send out more.

I apologize for the lack of quality with regard to the pictures. They are a product of the hot, humid, dusty environment we all had to endure at the time. Have a great Veterans Day!

Semper Fi,

Dave Rogers  
W/1/13

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Dear David,

Your endowment of a scholarship for nursing at Fairmont State in the name of your mother is a splendid idea that has now been turned into a splendid deed. Nothing could have been more appropriate and I would like to think that Madge knows of what you have done and approves – although, being her, she probably feels somewhat embarrassed (if angels feel embarrassment!)

I read with great interest your letter to Don Hossack and think you are doing a fine thing in compiling a book of first-hand accounts of the "Hill Fights" around Khe Sanh. (Incidentally, "Hill Fights" makes a good title). What you and your fellow veterans are doing along this line reminds me of what Civil War veterans did once a certain amount of time had passed after the war and they began to reach a certain age. Many of them did not even like to think, much less talk or write about their war experiences right after the war and for years beyond that. Then, with the passage of time and increased age, they began to feel that they had seen and experienced things that should be recorded and preserved. In many cases, if not most, they



Sgt. Goodrich, 2nd Lt. John Eager, 2nd Lt. Jim Brown, and 1st Lt. Dave Rogers

were not thinking about future historians, but I can guarantee the truth of this: a lot of historians, including this one, are very indebted and grateful to them for what they did.

I doubt if you need concern yourself with copyrights, etc. as regards *Vietnam* magazine. First of all, the article I submitted is an abridgement of your account, and chances are you would want to publish the full version. Second, the article has to be accepted and published first – and so far, I've heard nothing from the magazine. This irritates me a great deal and as soon as I return from the trip to Kansas I am taking next week, if there is still no word I shall send a query to the magazine. By that time, one of its sister magazines, *Civil War Times Illustrated*, will be out with a long excerpt from my *Atlanta Campaign* book in it, and I'll tell the Editor of *Vietnam* that it is rather strange that at the same time I'm being featured in one of his company's magazines, I cannot even get the courtesy of an acknowledgment or rejection from his magazine.

As you probably know, I went to Fairmont early in September and spent a very enjoyable and profitable day with Mike doing research on the divorce case of Stonewall Jackson's sister. As I told Mike last night when he called, I plan to get to work on that article as soon as I complete another article and the trip to Kansas.

Mike called to inform me that the copy of my *Atlanta Campaign* book I sent him arrived safely. It is for all the Rogers family, and Mike says he will pass it on to John before reading it himself; so if you want to read it – you will have to wait your turn.

As soon as I know the situation with *Vietnam* magazine, I'll inform you.

Sincerely,

Albert Caster



On October 30, Bill Jayne, representing the association, met retired North Vietnamese General Nguyen Huy Phan in Washington D.C. General Phan is a medical doctor who is now recognized as a leading plastic surgeon in Vietnam. He was in Washington meeting with government officials because he is also the leader of an organization called the Vietnamese-American Association.

Bill discussed the possibility of a Khe Sanh veterans trip to Vietnam, our interest in helping the Bru people who live near Khe Sanh and meeting with North Vietnamese soldiers who faced us on the battlefield in 1967-68. General Phan was supportive of our wishes to make such a trip.

Washington sources familiar with travel to Vietnam believe such a trip is feasible. They recommend a trip of about two weeks duration that would include stops in Saigon, Da Nang, Hue, Dong Ha and Hanoi, as well as a side trip to Khe Sanh. Since much of the area around Khe Sanh is off limits because of unexploded ordnance, the Khe Sanh excursion would probably be staged as day trips from Dong Ha. Experts also think we should ask to meet with former South Vietnamese allies who fought with us, such as members of the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion.

Such a trip should probably be limited to approximately 15 Americans. eight or ten would most likely be the optimum number of participants. The cost would be \$3,500 to \$4,000 each, including approximately \$1,700 in airfare. Individuals should also plan to bring ample spending money for incidentals ranging all the way from laundry to possible donations to the Bru.

An interpreter would be provided. The tour costs would also cover all transportation, lodging and food.

Bill Jayne  
B 1/26

I joined the Marine Reserves in July 1966 at El Paso, Texas. After my six months active duty, I stayed with the 4th 8" Howitzer Battery until I went active for three years in August 1967. After going active, I was sent back through artillery school at Camp Pendleton to become an instructor. While I was at Schools Battalion, an opening came up for a PFC at Marine Barracks, Subic Bay, Philippines. I signed up for that opening and did not know that the orders I was given were for WesPac Ground Forces. I couldn't understand the orders anyway, I just knew I was to report to Staging Bn after leave. I learned at Staging that I was going to Nam.

I got to Vietnam Nov. 24, 1967, and was assigned to Hq Battery, First Bn, Eleventh Marines in the FDC section. I spent my entire tour with Hq 1/11 except for a two week

stint with Whiskey 1/11.

When I was with 1/11, we were used as direct support for 1st Marines and went on their operations. The places we went to are as follows: Quang Tri, Camp Evans, Phu Bai and Hue City during Tet, Ca Lu during Operation Pegasus, Khe Sanh (April 24 until July 4), Ca Lu again, Qua Viet, then ended up south of Da Nang where we were OPCON to Eleventh Marines for the first time in eleven months. One interesting note; when we were at Khe Sanh, we had a total of 13 firing batteries attached to us.

I got out of the Marines in 1970 and after a year of college I joined the New Mexico State Police and have been with them for 21 years, presently holding the rank of Sergeant.

Ron Taylor  
1/11

*ED: Shame on you Ron! Didn't you know the old saying: Never volunteer for anything?*

## WILD WEST

Khe Sanh Feb. '68: The fog had just lifted, the incoming had just started. It was relatively light, intermittent and generally scattered throughout the Fire Base. An out of breath runner slid into the bunker to inform me that Major Matt Caulfield wanted me and 1st Sgt Gene Chism (M-Co.) to report to his S-3 bunker for a briefing. We waited for a lull in the incoming then started through the trenchlines toward the S-3 shop when we spotted two so-called repatriated North Vietnamese sons-a-bitches crouched down near the perimeter doing something that didn't appear normal. "Chism, what the fuck are those two assholes doing? Whatever it is, it don't look right - let's check it out."

We both drew our .45's, approached from the rear and laid them alongside their ear. They had their sleeves rolled up and had drawn on their arms the perimeter line to include weapons placement. We knew our immediate thoughts would not be justified under the UCMJ so reluctantly we turned them over to the S-3 who escorted them to the S-2 section for whatever.

That's the last we heard of the incident. Sure would like to know what the final disposition was! Anybody from the "2" shop recall?

Dick Peloquin  
1/3/26



I find that my relationship with Khe Sanh is probably a bit strange when compared to most of your other members. I served in/around and over Khe Sanh in three different capacities. First as a Marine, then the Army and then as a civilian.

I started in the Marine Corps as a 0331, but I was able to get into a helicopter unit. I was trained as an Aviation Electronics Tech (Radio-Nav) but after several months in an operating squadron, I cross-trained as a helicopter mech (crew-chief). After a six month stay at Gutmo (Cuba) and then a Veques Cruise, I returned on my 2nd Veques when Dom Rep exploded. Upon returning home, I headed for West Pack.

I spent some time in HMM-263 then joined HMM-262 ("Bill's Bastards") when they came in-country. We were down at Ky Ha for 5 months then moved to Marble Mountain. While at Marble Mountain, we kept four aircraft up at Khe Sanh, usually flying FOB missions. Being up at Khe Sanh was the best part as we were away from a lot of the BS and our time was spent doing the job we were trained for. After 7 months, HMM-262 went back to Oki to have our A model CH-46s beefed up and turned into CH-46Ds. A few of us extended and brought the first D models back in-country.

Tet '68 brought out the heaviest flying and toughest missions we had experienced. The hours were long and the missions were, to say the least, "HOT." I left Nam in April '68 after 19 months. The only reason I left Nam (and HMM-262) was because I received an inter-service transfer into the Army. In April '67 I received the Distinguished Flying Cross while serving as a crew-chief (for the Commanding Officer of HMM-262, "Wild" Bill Shadrick, BGEN Rtd). Because this was the first DFC awarded to an enlisted Marine since WWII, LTGEN Krulak came to Vietnam to present it to me. During the awards ceremony, the General asked if I was going to stay in the Marine Corps. Although I had been a Sgt (E-5) for a year, my goal was to become an aviator. He explained that I only had two years of college and even though I had a FAA Commercial Pilots License, the Marine Corps wasn't going to promote any more "Flying Peons" (enlisted pilots), though we had one in our unit (an old E-8). The General arranged for me to be transferred into the Army and their Warrant Officer flight program. I transferred into the Army—on Oki—and was sent back to the States to go through helicopter flight school, but as usual, something went wrong with the paperwork and I was sent back to Nam, where I served as an 11B (grunt) for two months before they 'corrected the problem' and sent me to flight school.

Upon completing flight school, I returned to Vietnam as an Army aviator. I reported in at Dong Ha, flying Aero-Scouts and artillery spotting for the 108th ARTY Group. I spent from May '69 to Jan '70 flying out of Dong Ha. Many

missions were down QL 9 heading for Khe Sanh, although normally, the furthest we were able to get was just west of Vandy. I also spent many an hour flying low level along the DMZ, especially within Leatherneck Square. I had several crew-chiefs (and aero-observers) get wounded while on these missions.

In January, I went to fly Cobras for C Battery 4th/77th ARA (Aerial Rocket Artillery), 101st ABN Division, based out of Camp Evans. The reason I extended to this specific unit was that the GRIFFINS (C Battery's call sign) were primarily the Cobra unit flying for MAC-V-SOGs CCN missions out of Quang Tri. I flew CCN missions for the Griffins for 13 months until Feb '71. MAC-V-SOGs missions were cross border into Laos and North Vietnam.

I had flown as a crew-chief for MAC-V-SOG out of the FOBs at Dong Ha and, of course, Khe Sanh. The MAC-V-SOGs operations prior to the summer of '68 were known as Shining Brass—for the Laotian operations. The missions into the northwest section of South Vietnam were called Nickle Steel once they crossed over into North Vietnam (just the south west corner of N. Vietnam). After a major changeover in '68, the Nickle Steel and Shining Brass operations were combined into an operation called Prairie Fire. As a Marine, I flew Nickle Steel and Shining Brass operations (inserts and extractions), then with the Army I flew Cobras on Prairie Fire missions. After checking my flight records, I see that I flew at least 426 hours (as a Marine crew-chief) and 1341 hours as a Cobra pilot flying these classified missions.

In February '71 I was transferred back to an Aero-Scout unit for the large push into Laos—called Operation LOM SOM 719. I flew with C Troop, 2nd/17th CAV, of the 101st ABN DIV. I flew in the Scout Platoon until June '71 when I was wounded (my 3rd Purple Heart). For at least three months I was back flying out of Khe Sanh again—and I loved it. I remember a reporter interviewing me (because I had been at Khe Sanh during the siege and hill battles) and he asked me for my feelings about Khe Sanh. Having lost many friends in the hills and air around the Khe Sanh airstrip, including the best man at my wedding—Jimmy Akstin, Khe Sanh evokes strong feelings in me. I told the reporter that although we were there—we were only there as guests of the NVA, for if they could withstand the B-52 bombing, they could sure make life very difficult for us there. An Army Captain (PIO) who was with the reporter tried to cut me off and I quickly reminded him that to the best of my knowledge, at that present time NO-ONE had more time at Khe Sanh than I (meaning in the area at the time.)

While flying for the CONDORS (C Troop 2nd/17th CAV) I was once again living, eating, refueling and breathing the Khe Sanh air. I loved it. I was home in an area I knew and respected, although flying scouts into Laos was



the roughest flying I've ever done. Not a flight went by when we didn't get blasted/took hits, with more wounded than we wanted. LOM SOM will go down in the annals of helicopter operations as one of the toughest battles ever fought. Not only was the amount of enemy anti-aircraft fire accurate, it was the most intense that helicopter pilots had ever seen. The losses were staggering. Every helicopter unit had had its bad days, but during LOM SOM 719, all who flew day after day had nothing but bad days. For many, it was the first time they had flown in the air against 23mm/37mm and larger. It was the first time they had experienced flying in a formation when one—or two—of their flight would be hit by air bursts. This was like what their fathers had flown into over Germany during WWII. The acts of bravery were many and I am sure that very few of them were reported. You just didn't have time—you flew your ass off all day and passed out from sheer exhaustion at night. In 6 years of total combat—LOM SOM 719 was the worst.

Anyway, after getting discharged and after a stay at Womack Army Hospital (Ft Bragg NC), I went to work for Air America—flying back where I was at home—Northern South Vietnam, Laos and over Khe Sanh. There were times when I was tempted to do a low level fly-by of the air field, and once when I took a few extra rounds, I made it back to the Southeast and landed at Khe Sanh where my mechanic quickly patched us up and we proceeded back to Hue. I ended up spending 22 months with Air America.

Khe Sanh is interwoven in my life. I watched the lush, green valley slowly get scarred and pock-marked with bomb craters over the years, with two rapid changes: (1) Fall '67-Spring '68 and (2) Feb-Apr '71. During these two periods the valley, and especially the area around the air field, was able to start its re-growth back to its green fields. But the push into Laos with LOM SOM 719 did 5 times the amount of damage that had happened when the Marines were there. Also, with the moving of the Yards to Mai Loc (just SWS of Camp JJ Carroll), the plantations and village disappeared and the wild green vegetation took over—even the red roads were quickly erased by the fast growing vegetation.

After I returned as a civilian, I would fly over the area to see how it was doing, though at times this proved to be hazardous, with the NVA moving into the area and no US/ARVN presence. Although my flights with AA were (and still are) classified, I do know that we had operatives working on the ground to the west of Khe Sanh—and from what I was told (in briefings), the area was crawling with NVA.

A little about me. I served in combat with VMO-2, HMM-263, HMM-262, 1stBN/6th INF 198th LIB, HHB (AVN Section) 108th Artillery Group, C Battery 4th/77th ARA 101st ABN DIV, C Troop 2nd/17th CAV 101st ABN DIV and Air America. I've got over 89 months overseas—with at

least 68 months in Southeast Asia. I served as a crew-chief/door gunner on the following aircraft: H-34D, UH-1E, CH-46A and CH-46D. I've been a pilot/aircraft commander of the following aircraft: OH-6A, OH-23G, OH-58A, UH-1 C/D/H, AH-1G and Bell 204 (civilian helo used in Nam). All these listed aircraft were flown/crewed by me in combat. I ended up with many awards; from the United States, South Vietnam and yes, even one from the Laotian government! I have two children still in Vietnam (Da Nang area). I have two children Stateside along with two grandchildren. I have three stepchildren (one of whom served in the Navy during Desert Storm.) As you can tell, I am currently serving time in a California State Prison for killing the man who raped my stepdaughter.

I, along with a good friend, Mr Ernie Payne, started Veterans About Face several years ago to help our fellow veterans who have not fared so well since the Vietnam War. Though some of these include those incarcerated, we also have an active program for the men at the PTSD section of the VA Hospital at Menlo Park. We've also been able to help some homeless vets. Although we are not a large organization, we have been lucky enough to have very dedicated people and we don't have the normal politics that are found in groups such as ours.

I know a lot of Khe Sanh vets—both Army and Marine (and a few civilians as well.) I happen to be a member of several other organizations that include Khe Sanh Veterans, such as Special Operations Assn, Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn., Vietnam Combat Pilots Assn., Vietnam Helicopter Crew Members Assn., Association of Air America, etc., and I will start making an appeal to these groups to pass the word about the Khe Sanh Assn.

Dau tranh

J 'Sneaky' White  
C-27182 11-121U  
P.O. Box 4000  
Vacaville CA 95696

---

DALLAS TIMES HERALD

Tuesday, Nov. 27, 1984

by Maggie Kennedy

Dear Dallas Columnist,

You'll never convince Jennifer Young and Gilbert Wall of Dallas or Bruce Jones of La Crosse, Wis., that it's not a very small world.

Jennifer Young worked for the Red Cross in Vietnam in 1968 and '69. Like thousands of other Vietnam veterans from across the country, she donned her old uniform and went to Washington D.C. earlier this month for the dedica-

continued on page 32



continued from page 31

tion of the new "Three Fighting Men" statue at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the long granite wall inscribed with the names of those who died in the Vietnam War.

"I stayed one day beyond that intense, emotional weekend," says Young, now a Vice President at InterFirst Bank. "Among the myriad flags, wreaths, letters, flowers and personal mementos placed all along the base of the wall, I noticed a note on colored paper which said: 'Gilbert Wall, F.O. 1st Bn. 26th Marines, Khe Sanh, contact Bruce Jones "T-Bone", in La Crosse, Wis.' There was an address and a phone number too.

"Obviously, it was written by a vet trying to connect with a long-lost buddy and placed at the bottom of a panel of some significance to them both," Young said. "I remembered that 12 years ago, I had interviewed and hired a Gilbert Wall when I worked at Mobil Oil in Dallas. On a whim, I copied the information. My first day back in Dallas I called the Mobil switchboard. Gilbert Wall still worked for Mobil. When I got him on the phone I said, 'Are you the Gilbert Wall who was a Forward Observer at Khe Sanh, 1st Battalion 26th Marines?' He said yes. Then I asked if he had attended the salute in Washington over the weekend. He said no. Then I said, 'Gilbert, T-Bone is looking for you.'

"Gilbert called T-Bone and they talked for two hours," Young continued, "and the note on the wall was taped to the list of 28 men Gilbert served with who were lost in a fire fight near Khe Sanh. Gilbert was one of only two men who survived the fight."

Jennifer Young and Gilbert Wall met for lunch after her phone call and the two talked about their experiences in Vietnam. Young was then a recent graduate of Purdue who wanted some adventure in her life before settling down to a career. In Vietnam, she was a Red Cross recreational specialist who flew by helicopter to secured landing zones and fire bases on the forward front to lead soldiers in playing game shows similar to those on television.

Young called Gilbert Wall "a bona fide hero."

Now a 40 year old accountant with Mobil, Wall lives in Irving and teaches boxing to kids in Oak Cliff. A Blackfoot Indian, he grew up on the reservation bordering Glacier National Park in Montana. He voluntarily joined the Marines in 1968 because, he said, he wanted to go to Vietnam. He spent 26 months there, was shot four times and has a Bronze Star for his efforts to save an officer during a fire fight at Khe Sanh. He also volunteered to be a Forward Observer, a job few soldiers sought due to its short life expectancy.

Bruce "T-Bone" Jones, a Marine radio man, was his best buddy in Vietnam.

"We arrived in Vietnam about the same time, served together for 13 months, got shot together and then lost track of each other when we came home," Wall said. "The last time I saw him was March 8, 1968. When we talked a few weeks ago, he told me he'd been trying to find me for years. He kept writing to the reservation in Montana but the letters never got to me or my family. He had no idea I'd moved to Texas."

Finding each other after all these years was a shock, Wall said. "Jennifer finding that note on the Wall was a one-in-a-million chance."

Now Jones and Wall are planning a joyous reunion. "T-Bone may come to Dallas in January or February on business," Wall said. "If that doesn't work out, we're going to meet in Las Vegas."

## A MOTHER WANTS TO KNOW

We have received notice from Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, In Touch program, that the mother of Cpl. Robert Franklin Owens is seeking contact with anyone who knew her son. Robert was with Delta Co. 1st Bn. 9th Mar. when he was KIA at Khe Sanh on April 16, 1968. Robert was a fire team leader with 1st Plt. If anyone out there knew Robert, please contact Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 2030 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 412, Arlington, VA. 22201, tel: 703/525-1107.

## FROM DEEP WITHIN THE HEART

*We've been together a long time now.  
I know you so well,  
and yet there's so much about you I don't understand.  
Sometimes when I reach out you withdraw.  
When I ask you to tell me about it you can't;  
your silence weighs deeply upon my heart.  
When I try to understand you push me away.  
How can I make you see I really want to help?  
Sometimes I just don't know how;  
I won't give up;  
I'll keep on trying.  
Just remember,  
the strength to go on comes from deep within the heart.*

Janet M Parker



Dear Ernie,

I have been trying to sit down and write ever since I got out of the Topeka V.A. in Oct but I have had nothing but family problems. My Dad spent all of Nov. in the Leavenworth V.A. and I have had a hard time getting my own life on some kind of track. I still go every Friday for out-patient group and one-on-one.

I guess I missed out on all of the issues of *The Khe Sanh Veteran* and hope I can get any that have come out since our Reunion. I hope I can get back on the mailing list as I really miss my mag. I will be sending my dues as soon as I get my next workers' compensation check. I don't know when I wrote to you last, so I will be sending some names that I found in the book of Topeka P.T.S.D. Unit Grads from or around Khe Sanh.

I feel I found something at our Reunion that I have been missing since my return from Vietnam. I found compassion and FRIENDSHIP, and people whom I can relate with. Although I may never find the guys from B-Recon with whom I identify and call my Brothers, I, with another SeaBee, did find some Brothers from Recon and hope we will see each other again. I also found new friends from Khe Sanh and some women who really care about their Vet husbands and the rest of us also.

Well Ernie, it's now January '94 and I am doing my best not to bunker up as I have in past years. This is my nightmare season—it usually lasts for three or more months, so I have been told not to isolate myself and work on being with people. I really don't get along with people at this time of year; actually, it starts before Christmas. I really hate the holidays—I hate being around large groups of people. I am working on this, but so far no positive results.

I am sure you have tons of mail to sift through from other Vets so I'll close this letter and get it mailed. I want to wish you, your family, and if you print this—all my Brothers out there the best for the coming year. GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

Your Brother

Lewis Sam Messer II  
C.B.M.U. 301 ('67/'68)

Dear Friend,

It was so good to hear your voice the other night. It gives me tremendous strength just knowing I have such special friends.

As you know, I chose to seek help within the Church. That was a tremendous step for me. (My Dog Tags from Nam are stamped "No Pref.") I have fought this for years.

Guess what? I lost!

Yesterday in Church, the theme was, of course, to ask for "Thanksgiving". How true. I have such a beautiful, healthy family, a new found faith in the Lord and I have something most people never find in life. I have the most special friends in the world. It is such a comfort to know you are there. You must also be assured I am OK and I will always be here for you—anytime.

I have taken your advice and backed off—just a little. I can never quit. I have mailed the tape to Tom Eichler to take to the Penns on Saturday after Thanksgiving. I am going to spend my four days making Molly a cedar chest I had promised months ago and just hang out with Maxine around the house. The last two weeks kind of wore her out too.

Please tell Pat I send my love and I had a wonderful time at your house.

Your friend,

Mike O'Hara  
B/1/26

Dear Mr Maves,

I have had correspondence with Brother Ray Stubbe and he was kind enough to send me a couple of back issues.

Your magazine is more than just a publication, it is a living part of our past and a thing we should never forget. Our experiences at Khe Sanh are unique to the Warriors who served there in the 'Hill Fights' of April and May 67 (my time) and the Siege in 68.

I will be discharged from the Miami V.A. Hospital by the time this letter reaches you. I have just completed a three month in-patient program for PTSD. We can never forget but we can learn to cope.

Respectfully,

Richard L Menard Jr  
3/9



## SOUL SURVIVAL

by Sandra Hill  
London

As a 19-year-old in 1938, my father joined the RAF Regiment, an outfit he was to stay with for 13 years. During World War II, the Regiment was assigned to artillery defence of British airfields, and it wasn't until the latter part of 1942 that the Regiment received orders to ship out to North Africa.

In mid-December 1942, they set sail on the merchant vessel "*Strathallan*", the Flagship of a huge 50 ship convoy. Loaded with military stores and 5,000 military personnel, the "*Strathallan*" also carried a crew of 431 and a compliment of 248 Queen Alexandra Nurses. Four days before Christmas, on the 21st, the convoy was steaming through a beautifully moonlit Mediterranean night. My father had gone up on deck sometime before midnight when the tranquility was brutally shattered by two huge explosions which virtually lifted the ship out of the water. Two torpedoes from an Italian submarine tore into the underside of the ship causing extensive damage, and as other destroyers in the convoy wheeled around to hunt down the sub, other ships steamed to the assistance of the crippled "*Strathallan*." In a desperate attempt to keep the ship afloat, within minutes of the attack the order was given to seal the lower decks. This effectively sealed the fate of thousands of military personnel still trapped below deck, including most of the nurses, the majority of whom had been asleep below deck at the time of the attack. Another ship took the "*Strathallan*" under tow but at 4 a.m. on the 22nd, the order to abandon ship was given. Those fortunate enough to have survived the maelstrom below deck clambered over the side into life rafts and shortly after, they watched the ship slide beneath the waves, consigning the majority of its human cargo to a watery grave. The loss of life was immense. In the wake of the attack, wartime censorship imposed by Winston Churchill dictated that the tragedy went virtually unreported, so as not to give the enemy a propaganda victory. "Official" losses were reported as 2 ships engineers, 4 crew and a small number of passengers (the magical numbers game was in play even way back then—"REMFs" playing God with the stroke of a pen). During the course of the ship's evacuation, my father, who couldn't swim, almost drowned. He recalls floundering in the freezing water before sinking beneath the surface and only vaguely recollects someone reaching down, grabbing him by the hair and hauling him back up and into a life raft. The "*Strathallan*" incident was the one experience of the war which haunted my father

more than any other.

My interest in war history started at a very young age, having been virtually weaned on war stories. One of my earliest and most enduring recollections is listening captivated as my father recounted tales of his wartime experiences to visiting friends and relatives. Whilst being too young to comprehend the implication of his narrative, I knew he must have been describing *something* exciting the more animated he got. My father never talked to me directly about his experiences, I only learned about them as an observer. As his stories unfolded, I would turn my inquisitive gaze to his impromptu audience and see the resigned look in their eyes, or catch an exchanged jaded glance pass between them. They'd see me watching them but paid no heed, little realizing that despite my tender years, I'd sussed them. I remember feeling indignant about that—or whatever passed for indignation at such a young age.



Cpl. Len Hill RAF

In those early days, I remember my elder sister being the apex around which everything revolved; everyone's favourite (first born's are always special aren't they), and I felt pretty much left on the sidelines. So I turned to my father. I recall trailing around in his wake wanting some of the attention my sister was getting, but he was an emotionally distant man who had difficulty displaying emotion of any kind, and I was forever kept at arms length. Most of my young friends' fathers' hadn't been old enough to serve during World War II but my father, being 10 years their senior, did see action, and when I compared my friends' relationships with their fathers' to my experience, as young as I was, I knew something wasn't right. At around the same time, my parents were going through a very rocky patch and they were always arguing. My mother constantly moaned at my father for always recounting his wartime experiences whenever we had visitors—she wanted him to leave it in the past, and that was guaranteed to be the ignition switch for more arguments. Consequently, because I inclined more toward my father and was content to listen avidly to his wartime reminiscences, my mother used me as a kind of 'whipping-boy' to get at him.

During those early years, my father was more like an observer than a participant in my life and I don't recall any respite from my mother's sniping—she didn't miss a shot to get at him via me. It was like being piggy in the middle, with no support from either side. In the end, I think it got to be a habit she just couldn't break. After a couple of years of this, things eventually came to a head when my grandparents had a huge showdown with my parents because I



was threatening to run away—I was convinced they didn't want me. I was ten years old at the time. It culminated in my grandparents taking over my upbringing. Whilst I continued to live at home during the week, weekends and school holidays were spent with my grandparents. With them, I got what I couldn't get at home—attention, affection and peace. For my father's part, he buried himself in his great passion of photography. He was sufficiently proficient to be asked to officiate at friends' weddings as the official photographer on a number of occasions. He used to 'escape' into his studio-cum-darkroom at home where he practised his art of portrait photography—using us kids as 'subjects'. We were required to sit for prolonged periods as he set and reset camera angles and lighting, and it got to the stage where I developed such a loathing for the camera that to this day, my automatic reaction is to turn away when faced with one.

Things with my parents never improved, and the beginning of the end came at age 15 (the year of the Siege), when I got a place in college which I was only able to take up through the support of my grandparents. The two years that followed were a personal struggle, during which time things got pretty crazy. With the advent of the psychedelic 70's, I found the ultimate escape from all the trauma going on around me and I drifted off into stoned oblivion. I used to go home some nights totally spaced out and my mother never even noticed. My father did—although I suspect he thought it was booze. He may have kept a low profile but he never missed much. He was a watcher. Shortly after finishing college and starting work, I admitted defeat and threw in the towel. After yet another major confrontation, I went out and didn't go back. At 17 years old I left with my sanity but very little else.

Looking back with hindsight, and by studying war and its effects on its participants, I've learned enough to realise that my father's recollections of his wartime experiences were his therapy. He wasn't blind to the reticence of his sometimes reluctant audience—he kept on going because he needed to—confession being good for the soul. In the absence of Reunions or support groups, which the Brits have never been hot on, his only outlet was to those around him. When that became a problem for my mother, he just withdrew into himself, taking his memories with him. He always gave the impression of being restless, of not being satisfied with his lot, but he never did anything about it. To a great extent, war vets need their own kind. Only those who have shared the war experience can truly appreciate what lies behind the words and memories, and the need to share those memories. A bonding of kindred spirits. When I see what American vets get out of their Reunions and support groups I really feel for my father. He's never had that. He stopped sharing his experiences when he thought people didn't care enough to hear them anymore. There was nobody to say, "Hey! I know where

you're coming from—I was there too" or, "Do you remember..."

My father's war experience lasted just over 4 years, at the end of which he came home to a grateful nation and a heroes welcome. In comparison, the Vietnam war rolled on and on, year after year. It was a "hit and run" type of war, where the enemy rarely stood and fought. You had to go in after them, got ambushed, booby-trapped, maimed in body or soul, or both, pulverized with artillery, and for those fortunate enough to make it back to the world, then faced the condemnation of their fellow citizens. That fact alone is almost as appalling as the war itself. When it comes to war, it doesn't all end with the cessation of hostilities or a tour of duty. The small print on the contract says, "We've got you for life".

As one whose outlook on life is that of fatalist, I firmly believe that destiny guides one and all. Those who returned from the war were pre-destined to do so. Those who didn't went on to fulfill their destiny elsewhere. When all is said and done, most war veterans possess restless souls desiring only to find the respect and peace of mind which so often eludes them. Most, unfortunately, have to settle for considerably less. Despite my father's shortcomings in the participation of my upbringing, I've always held him in high regard. In an oblique way, I wouldn't have developed such an interest in war history if it hadn't been for him. Throughout my life he's been like a shadow in the background, yet I've turned out pretty much like him. I've inherited his disregard for life's trivialities; his tendency to stand back and observe; his restless spirit—which is an underlying factor in my life, and of course, an avid interest in war history. I often wonder how different my early life might have been if he'd had support groups the way you guys do. I wonder...

I was watching the video "Dear America" recently, based on the book of letters men and women in Nam sent home to their families. There's a fair sized section on Khe Sanh and the Siege, and it featured a photo of Don Jacques and read out one of his last letters home before his patrol was ambushed and wiped out. It's really something—it's the third time I've watched that video and I've only just made the connection that he was the subject of the "Doomed Patrol" in "Welcome To Vietnam, Macho Man". You hear all these young guy's letters home, reassuring their families they're going to make it; so full of hope—then next day they're gone forever.

The final letter to be read out is one left by a mother at the Wall addressed to her long lost son, in which she told him she was visiting the Wall because she needed to see and touch his name once again, and that alongside his name on the Wall was her heart—which had been broken since he'd lost his life all those years ago in Vietnam. She

continued on page 36



continued from page 35

concluded by saying that she would rather have had him for the 21 years of his life, together with all the pain she'd endured since losing him, than never to have known him at all. It's such a heart-rending letter it just demolishes me every time I hear it.

I wonder what people would have done if there'd been nowhere to channel their grief—if there'd been no Wall.

## RAGING MEMORY

by Patrick Fitch  
B/1/26

Khe Sanh was 59 minutes of abject tedium punctuated by 60 seconds of terror. Film is the whore of terror but a bitch that reviles truth. She genuflects to trauma, disdains the monotonous 59, hyperventilates with the adrenaline of the clash. The truth is, however, sometimes vividly mundane, humorous and unfit for the voracious small screen frothing for more blood. "Give us the 60 seconds!"

No, I won't. What you may have is a segment of the 59, some of the glue that molded the Brotherhood for its final minute. Before the 77 days, we were still Marines, patriots and citizens. Our identity did not begin January 21 at 0535. That was only the opening moment of our 60 seconds. But we were there before then—and so was Tom Meade.

Tom had mesmeric eyes. His "black Irish" features and quick wit were gifts denied an entire generation of young American peers. He was a principled man who truly believed in God and country without affectation. It was my deep pleasure to have known him. Like all deaths, I try not to dwell on the end. He was gregarious and cards were one of our few diversions.

Long before that January, "Saint Thomas" would convene the semi-regular "convocations" in the Delta Company S-1 tent. We would gather around the altar of adolescent greed and play poker. That silly "script" which replaced greenbacks in-country was almost too hideous to handle. It had a shale red tint, akin to bad cabernet. Throwing it away in a poker game seemed a logical pursuit in a place devoid of logic.

My last game with the S-1 troops who worked with Tom was replete with booze. I have no idea how it appeared. The Air Force would procure a "fifth" for any Marine at Khe Sanh for the beneficent sum of only \$25. (ED: \$25 was cheap—some paid \$100.) To this day, you Airdales are still pricks. Lownds should have shitcanned your asses sooner. Anyhow...the game was on at Delta Company and there was enough of something that looked

like Jack Daniels to make every one of us happy. As I recall, there were always about eight people in the game.

My exit came, however, when Tom asked me how much I'd lost. There was another raise. I passed—then looked at the funny money on the box desk that served as card table. After counting about \$980 showing, I turned to Tom. My memory retains the original quote—but I can paraphrase:

"There's enough fuckin' ammo and booze here to stage a major firefight," I said to Tom. We were all so glib. My M-16 had 160 rounds lovingly draped around it with an "H-Harness" that had that reddish dirt that permeated the base. My ass may have been combat ready but I would have been an abysmal inspection piece.

Tom said that a little more booze and one or two frayed tempers might make the game a transition to combat. It's just that the tinted Monopoly money on the desk just didn't seem real. Tom did convince me that discretion needed to prevail when the S.Sgt next to me unhooked the handle strap to his pistol. I left the tent and went outside with Tom, visited the piss tube and felt elated that I had escaped with a mere \$60 deficit and all my limbs appropriately attached. Then we laughed.

That's what I still remember about Tom. Not the end, but the beginning and the middle. He was only a Corporal there, but he's a celestial Sergeant Major now.

Semper Fi.

*ED: During a taping that Ken Pipes did for National Geographic, he included a segment done at Camp Pendelton. I saw Pat pay tribute to Tom Meade, who was my company clerk (KIA 6 Feb 68). I called Pat and asked him to do a memoir on Tom. I told him that I have a rubbing from The Wall of Tom's name and it hangs over my computer. "Tom is my muse," I said to Pat. I did not realize how unsettling this would be for you Pat. I hope that in seeing this you can see how angry you still are. I hope our Air Force brothers forgive your unnecessary comments. I seriously considered editing them out but realized that to do so would negate your feelings, which are no doubt real.*

*I end by asking you, Pat, how long do you want to carry this?*



## Thomas Aloysius Meade

*"Hippiecrits" he called them.  
Students in 'The World'.  
Did they know? Did they care?*

*His name was Thomas.  
Apostle of doubt.  
Penultimate Aloysius,  
surname Meade.*

*The rocket round  
directly taken.  
Chest high - no cry.*

*He had a name, and it wasn't "Corporal".  
Left a twin brother  
and a father who asked:  
"How did he die?"*

*But the letter was a lie.  
No body bag need apply.  
A backpack sufficed.  
For the arm and the watch  
we tagged remains.*

*Just another stat.  
Body count ours.  
On a damp little mesa.*

*Just a faded memory of the 26th Marines  
in a place called Khe Sanh.*

*His death was obscene.*

*Patrick Fitch  
B/1/26*

## All For Naught

*Do not speak to me of honor;  
Do not speak to me of pride;  
Do not speak to me of nations;  
Where - for naught - our valor died.*

*What care I for fancy logic?  
What care I for reasoned thought?  
I have buried the friends of my heart -  
All for naught - all for naught.*

*What care I for politicians  
fighting over why we fought?  
I have buried the friends of summer -  
All for naught - all for naught.*

*What care I for fancy speeches?  
I grow tired of shiny lies.  
I have buried the friends of laughter -  
All for naught, laughter dies.*

*Do not speak to me of sorrow;  
Give my grief the peace I sought.  
You are not fit to speak of men;  
Dead in Asia, all for naught.*

*Robert A Hall  
HQ 26th Marines*



## RETURN TO VIETNAM

by Nancy Smoyer

In April 1993, I went back to Vietnam for a month with the Veterans Vietnam Restoration Project. Our group was small, three combat veterans and myself, a Red Cross Donut Dollie. We spent two weeks renovating a clinic at Cu Chi and two weeks traveling north to Hanoi. We worked and traveled with former Viet Cong and NVA soldiers which added an unexpected, but very welcome and therapeutic element to the experience, especially since I was stationed at Cu Chi during Tet. It was an unsettling experience to be introduced to a fellow worker who was the head of the local veterans group, learn that he had been at Cu Chi during the entire war and realize that this man was lobbing mortars and rockets at me during Tet. However, during the two weeks we worked together on the clinic, we formed a special relationship in spite of our language difficulties. He gave me his gold star pin and I gave him a pin from the 10th anniversary of the Wall; we joked and teased and spoke of friendship and peace. His face became the face which humanized the enemy for me.



*Nancy Smoyer on the road back to Khe Sanh.*

first few days I found myself getting more and more depressed as the guys in the group were getting more and more excited about how wonderful everything was. I wasn't interacting with the Vietnamese people on the work site or getting involved the way I normally do when I travel, and I couldn't figure out why I was acting so differently.

Then at the end of my third day I had a revelation. I realized that I was mourning the loss of "my" Vietnam. As I thought about it, I was able to identify the stages of the

grief. My denial has been in thinking about Vietnam as being unchanged since I left, complete with GIs and fire bases and choppers everywhere. Instead, I was hit in the face with a completely different country, a new reality which I didn't want and couldn't accept. My bargaining had been that if I kept connected with the vets and activities related to Vietnam, then the experience stays alive and not over. The anger I've felt has been toward the Vietnamese people, the Vietnamese government and the American people and the American government. Those feelings of

anger have spilled over in many parts of my life. And then there was the depression which I've dealt with in various forms for years, and which was hitting me full force again, right then and there.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. The most important thing that happened was a process I found myself going through during my first week there which caught me completely by surprise. My primary reason for going back was to get over the feelings of anger and animosity I've carried for the Vietnamese for 25 years. Although I was well aware intellectually that my feelings were for the most part irrational, I also knew that I wouldn't get over them until I went back. From my experience on other trips to Third World countries, I was pretty sure that those feelings would disappear almost immediately, which is, in fact, what happened. However, there were other aspects I hadn't foreseen.

Even as we were driving from Tan Son Nhut to Cu Chi, I found myself thinking, "What are all these Vietnamese doing here; where did they come from?" and "Where are the GIs?" It was so strange and upsetting to see no American presence, nothing to indicate that we had ever been there. It made the whole thing—the war, the losses, the pain, seem even more of a waste. During the

As I understood this, I knew that I had already dealt with the anger toward the Vietnamese people—that left immediately, and after working with the Vietnamese veterans and going into their homes and meeting their families, it was impossible to continue carrying my negative feelings. As I read *The Tunnels of Cu Chi* and crawled through the tunnels, saw pictures in every home we visited of family members who had died in the wars, visited the massive graveyards and memorials to the war dead, heard about the 300,000 Vietnamese who are still missing, I gained a compassion and understanding which I hadn't allowed myself to feel before. I had accomplished what I came back to Vietnam to do.

But even though I now understood much of what I was feeling and had even gotten over my negative feelings toward the people, I was still not at the point of acceptance. As I told the guys, I wasn't ready to give Vietnam back to the Vietnamese. But then, after a week or so of being unable to talk about my changed feelings toward the Vietnamese people without choking up, I realized that it



was over. I was done with Vietnam. Not done with the vets or with the after-effects of the war, but done with the country and with the people. It's their country, they fought for it (on both sides), they earned it, and although I now care for them—whereas I didn't before, that part is finished. I still have all the other aspects of Vietnam (the war, not the country) to deal with, but at least one is taken care of.

Now I have two Vietnams—the one in my memory, in my pictures and in my vets, and the Vietnamese Vietnam. It had been "my" country for a while—my GI Vietnam—and yet it was theirs, and should have been all along. I had been afraid of losing my Vietnam, of having to replace it with the "real" one, but now I realize I can keep them both—different but the same, separate but together, entwined.

So that was my experience. Traveling north after that was almost anticlimactic. It was wonderful to finally see Khe Sanh and other Marine fire bases, to get sand from China Beach, to go to the village near Da Nang where my brother was killed, to search for the Red Cross villa in Da Nang (which I never could find), to look for bullet holes in the Citadel, to visit the fascinating and disturbing war museum in Hanoi where the possessions of the POW/MIAs have been stored, and to just take care of unfinished business.

Other observations. The Vietnamese people really are as friendly toward Americans as I had heard. They carry no grudge that I could see. I asked several of the former enemy why that was and their response was that they had been told by their government, and they firmly believed, that American GIs were not there because they wanted to be but because their government sent them, so that made all the difference in their attitude towards us. After we had seen the museum and site of the My Lai massacre, our Vietnamese veteran guide told us that he didn't like going there because it wasn't representative of the American GIs, that this was an aberration. (His son was killed at Khe Sanh in 1972 and has never been found. The image of him standing on Khe Sanh with a Marine who had been there during the siege I will never forget).

The Vietnamese veterans are very puzzled and curious about Americans' PTSD. When I asked whether they experienced it they said no, because they knew what they were fighting for and their country's response toward them was totally different. However, we did observe some stress-related problems, which is not surprising after 40 years of continuous war.

I recognized nothing. Oh, Marble Mountain looked the same, and I think I recognized a field just before a bridge in Da Nang, but I could have been dropped anywhere for all I knew. The NSA hospital is empty sand dunes, the bomb craters are mostly filled in (especially in the south),

the rice paddies are green, cows graze on Khe Sanh (at least inside the perimeter—mines are outside), there are tons of water buffalo, the kids are a joy—and the war is over.

Post script: I originally wrote this about a month after I got back, five months ago. Since the trip, something has happened which I hesitate to identify because I can't believe it's true or real. I had listened skeptically as I heard others talk about a change in themselves after going back to Vietnam, and yet somehow, that change has happened to me. Friends have noticed that there is something different about me—I'm a little more tolerant, a little less impatient, a little more open and less negative. Somehow, the cloud has lifted a little bit—I feel lighter.

I've heard that when one feeling leaves, space is made for something else to move in. I know that a lot of anger has left, but I can't identify what it is that has taken its place. I keep being afraid that the old me will return, and it may, but this reprieve has shown me that there is another side, another way to be. That realization is what makes me want to share this experience with others in hopes that they too might find, or make, the opportunity to let go of some of the pain.

---

Steve Riddle  
1/26 Scout Sniper

Dear Ernie,

I enjoyed our visit at the Khe Sanh Reunion. In many respects it was akin to stepping into a nuclear reactor, the way the energy and emotions were flying around. It certainly triggered a lot of memories ranging from very painful to extremely humorous.

Per our discussion, I have enclosed some photos of some of the members of our S-2 scout/sniper section 1/26. In addition, I have included some recollections of my partner and bunkermate, Nelson Jones.

Nelson and I reported to the scout/sniper section together. He stood close to 6'4" in height and weighed about 230lbs solid. He and the great Cleveland Browns fullback, Jim Brown, could have been related. Sgt Garcia was the chief scout and Lt Sibley was in charge of our S-2 section.

We spent many hours filling sandbags and working together as a team, operating the TPS-6 troop detection electronics device. At that time, we mainly worked at night on Bravo, Charlie, Delta 1/26 and the ARVN Ranger perimeters. We also scouted for patrols once we started operating outside the wire.

When I first met Nelson, he appeared to be quiet,  
continued on page 40



continued from page 39

introspective and religious. When I got to know him, he definitely was quiet, introspective and religious! Nelson was also a fatalist. If something was going to happen, it would happen. This philosophy resulted in many hours of discourse between us. I never once heard the man curse. During quiet moments, I often observed him reading his military issue New Testament Bible. He told me that he derived a sense of peace and purpose from his religious



Joe Schiller, Mike Jarmon, Kit Carson Hep and Steve Riddle—  
Scout/snipers 1/26.

beliefs. As we became better acquainted, he would sort of give me the silent treatment if I used blasphemous or foul language. It initially pissed me off, since being scared, under fire, tired, dirty and surrounded in the middle of nowhere, lent to the generous use of profane language as being the most apropos semantics, considering the overall situation. Nevertheless, an inappropriate expletive would cost me a bout of silence from my immense counterpart. This turned into a form of game between us. I, of course, would often slip, particularly with close incoming or unwelcome work details after we had been up most of the night. I usually could solicit a pretty good smile or even a laugh out of Nelson if I would sarcastically on occasion say to him: "Golly! But that was a close one!", then roll my eyeballs. Often, just to gig him, I would say something like: "For goodness sakes Nelson! Do you think that the Gunny figures we're the only two assholes on this whole fucking base that are so adept at digging holes, filling sandbags or burning shitters?" Of course, looking at him quizzically, with a glint in my eye.

One night, on the ARVN Ranger lines, we were taking incoming fire. A round came in real close and the concussion knocked me unconscious momentarily. When I recovered my senses, I was inside the ARVN command bunker. I was laying on the deck and Nelson was trying to get me to talk to him while checking me over to see if I had sustained any hits. I was so stunned that I couldn't even gener-

ate some sort of smart-ass comment. A couple of ARVN Rangers explained to me that Nelson had dragged and carried me from the fighting hole in the middle of the incoming fire to the bunker. I looked up at Nelson and told him I appreciated what he had done for me. He was squatting over me looking down with those huge hands of his just hanging there and nodded and shook his head like it wasn't any big deal. Later that night, I went back out and noticed Nelson in the close vicinity bird-dogging me to make sure I was okay. On reflection, it felt like there was a benevolent oak tree shadowing over me. I was very fortunate to have had a partner of his caliber and character working with me.

I separated from scout/snipers a week or two after we landed at Wonder Beach and was re-assigned to the 3rd Combined Action Troop in Phu Bai. Nelson and I lost contact after that. I later heard that Nelson was on the operation with Delta Company 1/26 and was in the close vicinity when Captain Hughes was KIA due to heavy machine gun fire. He may have been medevaced—I never found out.

For me, Khe Sanh represented my first three months in-country. I remember thinking, 'you only have ten months and a wake up to go!' I know Nelson made it back to the world because I didn't see his name on the Wall. I pray that life has been good to him and that he and his family are well.

I'll always remember Nelson as being a physically imposing individual whose quiet resolve far surpassed his physical capabilities, which were considerable.

Like so many others, Nelson and I had seen the elephant together. To have spent my time at Khe Sanh with that gentleman/Marine was a privilege and an honor.

Semper Fi

## THE OLD WOMAN

by Talis Kaminskis  
CAC-O

She was old and wrinkled. It was easy to see all her features. Her body lay motionless in the grass just a few feet from the hooch she called her home. Only a few nights earlier a meal had been shared there between her and her family and a few Marines who shared the village with her son. The world had seemed such a safe place. A haven far from the violence of war that surrounded the country. The laughter and gaiety of the meal had caused all to forget why they were able to come together. Now the reality was harshly reincarnated. The sound of weapons had echoed from morning till now, and none had really paid attention to their destruction. In the world around it was rather common place, and for those who had lived with it



for an extended period of time, taken for granted. But now, now it wasn't just another nameless casualty. It wasn't a warrior whose job it was to kill and/or die. It wasn't one whose death could be expected in such a place. It was a little old lady. Body aged beyond actual years. Wrinkles a roadmap to the life she had led. The stillness of death betraying the vibrancy she had so recently shown. Had raised a family in a world which had known little peace for generations. Taken pride in a granddaughter to whom she was passing on her ways. Welcomed the young strangers who came to help fight a war she had little patience for. But drawn into by the son who was a village Sergeant. She had chastised their mistakes and laughed at their awkwardness. Had served them food from her kitchen and waited for grimaces as they tasted it for the first time. But she never gave up. They were always welcome to visit. To leave the war behind. To have brief moments where they could escape and find such brief sanctuary. Now it was all gone. An "errant" shell from a friendly gun. A sudden blast. Caught out in the open, away from her bunker. It was all over. A life had been snuffed out. No marks betrayed the cause of her death, but that was of little consequence. The finality of death was all the proof that was needed. The body now being cradled in the arms of a mourning son was just as still. Marked or no-marked. Rocked to and fro in a futile attempt at restoring life, the permanence was non-removable. The Marines witnessing the scene turned away. Some did not know how to handle it. Others were afraid of how they would. None wanted to share the moment with the others. The unexpectedness of the war's latest victim had brought them all closer to a reality they did not wish to confront. The death of warriors was expected. The death of unknown civilians could be tolerated. But the death of one who had shown them kindness and a touch of home was not what was supposed to occur. In spite of all they had already experienced, because of their youthful years, they still had retained a hold on a bit of naiveness. That had been cruelly shattered by the personal touch the violence of war had inflicted on them. No, they weren't men because of it. But just young bodies, that much more tired. That much more aware of it. Knowing that as they stepped away from the scene, they were still part of it, and always would be.

## THE MAD MOMENT

Manuel Babbitt  
A.T.'s

Comrades, do you remember what we did with the old ammo? I remember a tree—or just the hint of one. The ONTOS, crosshairs in place, sighted in, one shell in the 50 cal. spotting rifle. One on each top gun 106 shell in each of the six guns waiting for the command. I know to the Grunts it was a sweet sound and often shook the ground when we

fired a salvo; "all six at once", nothing alive should survive! Somehow, that tree-stump was not laid waste. Oh—it was dead alright, probably the Agent Orange found its mark. All the plant life around it was dried out. I cannot believe the NVA walked away unharmed—though many died there. I was left with much despair, I found it hard to breathe the air. Red dust was everywhere, under my nails, in my pockets and in my close cropped hair. In my skin, I do believe I tasted it in my tears. It was caked in my boots, my cammies were soiled as well, but we all knew water was scarce in hell. It must have tasted like seasoning to the rats we shared our living space with. Some of us settled for sea rats. (one can each) for many days. I filled up on rice cakes I traded the scouts. Once a week I'd visit their camp just to make eye-contact; they were just as close-mouthed as I, but we had a common goal, to survive. They liked the hard peanut butter and cigarette samples. I was happy to see a smile; it was probably the only gesture that kept me sane. But in Vietnam it is wise to fear nature; it is wise never to forget they are home with unwanted guests.

## THE COWARD OF KHE SANH

*The coward of Khe Sanh - each day you see him rise.  
He runs outside to take a pee  
then gives the high sign and runs inside.*

*The coward of Khe Sanh doesn't walk, doesn't run.  
He's doing a shuffle, bent forward a bit at the hips.  
At the sound of the mortars, rockets or arty  
he becomes the fastest man alive!*

*The coward of Khe Sanh works on the strip.  
He hauls ammo from the dump to the pits.  
He loads the rounds into the tubes.  
He also wants to kill an NVA or two.*

*The coward of Khe Sanh sometimes leaves a trail -  
a trail of shit paper flying behind.  
Some asshole yelled "incoming!"*

*The coward of Khe Sanh, see him run.  
One hand on his head, one on his gun!  
His weapon is for fighting - his gun is for fun...*

*The coward of Khe Sanh.  
Nowhere can he run; nowhere can he hide.  
So each day and each night he stands on the firing line.*

*The coward of Khe Sanh, he looks at you,  
from out of my eyes.*

Lewis S Messer  
CMBU 301



## ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

by Joseph M Belardo  
1st/44th—"C" BTRY

It seemed as a young man I had a special bond with nature. I would spend hours exploring her, hiking her and enjoying her. She taught me to be patient, and my eyes and mind could and would be filled with her wonderment. On the outside, I could look in and see her like the song, beautiful and spacious skies, amber waves of grain, majestic mountains. I knew she had spread her grace on me. I began to give my attention to others by watching their eyes. Their eyes would tell all emotions. I learned through eye contact happiness, sadness, confusion, romance and love. I experienced from the touch of the hand, the hug, that eye contact is what I thought a real man should be about.

Uncle Sam cast his eyes upon me and gave me the look of one of America's best. The new look fit me like a glove. I enjoyed the hairy eyes the drill instructors could give. The staredown the officers would try to show. I would return any look required. I knew sustained eye contact would give them away.

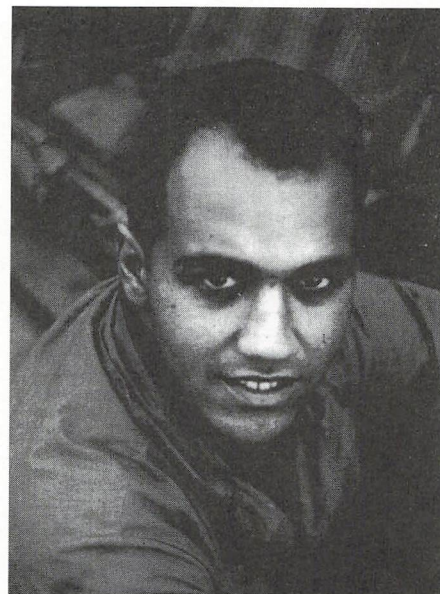
Like most GIs of my era, I was sent to the land of the dragon. My eyes could not believe her beauty. It was a feast for eye and mind. God didn't make this land for killing or dying, man did. Uncle Sam sent me north to the Zee. My eyes became filled with confusion. This army dog was now attached to the Halls of Montezuma.

I took on another new look. Squad Leader on a M42 Duster, a twin 40mm Ack-Ack gun. It was our job to give the North Vietnamese Army the look of death. Something my eyes and mind had never seen or experienced. The Duster separated men from man. There was no room to duck, no place to hide, nowhere to run. It was straightforward, face to face, eye to eye dueling. Very little guessing of who was killing whom. While the Marines blazed I could see from my open turret the Marines I supported. My eyes would agonize the feelings of others. Marines running, jumping, yelling, shouting, killing, screaming, wounded and dying. Arms meant for hugging lovers were now holding friends, wounded or dying.

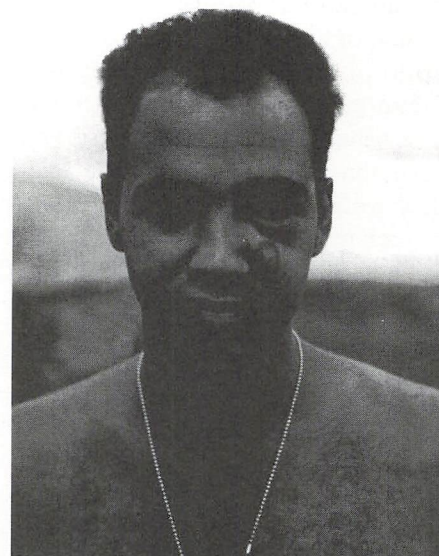
All eyes now filled with horror, sorrow, fear, hate and pain. Eyes screaming at each other for help; eyes looking for targets hiding in the shadows; eyes unbelieving; eyes fixed in stares, glazed by their final journey to their God. I began to wonder why my God allowed me to see these atrocities of life. The squeeze of the trigger was easy, but the eyes of the suffering and dead were forever—regardless of who was on who's side.

I came home a broken warrior. Eyes and mind spent from too many firefights, too much incoming. Eyes being witness to the dark side of life. My Uncle Sam had completed my training, eyes do tell all.

My eyes now walk this earth, half filled with tears—hoping never again to be "on the outside looking in".



*Joe Belardo at Khe Sanh, June 1968.*



*After taking shrapnel soon thereafter.*



## PAY BACK

by Robert Shippen  
S.F. CCN FOB-3

I left the war in December '68 after 12 months in-country as a medic with the Army Special Forces. I went on with my life. For 25 years, Viet Nam continued to surface, usually when I least expected it. Smells, sounds, rain, low clouds, red clay, news accounts of trouble in other parts of the world, often reminded me of Viet Nam. Viet Nam has been like an old acquaintance who drops in to visit at awkward times, uninvited, not welcome. I may have left the war but Viet Nam hasn't left me.

I decided to confront Viet Nam directly. In October of '92 another veteran and I loaded two suitcases with donated medical supplies and returned by commercial airliner. This time we were armed with goodwill, medicines and a list of three medical facilities where we'd deliver equipment. Vung Tau has a clinic built by returning Viet Vets under the direction of Garberville, California Veterans Vietnam Restoration Project. Le Ly Hayslip's East Meets West Foundation has a clinic near Marble Mountain outside of Da Nang. The Medical Director of the regional hospital in Hue City had a need for supplies. These were our destinations to provide "humanitarian" assistance.

Approaching Tan Son Nhut aboard Air Vietnam on a flight from Manila, I felt palpable fear. Our country didn't have relations with the Communist Vietnamese. Would they arrest me? I imagined being shot down by a SAM or a U.S. F-4. Paranoia maybe, but the too-familiar anticipation of my pending death was very real. We landed safely and passed through customs with brusque indifference by young men and women wearing NVA uniforms. No guns visible anywhere. A returning Vietnamese aboard our flight befriended us with a ride to downtown Saigon/Ho Chi Minh City where we got a room at Hotel Saigon.

Dining in elegant restaurants, watching folk dances and ethnic musical performances at Maxim's and the Caravel helped us relax and recover from jet lag and ever-present anxiety. We visited museums and made friends with cyclo drivers, most of whom were former ARVN soldiers. We hired a car and took a day trip to nearby Vung Tau. Here we delivered medicines to the Friendship Clinic built in 1988 by the Garberville, California Veterans Vietnam Restoration Project.

When we left Saigon, we traveled north. My friend wanted to visit the waterfronts at Da Nang, Quang Tri and Dong Ha. He wanted a boat ride on the Cua Viet River where he'd operated small river boats. I wanted to visit Da Nang, Marble Mountain, Phu Bai and Khe Sanh. We booked a five day tour to these places through Vietnam Tourism in Ho Chi Minh City and flew to Da Nang. We

were met at the airport by a courteous interpreter and driver with a late model Toyota Sedan. We stayed in first class hotel rooms and ate good food. Bottled water was provided. After delivering supplies to Le Ly Hayslip's clinic at China Beach, we toured Marble Mountain.

During the war, Marble Mountain was used as a field hospital for Viet Cong and NVA casualties. It was in the cavern where enemy patients had been treated that I met a group of about 20 high school students on a class outing. When they realized I was an American veteran I was asked to join them. They sang folk and love songs, shared their refreshments and practised pretty good English with me. I felt as if I was being welcomed home by Vietnamese the same age as soldiers I'd fought and killed not more than 500 meters from this mountain 25 years earlier. It was a homecoming more sincere and warm than any I've received in the USA. It was very emotional. After Marble Mountain I was no longer afraid in Viet Nam.

We drove up and over the Hai Van Pass, stopping at will to explore Japanese, French and American bunkers. We burned incense at a small VC cemetery along Highway 1 just south of Phu Bai. While in Hue, we visited the Citadel, rode a boat on the Perfume River and toured tombs and temples. At Dong Ha we rented a sampan for a trip along the Cua Viet. We then drove to Cam Lo and turned onto Highway 9. We drove past the turnoff for Con Thien and stopped at The Rockpile. We visited a Bru Montagnard village and performed an impromptu Med Cap on a young buffalo girl with severe malaria. We drove across new bridges and stopped to look at the ruins of the old ones destroyed during the war. Bomb craters became evident as we approached the plateau where we'd find Khe Sanh Village. We turned onto the access road leading to the Khe Sanh Combat Base. We were there. From this point on I was the guide as none of the Vietnamese had been there before.

The clay is still red. Low clouds and mist still send a chill along your spine and blanket Co Roc mountain in the distance. Hills 950 and 1015 stand as permanent sentinels over the plateau. The runway is now marked by a monument erected by the government honoring their sacrifices during the war. Many of our trenches have been excavated by people digging for scrap metal to sell. I was able to find my old position along the south and western perimeter of FOB #3. Memories from 1968 returned as if the decades had passed in the span of only a week. I gave private and reverent respects for those, friend and foe, who died or were wounded at Khe Sanh.

I felt depressed and didn't stay long in this place that to me continues to reek of loss, pain, death and war. It is still a very heavy place. Depressing, painful and real. I had confronted Viet Nam head on. Healing from war is a life-

continued on page 44



continued from page 43

long process. I know that my memories won't go away, nor should they. I need them to help with my future. Returning to Viet Nam helped me put my experiences there into context with the present. My memories of the war now are more in the context of where I've wanted them to be all along, the distant past. As Vietnamese continually say, "The war ended long ago."

Khe Sanh is still a dangerous place. An unexploded artillery round lay near a hole on the runway, wisely abandoned by whomever dug the hole. Several times a year people or livestock are injured or killed by exploding ordinance. I brought home souvenirs: a handful of spent rounds that littered the old access road, a USMC brass insignia excavated by a metal collector as I stood nearby and a handkerchief filled with dirt from my old position. I also left Khe Sanh with the intention of returning at least once more. My healing had just begun.

I went back in April of 1993 with a small group of American veterans. We went as Team Seven of the Veterans Vietnam Restoration Project to build a health clinic in Cu Chi. We consisted of a Navy vet, a Marine vet, a Red Cross entertainment worker and myself. After two weeks of daily labor building the clinic, side by side with former VC, we toured the country for another two weeks. All of us visited sites where we'd served during the war. We traveled from Cu Chi to the Delta, stayed in My Tho and rode a boat along the Mekong River. One of our group had served several tours as a Navy gunboat pilot in that area. We traveled north along Highway 1 overnighing in My Tho, Saigon, Vung Tau, Nha Trang, Quang Ngai, China Beach (2), Hue (2), Khe Sanh and Hanoi (3). The Marine had served at Con Thien, Khe Sanh and in the mountains along Hwy 9. Our route took us through the following places: Ham Tan, Phan Thiet, Phan Rang, Nha Trang, Tuy Hoa, Quy Nhon, Quang Ngai, My Lai, Tam Ky, Da Nang, China (My Khe) Beach, Hue, Quang Tri, Dong Ha, Con Thien, Mai Loc, Hwy 9 to The Rockpile, Ca Luu and Khe Sanh. We then took the train north to Hanoi where we visited museums and did the general tourist thing. Each of us had a personally healing experience on this journey. We provided one another with support.

This latest trip was booked through CCB Tours with headquarters in HCM City. This company is operated by the Cu Chinh Binh (CCB) or Vietnamese Veterans Association, their equivalent of all our veterans service organizations combined. CCB Tours specialize in taking groups of American veterans to visit former battlefields. If asked, they will arrange personal meetings with veterans who fought against us in specific fights. We met and worked with quite a few men and women whom we'd fought during the war. It was an enlightening and healing experience. We went to their homes, met their families

and played with their grandchildren. They are aging veterans living simple lives, trying to get by peacefully. All of their eyes have "The Look" that comes from seeing too much. Some told me that meeting American veterans after more than 20 years has helped heal their psychological wounds. I highly recommend CCB Tours for making in-country travel arrangements, especially for larger groups or film crews.

It was through CCB Tours during our overnight at Khe Sanh Village that I met the Chairman of Huong Hoa (Khe Sanh) District, a member of the Bru Van Khieu ethnic minority. I received a formal invitation to bring teams of American veterans to work with the Bru, providing needed assistance in areas of medicine, agriculture and education. I'm currently trying to raise funds and other resources with which to actualize this venture. I'll keep you and the Khe Sanh Veterans Association apprised of progress in this project.

## **"He Won't Ride The Horse He Loved— He Was Killed In The War"**

by Kay Maddox  
Daily News Staff Writer

"In an April 25 letter to his parents, 21 year old Mountville Marine, Mitchell White wrote: 'Do you realize I only have a little over 11 months left over here?'

Young White was a private first class in the Marine Corps and had been in Vietnam nearly a month when he wrote that letter. Six days later, the young private was reported killed in action in the vicinity of Quang Tri, Republic of Vietnam.

He was the son of Mr & Mrs Thomas White of Mountville Road.

The Marine continued, 'The time is passing pretty fast. I wish it could go faster. My rotation date is April 9, 1969.'

In the third paragraph of his last letter, Mitchell asked about Dixie, a quarter horse who is somewhat wild. Dixie was given to Mitchell a year ago by a neighbor, Frank Lewis. The horse had been halter broken by the youth but that was as far as the training got. He told his family, 'If y'all have too much trouble with Dixie and can't get close enough to train her, talk to Dail and see what he can do. I'd hate for somebody to get hurt trying to train her. If I was there, I think I could handle her alright.'

Now Mitchell will never get home to handle Dixie and



the horse will probably continue to roam the pastures. Mr White said the horse only comes down near the family about once a month.

The boy, a 1967 graduate of LaGrange High School was the only son of Mr & Mrs White. He had three sisters; Charlotte, an eighth grader at Hill St. Junior High; Susan, a LaGrange High senior and Gloria, who is married and lives at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Mitchell was a boy who loved the outdoors. He joined the Marine Corps 'to get it over with' and said in his last letter he was thinking of buying some land in Mountville when he got out of the service. He wrote, 'There's not much happening over here now. Anyway, we haven't been doing anything. I like it like that. All we do is go on working parties and so forth'

The Marine was killed when he 'sustained shrapnel wounds of the body from hostile mortar fire while on an operation', according to General Leonard F Chapman Jr., Commandant. The family learned of the death of their only son yesterday afternoon. A Marine Officer from Atlanta, accompanied by the Rev. Buddy York of the LaGrange Dunson Baptist Church, told the family of the tragedy.

The Whites' were members of the LaGrange church but have been attending the church in Mountville since they moved to that community. Mrs White is a senior at LaGrange College and is working in the laboratory at City-County Hospital. The soldier's father is a long time employee of Dunson Mills here.

The family has not yet completed arrangements to have the body sent home."

10 Pages--One Section

Full UPI Coverage

## He Won't Ride The Horse He Loved, He Was Killed in War

By KAY MADDOX  
Daily News Staff Writer  
In an April 25 letter to his parents, 21-year-old Mountville Marine Mitchell White wrote, "Do you realize I only have a little over 11 months left over here?"

Young White was a private first class in the Marine Corps and had been in Vietnam nearly a month when he wrote that letter.

Six days later the young private was reported killed in action in the vicinity of Quang Tri, Republic of Vietnam.

He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas White of Mountville Road.

The Marine continued, "The time is passing pretty fast. I wish it could go faster. My rotation date is April 9, 1969." In the third paragraph of his last letter Mitchell asked about Dixie, a quarter horse who is still somewhat wild.

Dixie was given to Mitchell a year ago by a neighbor, Frank Lewis. The horse has been halter broken by the youth, but that was as far as the training got.

He told his family, "If ya'll,



MITCHELL WHITE

## COUNTRY BOYS

by Bill Yates  
W/1/13

I come straight to Vietnam from Schools battalion. A C-130 put me down in Dong Ha around Feb 26, 1968. We wuz in some stagin' tent when a sergeant come in to give us our orders for where we were goin'. "Yates," he says when he calls my name, "Whiskey One Thirteen."

"Where'bout's that?" I asked him.

"Khe Sanh," he says.

I says, "I better write me a letter home tonight, this might be my last one." laughs. That night at Dong Ha we took incomin'. It wuz my first time bein' fired on. Sounded like a freight train comin' down the line.

I finally got me a chopper ride to Khe Sanh. I jumped out the chopper, left my seabag lay and headed for cover. We wuz takin' incomin', Charlie was hittin' us good. Finally, things settled down to where I could find Whiskey Battery. The gunney showed me where two rounds had just hit inside the battery area. That first night I wuz there, there's supposed to be an NVA assault. They wuz passin' out grenades. I had me my M-14 issued at Dong Ha. He assigned me a position just outside the FDC since I was a new guy and didn't know what I wuz doin' yet. I wuz real scared man! We fired all night from our battery and the next day we got word from the base commander that we'd gotten 71 kills from our battery.

I remember them parachutin' in the supplies. Stuff shook the ground when it landed. You could hear Charlie firin' up at the planes with automatic weapons.

I got ordered up to 861 that had been hit and partly overrun. We had two guns up there. I got up there March 6. You could see Khe Sanh real well from up there. That's the first time I got to fan fire my M-14 wuz up there. We'd shoot out over the wire. We wuz gettin' hit steady by mortars. Some of the guys who got medevaced left their M-16s, so's I took me one of those. One day I wuz on a work party buryin' com cables when Charlie dropped in a coupla rounds on us. It really messed up some of the guys. Next day, some of the grunts wuz outside the wire choppin' down the elephant grass so's we could see 'em before they could get up close. One of the guys hit a booby trapped grenade. The guy laid down there on the LZ for quite awhile waitin' for a chopper. He died 'fore the chopper could get him out. So, after he wuz dead, they didn't need the medevac. He laid out there on the LZ for over four days in the hot sun. He wuz in one of them big plastic bags. I'd have to walk guard every other night and had to walk by him. Made me remember to when I first

continued on page 46



continued from page 45

got in-country. I wuzn't in Da Nang two hours 'fore they assigned me to a work party unloadin' bodies. That shook me up. Anyway, you could smell this guy's body clear up on top the hill. He wuz married and had a little girl who wuz five months old at the time.

We wuz bein' given two C rats and two canteens a water a day back then. Finally got to come off that hill April 28 and went down to Khe Sanh. Got to take a shower for the first time since I arrived at Khe Sanh. Felt real good! We wuz jokin' 'bout who we wuz goin' to get to go off with that night. Where we wuz goin' to eat. Go to a show, or somethin'.

From Khe Sanh we went to Ca Lu. Stayed there 'bout two weeks. There wuz a creek to wash in down there—that wuz nice. Then we went to Camp Carroll. It wuz at Camp Carroll that I got the news 'bout Mitch. We finally had a lot of our old mail come in. I see the letter from home with the old post mark. The clippin' fell out. I see Mitch's pitcher. I says, 'I wonder what Mitch done to get his pitcher in the paper...' And then...uh...I looked and saw the headlines and...uh. It wuzn't until after I got to Quang Tri that I found out what happened to Mitchell. He wuz my best friend and uh...well...he did all he could do, I guess.

They had hot showers at Quang Tri. I got me some pitchers from back home while there. We got hungry for some home food. One the men snuck into the ville, killed a chicken, brought it back and we cooked it. See, we do have some good times over here! You people think it's all just war. Most times we try to have good times. When we left Quang Tri we went to Da Nang. They had runnin' water in the bathrooms. Flush toilets and all that. I figured I'd flush them a few times for the guys that didn't have any.

Went out to Hill 85 the next day. 'Fore I left Georgia, I used to read 'bout all this stuff in the papers. Now I'm over here and it's real. I'm glad to be over here, do my part, but...uh...I'll be glad to go home. Get outtah this place.

*(ED: suddenly, his voice changes in tone and intensity)*

Roger...Roger. Stand by. Son-of-a-bitch! Deflection...zero...one...eight-five.

*(ED: another voice goes)*

Stand-by...Fire!

*(ED: now I'm really confused, until a much older, more gravelly voice of the one I'd been listening to comes on. The tape is now much clearer).*

Well...Lieutenant Ernie Spencer, this is William Robert Yates. Bob Yates. They called me Willie Roe for short when I wuz in the Marine Corps. That wuz a tape that wuz made September 2nd, 1968, at Cau Doi. Today is December

31st, 1992, in Franklin, Georgia. I thought I wuz gonna get all that fire mission on the tape but it ran out. I enclosed the old newspaper article and pitcher of my best friend, Mitchell White. It's a copy of the one fell out when I wuz at Camp Carroll. He wuz at Cua Viet, Camp Big John when he got killed. He wuz with weapons platoon 2/4. I thought he wuz a hero. It really shocked me when that pitcher fell out. He wuz such a good fella. Well...talkin' 'bout Vietnam, one thing I remember most when I was on Hill 861 wuz the rats. They wuz huge! In a bunker that another fella and I shared, I guess 'bout 8 by 5 feet, them rats be crawlin' all over you when you'd sleep. Scared to knock 'em off or they'd bite you.

And...burnin' shitters. I remember burnin' 'em, the winds blowin' North, I stand to the South side. Then it'd turn around and the wind would blow south. Didn't matter where you wuz, that wind wuz gonna blow that smoke on you! And...the piss tubes. They were pissin' in piss tubes. They'd be so full that it come out the top! You know, not many people know what I'm talkin' 'bout. Some do...not many.

I remember one night they had a patrol on the ridge next to us on 861. We had an infrared scope and we wuz watchin' 'em when they started gettin' hit. They got hit pretty bad. Medivacs...a few KIAs. One fella I remember particularly. I helped hold him. The corpsmen cut his throat, put the bottom half of an ink pen in his throat and taped it up. I dunno if he lived or died. But, I think 'bout that sometimes. The other time...a chopper come up to drop us off some supplies. It wuz goin' back down...then it went down between us and Khe Sanh. It wuz too far away for us to do any good and I guess too far away from the people at Khe Sanh. We could see 'em. We could see the people. We could see the NVA come outtah the bush, firin' at 'em. And Billy Moffet got on the 50 caliber machine gun and started firin' on the enemy for 'em. Reason I remember that so well 'cos I grabbed hold the barrel and got blisters on both my hands. Dumb boot! Eventually a chopper come got some of the survivors off the downed chopper. Another time I wuz on patrol, a water patrol. We went down between 861A, a little ridge next to us. We each had two 5 gallon cans. There wuz a small LZ over there. It was hot. Chopper come in and dropped off a pallet and left. Some of us went up there to see what it wuz. It wuz full a ice-cream—vanilla ice-cream! It wuz marked to go to a ship. I gathered up all the ice-cream I could hold and went back over to 861. I passed it out as fast as I could 'cos it wuz meltin'.

I had a lotta friends when I wuz at Khe Sanh. I'd like to see 'em. Maybe we can all get together at Washington D.C. Talkin' with you Ernie and all I told you, I don't write well. You asked for the tape, so I sent you this one, and...I got outtah the Marine Corps 'bout the year 1969. And, uh...July, went to go and try to get back in. But at that time



## CHRISTMAS

*'Twas a Christmas Eve on the Laotian border, twenty-five winters ago.*

*The air was heavy with fog; a fine mist was blowing,  
and the silence was so heavy it could be sliced with a blade.*

*The young sentry was ending his watch.*

*All was well on the perimeter in front of his position.*

*Relieved of his post, he retired to his bunker for a meal of ham  
and lima beans,  
hot chocolate and two camels - unfiltered.*

*Solitary, in the candlelight he was visited by loneliness,  
a haunting longing for home.*

*On this of all nights, why the hell was he here.*

*He should be in front of the tree with egg nog,  
with parents and sister, with sweetheart.*

*He knew there was a service at the other end of the line.*

*Christian, nondenominational, to celebrate the birth of a God.*

*He wasn't religious; gave it up years ago.*

*It wasn't reasonable; it was only mythology.*

*Being alone was ushering in melancholy, that would never do.  
Out into the damp he climbed, bundled in field jacket and poncho.  
A voice in the night asks, "Who's there?"*

*"It's Jones."*

*"What's the password?"*

*"Gunrunner."*

*"Pass on."*

*This repeated for two miles until arrival at the end of the line.*

*To the tent on the top of the hill.*

*To the nondenominational service.*

*The Chaplains were men Jones had learned to detest  
because of sermons on warriors dying for a blessed cause.*

*This one was young.*

*A Protestant type with a boyish face and naive attitude.*

*In the stillness of night the sermon was exhorted  
about the birth of the Christ child  
and how he died for man's sins.*

*The communion was started.*

*Men got in line for a taste of the flesh and a sip of the blood.*

*Not a sound could be heard along the trenches at the time.*

*The Chaplain led the men in a hymn for the season;  
about the soldiers and sailors who had died for the cause  
in wars of the past and the wars of the present.*

*A crescendo of voices, some out of tune, emanating from rapt faces,  
ascended to the top of the tent.*

they didn't need me. The recruiter told me they had more men than at anytime in Marine Corps history, but I always think it wuz 'cos on Feb 23 I wuz in Headquarters battery 1/13 gettin' ready to come home. My RTD wuz comin' up when they hit us. I got shrapnel in the side of my face. Then I got shot in the hip. Took pretty close to 200 stitches. Tore the muscles loose in my leg. I'll always believe that's the reason they wouldn't let me come back in...

I dunno, but uh, since I got out...I don't like to be around people. I get around people or a crowd and I feel like I don't fit in a lotta times. Strange to me, everybody you seem to talk to, well most times, some a them people like to say they's at Khe Sanh. They get to tellin' their stories—and you know they weren't there. You hear these kinds a people...that's why, you know...that's why I'm a loner. That's one reason I started drivin' a truck, just to be by myself and uh...course, I enjoy it. Nobody bothers me. Huhhhhhhh (long long sigh). Certain days a year it really bothers me...like February 23rd and durin' February, March, April on 861 and Khe Sanh, and we got overrun August 17th out at Cau Doi. Took heavy casualties. Wuz lucky then I didn' get a scratch put on me until I wuz gettin' ready to come home. I can be somewhere...I hear a song, it flows me back. I wanna stop. I can jus' smell it. You know? Vietnam. They play a song, Papa Topa Gen, or Harper Valley PTA or Jack Flash or...I dunno, there's so many of 'em. Puts me right back. I can almost feel like I'm there again. I didn' get married until I wuz 34 years old. And ah...it's been hard on my wife, but uh...sometimes I just like to go up in the woods by myself. Eat some cold pork beans. Sometimes I go up to the trash dump and sit

continued on page 48

*Out there in the dark on the Laotian border, the enemy was moving,  
and Charley had been spotted.*

*A Listening Post hidden out in the fog  
called for mortars to be dropped on the enemy patrol.*

*While the congregation sang and exulted in the Christ child,  
the mortar battery outside the church tent starting firing rounds  
out into the nigh47t,  
and after the thunk of the firing, they whistled into the heavy black  
sky.*

*As Jones' skin was crawling,  
he heard the thunk and the whistle accompany the hymn  
as it was sung with fervor.  
And he thought to himself sadly,  
'No wonder I am lonely'  
because existence means nothing if the Christ child shoots mortars.*

Ken Rodgers  
B/1/26 - 2nd Platoon



continued from page 47

and ...uh...just smell it stinkin'. I dunno...maybe you know what I'm talkin' 'bout.

But nothing's done me any more good than findin' out 'bout this Khe Sanh Veterans. It's really been a big help to me. Run up some hellatious phone bills sometimes callin' people. I wish I could go back sometimes. I wish I could turn back the hands of time and I could do things different than what I did it, but I can't.

I just wanna tell you thank you for everythin' you're doin' for me and the rest of us. I hope I haven't bored you too much. So I'm gonna say, Happy New Year. Semper Fi and I'll be in touch.

*ED: Brother Yates sent me this tape some time ago. After listening to it the first time, I set it aside to save for a special occasion. I cannot think of a more fitting way for me to go out than with this piece. I could never have imagined that forty years ago, as I dove in the crystal clear waters and roamed the rain forests of old Hawaii, that someday another country boy like myself from the other side of our country would share his soul with me like this. I say to you my Brothers and Sisters that Brother Yates and his kind are the true John Waynes' of Khe Sanh —we don't need Hollywood images.*

## THE KHE SANH VETERAN INC.

is a non-profit, non-political, tax-deductible, 501-C Corporation. Its purpose is to record and preserve the history of the experience known as "Khe Sanh," to promote healing among those who served there, and to encourage artistic projects by its members. Membership is open to any member of our armed forces who ever served at, around or over Khe Sanh, Vietnam, between 1961 through 1971.

|                                       |                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Annual dues .....                     | \$20.                                                                                                                          |
| Life membership dues .....            | \$150.                                                                                                                         |
| President .....                       | Ken Penn                                                                                                                       |
| Vice President .....                  | Michael O'Hara                                                                                                                 |
| Secretary .....                       | Ray Stubbe                                                                                                                     |
| Treasurer .....                       | Bill Maves                                                                                                                     |
| Chaplain .....                        | Ron Exum                                                                                                                       |
| Sergeant-at-Arms .....                | Ed Diaz                                                                                                                        |
| Board of Directors .....              | John Balanco      John Kaheny<br>Earle Breeding      Carl Oksnee<br>D.J. Bland      Gary Parker<br>Jim Dawd      Jim Wilkinson |
| Newsletter Editor .....               | Ernie Spencer<br>458 Holiday Hills Dr.<br>Martinez, CA 94553                                                                   |
| Associate Editor .....                | Sandra Hill                                                                                                                    |
| Design and Layout .....               | Leo Wong<br>ResourceFull DeskTop, SF                                                                                           |
| Subscriptions/Change of Address ..... | Ray Stubbe<br>8766 Parkview Court<br>Wauwatosa, WI 53226<br>414/771-9987                                                       |

**Submit all letters, poems, and writing for publication to Ray Stubbe.**

**The Khe Sanh Veteran** Newsletter  
c/o Ray Stubbe  
8766 Parkview Court  
Wauwatosa, WI 53226

000000502      1293  
WILLIAM JAYNE  
10000 BOXFORD CT  
FAIRFAX VA      22030

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
QUANTICO, VA  
PERMIT NO. 5

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED