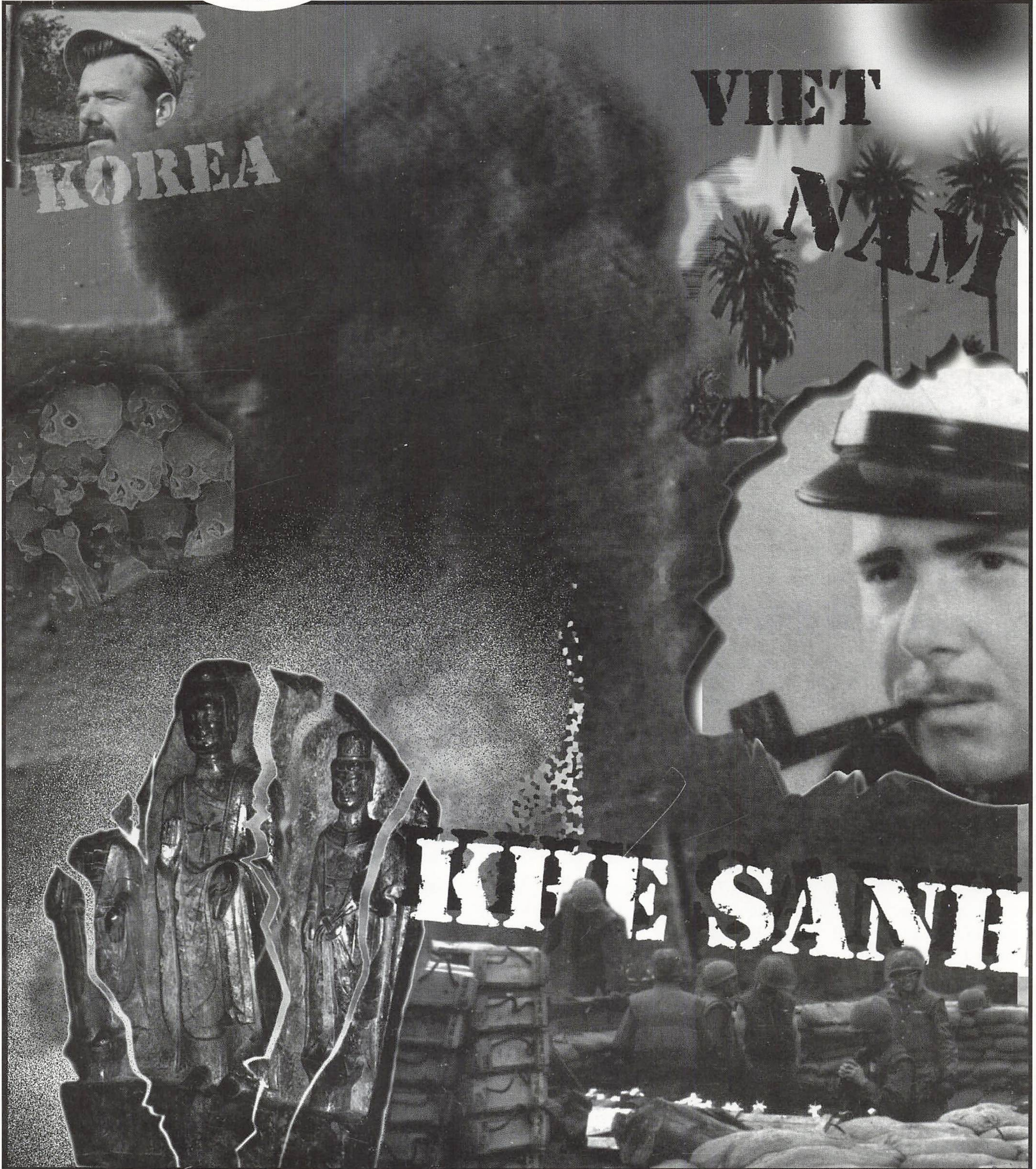




Volume 2:1

Fall 1995

The Khe Sanh Veteran



Sgt. Major James Gaynor, 1/26 USMC, KIA 2/15/68

John Kaheny

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This time of year seems to be filled with anniversaries. November 10 is the birthday of the Corps. The next day is Veterans Day. As we all know Veterans Day is celebrated on the anniversary of the end of the Great War (World War 1). It is also the anniversary of the dedication of the Wall. January, of course, brings us our anniversary of the beginning of the siege. It is no wonder that we fill these days with quiet contemplation of the role our small band of brothers (and a few sisters) played in the fight for life on that remote plateau in Southeast Asia.



John Kaheny, Khe Sanh 1967

It is 28 years since I stood watch in the fire support coordination center of 1/26 and listened in awe to radios squawking chaos in the night as fire and steel rained in on us from the long range guns of Co Roc. When I recently retired from the Marine Corps Reserve, I looked back at all the events I had experienced over the last 33 years, none of them, including Desert Storm, compared in any way with the siege. I guess that maturity brings us a fuller realization of the impact on our souls of that gallant struggle against a most formidable foe.

Those of us who have attended our reunions are also keenly

aware that we still have walking wounded among us whose scars have not yet healed and perhaps will never heal completely. That is one reason why our reunions are such an important occasion. As I indicated in my first president's message to you we do conduct some business at the annual meeting. However, the most important purpose of the gathering is to provide the opportunity to meet fellow warriors who stood shoulder to shoulder with you in those terror filled days of the siege and to listen to them freely express themselves in a caring environment. Many of us survived that battle with many unanswered

questions. You may very well find the answers among your comrades. The reunion is a truly remarkable healing experience.

We will be meeting again in Philadelphia on July 24-25 1996. I encourage all of you, especially those who have not yet attended a reunion, to come and enjoy a couple of days with your fellow Khe Sanh veterans. It will be an occasion that you will long remember.

John Kaheny
1/26

510/228-4756.

The Khe Sanh Veteran will not publish material of a political or sectarian (religious) nature. The By-Laws of our organization specifically state that we are a non-political, non-sectarian, historical, artistic society. This magazine is a forum for our members and their families to express their feelings and views about the Khe Sanh and Vietnam experience. Selected non Khe Sanh veterans work will be published at the discretion of the editor and the editorial committee.

Notice to All Contributing Writers

The Khe Sanh Veteran is your magazine. Without your contributions both monetary and written it would not exist. We are well aware that many of you who have sent in letters, memoirs, poems or other written work have not been published. This is due primarily to the confusion which has existed as to where and to whom to send your work. We have attempted to print everything that has been sent in, but know we have not printed the contributions of everyone. It is for this reason that we ask everyone who wishes to contribute written material to this magazine to go through Ray Stubbe. Send your writings to Editor c/o Ray Stubbe 8766 Parkview Court, Wauwatosa, WI 53226. Ray will see to it that a copy of your work reaches the editor. We ask that the poets send in their poems one at a time. Pick your favorite that has not already been published and send it to Ray Stubbe.

With this issue our known backlog is current, except for poetry and longer memoirs. Those who wish to have their memoirs published will have to cut them down to no more than two thousand words, or make special arrangements with the editor to publish in parts. Those memoirists who wish help in editing their work may contact Ernie Spencer the editor of The Khe Sanh Veteran and author of Welcome To Vietnam Macho Man. Those who do not feel comfortable writing, may, with prior arrangement, send their taped memoirs to Ernie. Write to Ernie Spencer at 458 Holiday Hills Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 or call him at

The Khe Sanh Veteran

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Hey guys!

Just another grunt corpsman from Echo 2/26 trying to get you to take your malaria tablets. Let me look under your tongue. Dammit! Yeah, well they give me the runs too.

Being a two-time loser, I'm not keen on women right now after the divorces, but there is a woman here who has produced a video that I think you should see. It's called HOME OF THE BRAVE. For the guys still on the edge, maybe they should see it with someone they trust. You be the judge (it's the corpsman coming out in me).

Some of it hurts, but it seems to heal open wounds. We are not alone.

Here's the details: Home Of The Brave Foundation, 6303 S. Rural Rd. #3, Tempe, AZ 85283.

If any of you know of a nurse who owns a liquor store and has great legs, give her my address. What the hell, third time's a charm. I make great ham and muthas.

Semper Fi,

Doc Swanson

P.S. The dumb corpsman ended up getting malaria. Oh well.

Dear Editor:

I am enclosing some of the poems I have written about Vietnam and Khe Sanh. I hope you find some worth sharing in the newsletter. I am working on a deal for a book of Vietnam poems and I would like to use art in the book by Khe Sanh vets, if possible. If anyone wants to write and send a sample my address is: Charles Patterson, 725 S. Figueroa St. 1200, Los Angeles, CA 90017

I am a former Marine and Vietnam veteran. I served with Electronics Maint. Co., Maint. Bn, 1st. FSR in the Da Nang area or at Red Beach. I am trying to contact anyone who served with my high school buddy, Charles "Woody" Cronkite. He died of shrapnel from an RPG to the chest and right shoulder about 1600 hours 10 Sept. 67, near Con Thien. He was with India 3/26. Woody and I graduated from Suitland High School in Suitland Maryland in June of 65. When I was the "new kid" in Junior Hi, Woody introduced himself and then looked out for me. He made me feel welcomed. I attended the 3/26 reunion in Tysons Corner, Virginia. I met his fire team leader and the corpsman who saw him get hit. Woody was with 3/26 less than two weeks when he got hit. He had spent most of his time with MAG-16.

Michael P Rummel
841 La Strada Dr.
Fallbrook, CA 92028

Aug. 29, 1995

As the chaplain at the VA Medical Center, I am writing on behalf of two of my patients who were at Khe Sanh—Asberry York, F/2/4 and Stephen Foster, B/1/26.

Mr. York wrote a letter to the editor back in January in response to Phil Ball's request for information on F/2/3 of Foxtrot

Ridge in the November, 1994 issue. He and I are concerned that maybe his letter got lost in the shuffle, so enclosed herewith is a copy of that letter in the hopes that you can publish it and that Phil Ball will be able to read Asberry's reflections on Foxtrot Ridge.

Yesterday, Stephen Foster, who brought me aboard the Khe Sanh experience after his attendance at your 25th anniversary reunion in 93, continued his Khe Sanh story with me. I was deeply moved as he described the 26th Marines Orphanage. Does anyone have any photographs related to that place and time?

Since Steve is temporarily without an address, I will take any replies for him at: VAMC, 2215 Fuller Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105.

Thank you very much for your work.

Sincerely,

Chaplain Roland Schaedig

I really like the cover on the December 94 issue and what it represents, the lives lost and torn apart by all wars. One thing I wanted to ask is if any of you know of an orphanage I could donate to in Nam. I want to do something to help those kids. They were so cute and innocent, but were forced into the war too.

Semper Fi

Sam Rutledge

W 1/13

Ed note: Sam check out Bob Donoghue's article, in this issue

My name is William Prescott. I live in Georgia. I have been reading your magazine articles about the Viet Nam War and wanted you to know that I enjoy the magazine very much. The articles are direct and genuine and are not contaminated with any artificial colors or flavors. The articles are written by real people for real people and this I appreciate. Your magazine allows people to express themselves and they usually zoom in with surgical precision to cut away the cancer of doubt in the mind as to what the real world was in the Viet Nam Era. Americans may not like or appreciate the politics of the Viet Nam situation, but Americans should appreciate the efforts and sacrifices of the men and women who served in the war.

I served my time in the U.S. Army from 1961 to 1964 and before that I was a member of the Georgia National Guard from 55-61. My friend William R. Yates of Franklin, Georgia introduced me to your magazine. We both enjoy your magazine and certainly hope that it will continue to help promote and enhance the quality of all those who have served, are now serving, and will serve in our armed forces.

I greatly appreciate your contribution. Keep up the good job. It is important to do so.

Respectfully yours,

William Prescott

Ed note: Brother Yates' powerful memoir, COUNTRY BOYS, appeared in our Spring 1994 issue. He tries his hand at poetry in this issue.

My Sergeant Major

by Jim Wilkinson
CO 1/26

"Sergeant Major, why are you here with a line outfit?" I asked. I could not believe that a very senior sergeant major would be assigned to a line outfit. After all, from his record book, I could plainly see that the man would have been in the rear with the gear unless something or someone had intervened. He was on his "twilight tour." He had done Corregidor at the beginning of World War II. He was taken prisoner, did the Bataan Death March and survived as a POW until the end of the war. I was struck by his calm and friendly demeanor.

"This my final tour, sir," he said matter-of-factly. "I feel that I can make a difference with these young Marines. They need positive role models. That's what they've always needed. Third MAF Headquarters doesn't need my skills. These Marines do."

As the siege intensified and the incoming increased, I became concerned about the possibility of a ground attack, but Sgt Major Gaynor calmly said, "No, not yet. The incoming will have to get a lot more intense before they try a ground assault on us." Experience learned the hard way had taught him. Corregidor had schooled him for this, for Khe Sanh. What a man he was, all over the place. Visiting and comforting the young Marines and me. February 15 was a dreadful day. It didn't feel right to me. I couldn't put my finger on it, but I knew in my heart that something was happening. Sgt. Major Gaynor heard me ask my radioman to saddle up. I planned to tour the perimeter as was my custom. He insisted on accompanying us. It was my suggestion that we split up and each go in a different direction and meet at Charlie company's area.

I remember the dull gray sky that day. The heaviness in the air. The incoming was sporadic. When I was about two-thirds finished with my half, I saw a rocket pass over me and impact on the Charlie company line. The rocket had hit the company command bunker. The wounded were immediately taken to our battalion aid station.

When I got there, Dave Ernst, the company CO—a wonderful commander—was on the table with his shoulder bandaged and his arm in a sling. His radio operator was a KIA. Jim Gaynor was on another table, his head completely bandaged. Ed Feldman and his dedicated corpsmen were doing everything possible. Sgt. Major Gaynor was unconscious. I tried talking to him, hoping beyond hope that he'd come to. My pleas went unanswered. We had requested a priority medevac but nothing happened. I dashed down to Colonel Lownds' headquarters and asked that he intervene. He did and the medevac chopper from Dong Ha came.

Jim Gaynor was alive when he left Khe Sanh, but died in route to Dong Ha. I was devastated. I had to go and identify him. I am honored to have been given that assignment. He was my sergeant major. Although the difference in our ages was not that great, he was more a father to me than my sergeant major. The entire battalion was deeply saddened by his death. His steadfast bearing, his maturity and experience, his sense of humor, his dedication to the Corps and, above all, his inspiration to the young Marines at Khe Sanh is a lasting memorial to his indomitable spirit. I could not bring myself to visit him at the Wall until 1993 when we had our 25th reunion in Washington. I shall never forget the man. He was and remains forever a Marine's Marine.

I was stationed at Khe Sanh from September 66 to July 67. I was with the LSU ammo platoon in FLSG. I was the NCO in charge of making the original ammo dumps. We distributed ammo on a MULE. We helped pull out two Chinook pilots from Dong Ha when they crashed into a Huey sitting on the runway. Its blade came undone and was out in the runway when the Chinook hit it and crashed, burning before exploding. The second Chinook right behind the first one tried to swerve away but hit the first one. Both were on fire with rounds going in every direction. I climbed aboard and helped take the two unconscious pilots out. I handed them out to my guys in my squad. I had so much adrenaline pumping, they was light as a feather. Never got their names and never found out what happened to them. After we cleared the Chinooks we ran over to the Huey and pulled all its ammo off. Those ammo belts seemed a mile long. This all happened at night and when we got back to our tent we discovered that one of the helicopter blades went through our tent cutting the poles and our cots. We just looked at one another and shook our heads.

I remember the 26th Marines coming up to Khe Sanh. We took rockets real bad one night. Rockets and mortars. A lot of my friends were killed or wounded. We took about 80% casualties. I had an underground bunker with metal runway mating and four feet of sand bags. It saved my life! Does anyone remember this? I'm also trying to remember the name of our lieutenant. He was a 1st Lt. and real green. When they shipped us barrels of CS gas he took us to the perimeter, set some in front of a claymore mine and we detonated it to see the results. The wind shifted making us cry and we ran from it. We used those barrels as shoring on the sides of the ammo dump.

Another time we took a load of captured and bad ammo, grade 3 and 105 short rounds to some bomb crater on Hwy 9. After we blew the ammo, there was a lot of frags that blew off the pile and weren't damaged. So we had to fire all the leftovers. After about an hour of this the NVA got interested in what we were doing and commenced firing on us. We got in the PC and shagged back to Khe Sanh, bullets flying and rockets hitting the road behind us. When we got back I hauled ammo in the truck for months before we discovered an unexploded chicom mortar round behind the seat. Not knowing if it were inert, my lieutenant ordered it blown in place. So don't call me if you need a tire fixed.

I think of all our buddies who died there and it stays with me every day and night. I don't talk about it to anyone much anymore, and it feels good to talk about it now.

James A. Wodecki

From Sea Tiger 19 April 1968
Khe Sanh Reminiscent of WW1 Trench Warfare
by SSgt. Phil Hartranft

KHE SANH — Before the U.S. Forces began the big push during Operation Pegasus to link with the Marines at Khe Sanh. An old World War 1 Marine could have visited the northwestern most I Corps combat base and been filled with nostalgia.

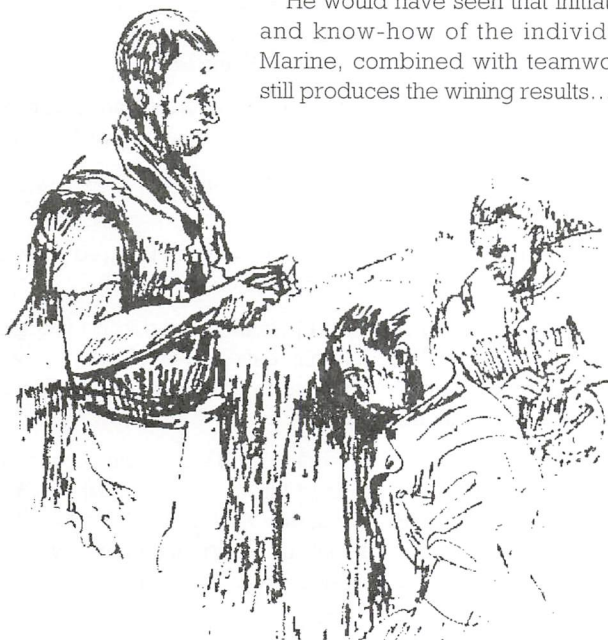
Fifty years and three wars after he was fighting in France the "Devil Dog" would find that today's Leathernecks had been involved in a form of trench warfare strangely reminiscent of WW 1 days...

He would have found some changes though. The food situation was much improved with the nourishing rations of today. Of more amazement would have been the body armor worn by the Khe Sanh defenders...

Yet, in spite of the equipment and awesome weaponry things have changed little for the grimy men living in the trenches and bunkers...

It also still requires raw courage to hazard incoming artillery and rockets, or pick up a wounded Marine and return him to safety.

He would have seen that initiative and know-how of the individual Marine, combined with teamwork, still produces the wining results...



Rev. Charles Kelly from *Sea Tiger*, 1968

Return to Khe Sanh

by Robert J. Donoghue
SF, 27 October, 1994

I left Springfield on 6 October and arrived in Saigon on the 8th. Spent two days in Saigon buying mosquito nets and Chinese military surplus work uniforms. These are heavy, khaki colored, 100% cotton uniforms that the Bru prefer while working in the fields. A matching set of shirt and pants cost \$6 US. The all nylon mosquito nets were \$5 each.

Traveled in a 1967 Ford sedan for three days along Hwy 1 to Khe Sanh. The road is getting into better shape. There was major bridge work going on along Hwy 9.

The Bru around Khe Sanh are comprised of two groups, those who fought with the NVA and those who fought with the Americans. Some of the Bru who supported the NVA in other areas have resettled around Khe Sanh. The Bru have local government representation. The Bru who supported the Americans have received harsher treatment.

Rucked to the Bru community of Thon Cheng, in grid XD 836362 and linked up with my interpreter Tu. Tu's 3 year old son was very sick and near death. I arranged for a Viet with a Russian dirt bike to transport Tu and his son to the Khe Sanh hospital. Bac

Si Thien treated Tu's child. The boy had a high fever and fluid in his lungs. The doctor prescribed antibiotics, high-dose vitamins and a calcium supplement. These items cost \$4. The doctor did not charge for the hospital visit. He was very supportive and impressed me. This is a far cry from last May when we tried to have some Bru treated there. We were told that our May trip really embarrassed the local government and that they were trying to treat the Bru better.

While at The Bru community at Thon Cheng, I learned that one of my Bru from 68, Rai, had recently died. I was hoping to see him on this trip and was deeply saddened. Lee Dunlap asked that I check to see if a man he knew, named Ana who had been Deputy District Chief for Huong Hoa in 1967. Ana is still alive and was in a re-education camp until 1986. I rucked about 8km to Ana's community at grid XD 830430. He was out working in the fields when I arrived. I met Ana's mother who is over 100 years old. A Bru from the ville escorted me to the field Ana was working in grid 824419. It is about 4km SE of Hill 881 South. He seemed fit and remembers Lee Dunlap. I took photos. Ana's community is the closest one to Hill 950 also referred to as Lemon Tree or Kickory depending on the time period. I asked the Bru to guide me to the summit. They told me that 42 Bru have died from exploding ordnance on and around Hill 950. Went as far as the river and took photos of a waterfall in grid XD 843437.

At the Bru community of Thon Cheng I handed out mosquito nets and the work clothes. The clothes were received with great appreciation and they asked if it would be possible to acquire more from us. The average annual income for the Bru in this area is \$80-100. I helped the head man set up a medical area in one of the houses. We provided various drugs and vitamins, antiseptics, and sundry medical supplies.

Lack of money is the primary reason the Bru do not use the Khe Sanh hospital. So I set up an emergency fund of \$200 to be used for treating the Bru. Also set up another fund of \$200 in Saigon to send a monthly package of mosquito nets and work clothes. My Saigon contact Nguyen Van Loi is a good guy who spent 8 years in re-education camps.

While there I also helped a small fish farm venture. I gave \$50 to buy cement and rock to dam the stream and gave \$50 to buy the starter or small fish. This will help provide them with protein which they desperately need. If times are hard they can also sell some of the fish.

Got a cattle project started. Thon Cheng is such a poor community that they have no cows. This is unusual even for Bru. I bought two pregnant cows for \$350. Both cows were due in two months. I own the two mothers (so the community would not become jealous of Tu) and will give Tu title to the two calves as payment for taking care of the cows.

I met with the Chief of Social and Security of the village of Tan Lien. This is the village that administers the activities at Thon Cheng. We discussed starting a grammar school for the Bru children. We could build a two room class for about \$1,000. We could have classes twice a day. Two teachers would cost \$30 a month apiece. I figure we'll need \$2,000 the first year and \$1,000 thereafter. This would include books and maybe a school lunch program. The government wants a two year commitment to start the program.

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Met Tu's brother-in-law who lost an arm a year ago to an explosion while working in the fields. I'm trying to arrange for a mechanical arm for him. There are foreign medical teams working out of Saigon and Hanoi that provide prosthetics. Didn't say anything so I wouldn't get his hopes up.

Took a trip to the well I put in last May. They had "Bob" written on one side. Boy, did that take the wind out of my sails. We hope to put in another well in the future.

Bru kids love bubble gum. I gave out 400 pieces of Bazooka Bubble gum in nothing flat. I also gave the men Marlboro cigarettes and some T-shirts. Also gave out six Buck knives. These they really need and love.

This was my third trip since May 1992. I'm already planning to return sometime in early to mid-1996.

I would like to share a simple THANK YOU to two nameless and faceless grunts who gave this young Marine PFC a bit of joy. Let me explain. I was assigned to Khe Sanh from 28 April through 27 June of 68. I came from LZ Stud, later renamed Vandy. I arrived via the first convoy from Dong Ha since January. We were a rag-tag outfit of volunteers from all over I Corps who formed a new "bastard" outfit under 3rd Mar Div called Task Force Hotel. When we arrived at Khe Sanh some noncom; few of us knew one another's names, advised us to find an empty bunker and crawl in for the night—we'd reform at dawn. I found an empty hooch and began setting up house in the hole in the ground. Shortly, two mud Marines crawled into the bunker. I thought I'd be evicted. They took one look at me and saw a FNG with only a couple of weeks in country. I still had on stateside utilities and boots. They welcomed me to share their hooch. Soon one of the guys broke out his writing gear and asked his partner what the date was and the guy said 'April 28.' A chill went through me.

"I...I think it's my birthday," I mumbled.

"What'd you say Mac?" one of the guys asked.

"Well if today is the 28th, then it's my birthday." They looked at each other and began to whisper so I could not hear. They then got up, grabbed their weapons and left. I wasn't sure what I'd done wrong...maybe it's unlucky to be around a FNG during his birthday. I was so boot to the Nam I honestly didn't know if I'd just broke some grunt taboo about birthdays and FNGs. God, I felt alone.

A few minutes later I heard someone crawling back into the hooch. It was the two mud Marines. The first one had a stub of a plumber's candle balanced atop what I soon learned was a C-ration pecan cake roll. The other guy handed me a canteen full of piss-warm lemon-lime Kool-Aid. They both sang their best rendition of Happy Birthday. After I blew out the candle one of them used a K-Bar after wiping it clean on his grungy trouser leg and cut the pecan roll into three pieces. If they saw my tears, they didn't let on and soon after, we turned in for the night.

In the morning I heard some shuffling around, but did not see them depart. I never saw them again or learned their names, but I shall never forget their kindness. If this rings a bell with any Khe Sanh vet out there, well, my unknown friend, a VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU and Semper Fi, Bro.

Robert "R.J." Ratkevich
USMC-former
USAF-retired

Dear fellow Khe Sanh veterans:

The members of the 1st Platoon of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines have joined together in an effort to collect information about the NVA assault on our outpost, Hill 64, which occurred on Feb. 1, 1968. The hill was approximately 500 meters outside the KSCB northwest perimeter, near the Rock Quarry. The attack took place in the early morning darkness and should have been visible to those at the Rock Quarry, the northern perimeter of the KSCB, and, Hills 881S and 861.

We would very much like to hear from *anyone* who can provide either specific or general information about the assault such as:

- Eyewitness accounts and any photos of the hill before, during or after the assault.
- Statements from anyone at KSCB who was mortared during the attack and or accompanied the relief force to the hill.
- Statements from anyone who provided supporting fire including flares, monitored radio traffic, called in air support or was in any way involved in the decision making process as to how to support the men on the outpost.
- Names of any news reporters at KSCB on the 8th. Any information about the dead and wounded from personnel who took care of them and any information on the NVA soldier(wounded) who was captured. Information such as his medical care, who questioned him, where, and what ever happened to him.

We want to stress that we want to hear from anyone who can add to our input. We hope to put together enough information to eventually write a book about the assault. If you would like to be a part of this effort, please contact me as soon as possible.

David R. Ford
1639 Wagonwheel Dr.
Semmes, AL 36575
334-649-0132

P.S. I hope this is okay to print in **The Khe Sanh Veteran**?

Ed note: I guess it was Dave, but we do have a request. We ask that those who respond share their input by routing their letters via Ray Stubbe so that we might share this wonderful idea with all the members. Let's make this the prime topic for the next issue. Okay guys out there, what were you doing on the 8th. of Feb. 1968? Let the letters roll!

23rd April-13th May, 1967
 From Co Third Marines
 To SOP THIRD MARDIV/111 MAF REP
 ZEN/SECOND BN THIRD MARINES
 ZEN/THIRD BN THIRD MARINES
 ZEN/B CO FIRST BN NINTH MARINES
 ZEN/E CO SECOND BN NINTH MARINES
 ZEN/M CO THIRD BN NINTH MARINES
 ZEN/K CO THIRD BN NINTH MARINES
 ZEN/C CO FIRST BN TWENTH SIXTH MARINES
 ZEN/KHE SANH SITE 23RD TASS APO 96337
 ZEN/DET 13 15TH AERIAL PORT SQDN
 UNCLS
 BATTLE OF KHE SANH

1. The battle of the Khe Sanh will certainly go down in annals as one of the most fierce in Marine history. Over the past sixteen days I have marvelled at and admired the courage of our individual Marines and the team work and determination of our units from fire teams to battalions.

2. A very determined and well disciplined enemy force has been defeated by the actions of every Marine and other members of our Armed Forces who participated in this action. This victory was gained by the team work of all the Services and the most completely integrated inter-service air-ground close support team I have ever witnessed. We can all be thankful we are members of such a fine team.

3. If there is one consolation in fighting a battle, it is knowing that the Marine in the front lines is being properly led. No Commander could ask for finer leadership than has been exhibited by the Second BN Third Marines and the Third BN Third Marines.

4. May God bless all of you and may He watch over our comrades who died or were wounded in gaining this victory. God speed.

Col. J.P. Lanigan,
 Commanding Officer, Third Marine Regiment BT

Ed note: Since this is an historical document grammatical and spelling errors are as shown. Note C company 1/26 is credited with participation in the Hill Fights.

It is interesting how things in life happen. While cruising on the Internet a short time ago I happened onto a "chat channel" in which Vietnam vets were chatting on-line. As it turned out, there is an Internet Homepage for Vietnam vets with much information on it that may be of interest to those who are computer nuts like me. Here is the Internet address if anyone would like to check it out: <http://grunt.space.swri.edu>

This page is administered by a former Marine named Bill McBride who lives in Texas. After chatting on-line with Bill, he steered me to The Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. I had no idea such an organization existed. I was pleased to receive a directory. I contacted all the guys from C company 1/26. I was a squad leader with 2nd Platoon, I think. The guys called me Sgt. Pete. I know at one time one of the guys had photographed our platoon. If anybody is aware of that photo, please contact me. I'd love to have a copy. I think it might have been lieutenant Paul Bush who took the picture. I just learned that he did not make it back.

I left Khe Sanh in December of 1967. I was discharged when I got home and never looked back until now. Jim Epps called the other night and told me that Lieutenant Paul Bush was killed during the siege. I was shocked. I had no idea he'd been killed. After all these years, it hit me as if it happened just today. Our emotions are not affected by time, distance, or space.

I'd like to thank everyone, especially you Ray, who put so much into this organization. You all have affected my life in a most positive way. All letters are welcome, especially from Charlie company.

Semper Fi,
 Con Pedersen
 461 FAwn Rd.
 Cle Elum, Washington 98922
 Email: edersec@tempest.adsnet.net

Ed note: If you do receive correspondence as a result of this article, Con, we ask that you share it with us via Ray Stubbe.

NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS
 PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION AND
 BY LAWS OF THE
 NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS
 CITATION
 IS HEREBY AWARDED TO
 OUTSTANDING GUARDSMAN
 CW3 THEODORE HAROLD GOLAB

On 25 July 1993 Chief Warrant Officer Golab, while performing as pilot-in-command of a UH-1H aircraft, placed himself at considerable risk to rescue three victims of a levee break in Northern Pike County, Illinois. CW3 Golab's skill and experience enabled him to execute the dangerous rescue operation, while keeping his crew safe at all times. CW3 Golab has brought great credit upon himself, the unit, the Illinois Army National Guard and the United States Army

dated 16 April 1994

Ed note: Ted served with Bravo company 1/26 during the siege.

VMGR-152 was stationed at Iwakuni, Japan from 60-65. In 65, we moved to Futema, Okinawa.

VMGR-352 was based at El Toro, California but had four KC-130s attached to Futema, Okinawa. From May or June of 65 until Xmas 67, four aircraft would fly every day. Two were TAD to Da Nang for 14 to 20 days.

VMGR-152 kept one and sometimes two aircraft at Da Nang from late 63 or early 64 supporting a H-34 chopper outfit that we brought to Da Nang from Soc Trang, in the Delta. The reason we were moved to Da Nang was because the Army H-21 choppers had no or very light lift. So the Army H-21 unit swapped locations with the Marine H-34 unit.

A Hawk battalion landed at Da Nang just before the 3rd Mar Div arrived. VMGR-152 kept four or five KC-130Fs at Da Nang from March 65 on. I flew over Khe Sanh a lot in 64 making air drops. My first landing in 64 was on a dirt runway. We moved a lot. No messhall. No showers. No water. We had four tents off the South end of the Da Nang runway. We stole food, etc. from our
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cargo, C-rats, two, three meals each, per day. The Special Forces had an A team with a heavily barb wired compound. Some of us with VMGR-152 would be invited by the Green Berets to drink with them at night. To get into their compound you had to go through two gates guarded by Nungs. Their wire was 8-10 feet high. Their club had two airconditioning units, hard liquor and ice. I drank a lot of their special called a "14." Actually it was more like two, three, or four 7 and 7 shots into a big goblet. Whenever we were scheduled to fly to Khe Sanh, the Green Berets asked us to fly a "load" for their guys up there. With what they were giving us, their requests were always granted. If they had a big load, they sometimes took days assembling it. They always established radio contact with their team at Khe Sanh before we'd load their stuff. They'd verify the weather. It usually cleared in the early afternoon over Khe Sanh, if it cleared at all.

New pilots would ask the crew where Khe Sanh was. We had enlisted navigators then. All our flights to Khe Sanh were VFR (Visual Flight Regs). We would fly up there two different ways. Either through the valleys N/W of Phu Bai or up the coast to Quang Tri, then left until you see the red dirt runway. After unloading, the SFs would wine and dine us. I mean really feed us. They had a big compound with a messhall and a picnic area. With our bellies full we would fly back to Da Nang before sundown. I made it into Khe Sanh about once or twice a month till the weather closed it down. My last load to the Khe Sanh Special Forces guys was just prior to Operation Starlight, July/August of 66. Both VMGR-152 and VMGR-352 flew many heavy, heavy lifts in support of Operation Starlight. The runway into Chu Lai was short and could only handle one aircraft at a time.

I started flying into Khe Sanh again in April of 66. We never stopped until February 68. Prior to the AM-2 matting which was super, they had marsdon matting. It would wave and sometimes buckle when we landed heavy and we were usually heavy when we landed. The main wheels could take it but the nose wheels suffered.

I remember one pilot who flew into Khe Sanh a lot. His name is Roland Banks from Texas. He is on the Khe Sanh roster. This guy was an 8mm movie nut. He constantly took movies out his left side coming into Khe Sanh. He had his co-pilot fly until just before landing before he'd put his camera down and land the craft. He might have some great flicks of Khe Sanh. I haven't seen him since 68. He did some great take-offs and landings at Khe Sanh.

My nickname was either Black Cloud or Magnet Ass, 'cause I was always having bad stuff happen during my shifts, flights, tour.

Enough of my rambling on,

Jim Veletto

Comments made by LT. Col Fred McEwan CO 1/26 at the memorial service at Wunder Beach 06 May 1968:

In this service, we have honored not only those who have died at Khe Sanh, but all those who were there. We have fulfilled our promise to the families of our Marines killed in action. Equally important for you men of this battalion is the fact you will always remember the Battle Of Khe Sanh. You will live with it for the rest of your lives and in so doing, you will always remember those

who gave their lives.

To each of you men who were there, I have this to say. For three months, the eyes of the world looked at you and the enemy, who was unable to claim success. At another outpost and milestone in Vietnam's history, this same enemy claimed success at the battle of Dien Bien Phu and with it fell half of Vietnam. Had Khe Sanh fallen there would have been far reaching effects. But, Khe Sanh held. You held Khe Sanh living in the trenches, constantly subjected to heavy bombardment by mortars, rockets, artillery, recoilless rifle and sniper fire. You held because of your fighting spirit and indomitable courage. May God bless you and return you safely home.

LtCol Andy DeBona USMC ret. who served with M company at Khe Sanh and is now the 3/26 Memorial Scholarship coordinator collected \$1300 from various sources. On November 17, 1994 I had the pleasure of presenting a check in this amount to Dr. James D. Riddle, VP for development at American International College in Springfield, MA. Accompanying me was Capt. Enoch J. Blasis, Officer Selection Officer for the Marine Corps Recruiting Station, Western New England, Chicopee, MA.



L-R: Dr. J. Riddle, Dick Peloquin, Capt. Blasis

Dear Ray:

I've been wanting to drop you a line and pass along a condensed version of the book I'm still working on. I had no idea when I started this how difficult it was going to be, but I'm enjoying every minute of it. It has become a new hobby for me, something I look forward to every day.

I have located and interviewed about a dozen of the men who were there, but would like to talk with more. I know there is a small group from second platoon who get together every year, but I've yet to make contact.

Ray, I realize that I lack the professionalism necessary to get my work published and I'm open for suggestions. What would you do? I'm serious when I say that I'm not interested in selling a lot of copies, but I don't want to embarrass myself either. I have 75 pages ready for review as the first section. Two more sections of equal length are to follow in the next year or so. I know that almost every grunt who did Vietnam has written a book, but I want mine to somehow be different, no blood and guts or war hero stuff. I was just an average 19-year-old kid, thousands of miles away from home. I feel my main responsibility should be in documenting Fox 2/3 while I was a part of it.

You have already been such a great help, both with your information, knowledge, and inspiration and I want you to know that I deeply appreciate everything you have done.

Best wishes and God bless,
Phil "Butterball" Ball
3951 Delmar Ave.
Cincinnati, Ohio 45211
Ph. 513-4817203

Ed note: Even if you do not get your work published it will become a part of the Khe Sanh archives. Who knows, maybe 200 years from now a scholar will find your work of sufficient interest to publish all or part of it. You are wise, my friend to tell "your truth" about what you believe or feel happened that May 28th day in 1968.

Dear sir:

I am writing in regards to the November 1994 issue concerning info on Foxtrot Ridge. I don't know if this will clear up the information brother Phil Ball needs, but here goes.

I served with F/2/4 in 1968-69. In December 1968 Fox 2/4 was in a battle from 12-11-68 to 12-19-68. The whole second battalion eventually got involved. We lost 17 Marines and one Corpsman on that ridge. The company commander of F/2/4 was 1st Lt. Gary E. Holtzclaw. I always thought that Foxtrot Ridge was named after Fox 2/4. There was a special ceremony held in January 1969 at Cua Viet to honor our fallen men who fought there in December of 1968 and that was Fox 2/4.

Fox 2/4 was a roving grunt unit continuously in the bush. Fox 2/4 launched operation Purple Martin from Khe Sanh. We fought at 881 North, 881 South, Tiger Tooth, FSB Nevelle, FSB Russell, Con Thien, Dong Ha, Dai Do. Conducted Operations into Laos such as Dawson River, Operation Georgia Tar. The last time that I was at Khe Sanh there was a small faded American flag and it was still flying. Fox 2/4 ran patrols around Khe Sanh into late 1969. We Fought at Hill 715, 691, patrolled around the Rock Pile, Hill 950 and other places I can't recall.

The Quintessence of Deceit

by Richard A. Goodwin

HM2 1/9

*I once envisioned in the naiveness of youth
A dream, where I in the world would thrive.
But transformed was I, by the conflict of war,
To the reality that I might just survive.*

*In the war I was threatened, not secure as before,
Compromising my values along the bloody way,
Convictions and beliefs were destroyed by my will,
I was a traitor to myself every day.*

*Being taught and believing, that killing is wrong,
When offended you should turn the other cheek.
Abandoned those values and fell prey to false power.*

*I relinquished my aptitude to be meek.
The real me as I knew, went off to a war,
From the actions that ensued I was killed.
A living body came home, but the real me was dead,
I died, without my blood being spilled.*

*Now my family often wonders, as well as myself.
Why emotions are not a part of my life.
I buried the pain, which now live as nightmares.
I refused to succumb to emotional strife.*

*There wasn't time for compassion or regrets.
There were people who needed my care.
My wounded, my dead, were frequent and many,
Emotions had no place in my fare.*

*So the turmoil of past override to the present,
Contradictions of self still war in the now.
I yearn to be true, to self, as once was,
The old me wants to live, but doesn't know how.*

*Thus the conflicts of war, of values, of emotions,
Continue to rage in this person of me.
I know not my feelings from moment to next.
O God, from this deceit, I seek to be free*

continued from page 9

I want to join the Khe Sanh club. I think it would be great. I am receiving disability and VA compensation, so it will take me a little time to get my monies together. Please let me in the Khe Sanh register.

Asberry York Sr.
35707 Chestnut
Wayne, MI 48184
313-5956129

Ed note: There were obviously a number of battles by various Foxtrot companies of different Regiments, at different places, which retained the name Foxtrot Ridge. It is interesting to note that brother York's unit 2/4 fought on Hills 881 North and South. These two hills saw numerous clashes between Marine and NVA units. See Phil Ball's letter in this issue concerning his "Foxtrot" ridge. Do any of our readers have other "Foxtrot Ridge" stories to share?

Dear Ray:

Enclosed are some drawings I made while in the hospital in Osaka, Japan, May of 68. These are just copies, as the originals are in a bound drawing book that I got from the Red Cross and no way will they ever be removed.



I used to draw a lot and while at Khe Sanh did quite a bit of flak jacket graffiti for the guys in our squad and other squads. This was a popular form of what I'd call self expression or rebellion. My camera and film were destroyed or ripped-off while staged at Khe Sanh Combat Base. In the hospital I drew what I had seen, and remembered. The thoughts and desires to do so were sporadic or non-existent at times. I never had any real training in art. I just drew from my memory, mind to hand.

I wish I could have made the reunion, but medical bills and my daughter just graduating from college prevented it. I saw a name of a real good friend on the last reunion roster Arnot, Terry. I think his real name is Barry Steven Arnot. He was in 2nd Plt F 2/26. We met in staging in California and became good friends while there. I last saw him walking off Hill 700, wounded. That was April of 68. He's now a pastor in Maryland.

Mike Dagner
F 2/26

ED note: The pictures displayed by brother Dagner are scans from copies. Much of the artwork quality is lost when you do not scan from originals. If other members have artwork from Vietnam that they would like to share please send in the originals.



Was the month of July 1967
Just graduated, turned 18 and was close to heaven
Cause I was sweet on a girl
Who was pretty as could be
But I had a bad case of a thing called
Jealousy
One hot afternoon I called her on the telephone
It rang and it rang
But she was not at home
So I went to the pool where she often went to swim
There she was laughing and talking to Tim
I started to shake and I started to scream
Reached for her hand and I took back my ring
Said "oh my darling I'm gonna show you
I'll join the Marine Corps and I'll make you blue
In less than a week I was at South Carolina
At a place called Parris Island about to lose my mind
Thought to myself now this just can't be true
Sir, Mr. D.I. may I have a word with you, Sir
Don't take this wrong Sir but I don't want to stay
I had no idea that it would be this away
He started to yell and then he started to swing
He knocked me on my butt
I could hear the birdies sing
That was back then, now it's 1995
I went to Vietnam and I thank God I'm still alive
They put me in an outfit up on the DMZ
A little place called Khe Sanh we were making history
Now, in my dreams I remember it well
The fear the death the bravery in that man made hell
People tell me I lost what little sense I had
Guess it may be true, I'm only happy when I'm sad
You ask what happened to that girl from my childhood
I see her now and then and she still looks so good
She walks over to me, hugs my neck and wishes me luck
She married Tim, my psychiatrist
And me, I drive a truck

William R. Yates
W 1/13

Dear Ray:

I have about an hour's reading to finish your book. I like it a lot. They mislabeled the Rockpile and 861, huh? (the map layout in the book) Still, very interesting. More action at Khe Sanh than in a 10-floor whorehouse on a good night.

Been to the Living Memorial up on Hwy 97. I have pictures and will send you some when I find them. Extremely moving. I've been up there four times, twice with people who were never in Vietnam. When you're alone with your thoughts there, it feels like nothing I can ever recall. You only have the breeze coming off Mount Shasta to the southeast, four miles as the crow flies. I'm always surprised because there seems to always be a new piece of sculpture, like saying, "Hey, I was there also." The same if each could breathe. I may be gone but I'll never be forgotten, thank you. That's the strongest feeling you get from it.

Semper Fi,
Mel Sopp
K 3/26

Ed note: The sculpture garden is the creation of Khe Sanh member Dennis Smith who served with B 1/26 at Khe Sanh. Dennis displayed some of his recent creations at the Las Vegas reunion in July.

PTSD

By Joe Van Eeten
B 1/26

PTSD is like an ambush. It can occur anytime without warning and all of a sudden, boom! Look at what happened to Lewis Puller. Beware!

Denial is one of the symptoms of PTSD. PTSD is not something to be either afraid or ashamed of. People who have experienced combat will have PTSD at some level. Survivor guilt, moral pain are symptoms of PTSD.

Please brothers don't be proud. PTSD kills. Don't think you're beyond the effects.

I am 100% disabled with PTSD. VA certified. To me, it proves that I earned my Combat Action Ribbon.

I did not always know that I had PTSD. I did not receive my disability until 1992. Before PTSD actively struck me, I was a successful land developer and general contractor. I was happily married and have two lovely daughters. I went to church three times a week and was a leader in my community.

Then, in the early 80's I really changed. I began feeling really depressed. Anger and rage, hate became a part of me. I began having flashbacks again. PTSD is like some cruel sniper. By 1982, I had lost my wife, kids, business and God and was in jail. The next ten years were pure hell. During this time, I denied that I had PTSD. I'm OK, I kept hoping. I got it under control.

In 1991 I went to the VA and was subsequently diagnosed 100% PTSD. I am no longer ashamed of my PTSD. It is not fun to have, but it is real and I've learned to deal with it. People who survive single traumatic experiences such as a plane crash have what is called single PTSD. The Vietnam vet, especially combat vets have what is called multiple PTSD. We survived a plane wreck everyday for one year and twenty days. We survived death while our buddies didn't. We all suffer PTSD. Get real with


yourself if you're still in denial.

We need to stand by one another and help one another file for PTSD with the VA. We didn't just pay our dues for it. We pre-paid. The compensation helps. It's not some giveaway. It's part of our contract when we went in. Our government promised to care for us if our service connected disability caused us to suffer either physically or economically.

I beg you. Do not judge your brothers suffering from active PTSD. The world already did that when we came home. Be compassionate. I think the Khe Sanh vets should establish a PTSD hotline and those rated for PTSD should go on a roster. We can witness for one another and help each other with the necessary filings with the VA. The VA ratings boards are autonomous in each region. Some are real stingy with their ratings. Let's get involved. There are so many of our partners that we still haven't found. Come on guys let's not forget what Semper Fi means. The Khe Sanh Veterans network is one of the better things happening in our lives. It does not require that much effort to do a little more. Let's hump one more hill for a brother in need. Let's carry an extra round. Let's find the rest of us.


Ed note: Joe put his money where his mouth is. He took his initial VA disability payment and bought ten acres of forest land south of Portland Oregon and opened Base Camp Bravo. Bush vets have a safe, clean place to live at Base Camp Bravo. A man gets a camp site for \$40 a month, if he can afford it. Now that's affordable housing!

If you are a veteran in search of a community of other veterans, or if you can help us build our base camp in Yamhill, Oregon -

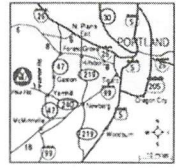


JOE WANTS YOU!

All veterans welcome, especially Vietnam veterans!
Community support needed. Please call today.
Help us bring our warriors all the way home.



BRAVO



Veterans Re-United
PO Box 605, Yamhill, OR 97148
(503) 662-3466

I'm beginning to master the fundamentals of the computer on a self-instruction CD ROM. Eventually I plan to use the computer for all my letters, sermons, reports, manuscripts, and so on.

In some senses I feel all of this is really a "chasing after the wind" and meaningless. I am already 57 as of last August the 15th and only have ten to fifteen years more creative life, I feel. There's only today and now. I've always felt this way since leaving Nam. When I returned home I could no longer make any long range plans. This intensified life and the significance of living, gave me an appreciation for art, beauty, love, peace. It's miraculous that I finished the Khe Sanh manuscript. It was not a project, but a compulsion, an attempt to rid myself of "foreign matter" in my soul.

CONGRATULATIONS to the following veterans of the siege who retired with 30 service: Captain B.D. Cole USN who was the Naval Gunfire Liaison officer in the 26th Marines Command Center. Colonel Bruce G. Clarke USA who was the District Advisor in Khe Sanh Ville when the siege began. He personally led the survivors of the attack back along the Poilane road and into the combat base.

We are saddened by the passing of our great friend, Quilles Jacobs who served with B Co. 1/26 during the siege. He died quietly at home on April 19, 1995, following a very long battle with cancer.

SYMBOLS AND SLOGANS: The phrase "eternally bonded" was suggested by Bill Griffith, E 2/26. The wreath symbol was done by a friend of Earl Breeding, E 2/26 and first appeared in our magazine in December 1989. The symbol of a rising sun, two hills and a river was designed by Michael Delaney, E 2/26. It appeared on our magazine in 1991. The phrase "home is where you dig it" appeared outside the bunker of Regimental S-4, Fred McEwen. It was used by our first editor, Ernie Husted. The phrase:

for those who fight for it, life has a flavor the protected never know" was on a sign in the office of the CO of B Company 3d Recon Bn. in the late months of 67.

Sorry I missed the Las Vegas reunion. I had to fill in for our pastor who visited his family in Germany.

Ray Stubbe

World Aid

World Aid is a non-profit 501(c)3 tax deductible organization based out of Seattle Washington. Our goal is to provide medical relief for those who are in such great need in S.E. Asia.

From June 1990 through June 1992, we worked in the Sepone (Tchepone) District of Laos adjacent to Quang Tri Province, Viet Nam. While there, we helped our beloved Bru with medical help from various volunteers from the states. We had been given a contract by the government of Laos to operate in this area. When our contract expired in June of 1992, the Laotian government refused to renew our contract. Only recently were we able to prevail upon the government and renew our contract to serve the Bru in the Sepone area. The contract is for three years. We were also successful in obtaining a three-and-one-half year contract with the government to provide a 30,000-40,000 word English/Lao medical dictionary as well as a three year contract to

provide ophthalmology services in the infamous "Golden Triangle" region of northern Laos. The government of Laos does not pay us for any of this work. Their contract with us merely gives us permission to operate in the areas they agree to, and we are only able to perform specific tasks which are spelled out in the contract. We focus on medical services since there is such a great need in this area.

The average life expectancy for males in Laos is 48 years, for females 51. The average GNP per capita is only \$200 per year. There is only one doctor for every 42,000 people. Fifty to sixty percent of the newborns in the rural areas such as Sepone District are dying from preventable diseases within the first year of life.

World Aid's goal is to train and equip at least one village health care worker for each of the almost 300 villages in the Sepone District. Many of these villages are Bru.

World Aid would like to introduce you to our "Adopt A Village" plan. For \$25 a month, you, your organization, your special interest group, etc., can adopt a village and help those who are in dire need. Your investment will provide a village health care worker with the training to meet the rudimentary medical needs of his or her village. It will supply basic medical supplies and training materials for these workers to not only function in their village, but to also train others to assist them. The \$25 per month will keep a village supplied with the basic drugs required to meet its daily needs. Simple to treat diseases such as malaria, dysentery and TB are causing most of the deaths. \$25 goes a long way in a poor country like Laos.

If you are a medical professional and would be willing to volunteer to teach, then World Aid welcomes you. If you are not a health care professional and would like to come to Laos to see what we are doing, please contact us.

Please, please give our request careful thought. Remember, the Bru were our allies when we were at Khe Sanh. They have never forgotten us. Write or call World Aid at 2442 N.W. Market St. #434, Seattle, WA 98107. Ph. (206) 784-7248 or Fax (206) 784-1120

Sincerely,
Michael A. Harris
World Aid Director/Lao P.D.

Telephone: (414) 694-8512
 Fax: (414)694-8330

Khe Sanh Veterans PX
 6317 72nd Street
 Kenosha, WI 53142

PX Order Form

All shirts available in LG, XL, 2XL, 3XL unless otherwise stated. Some lady's shirts also available in medium. See explanation sheet for details on some shirts.
 Add \$2.00 for Sizes 2XL and 3XL.

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|---|------|-----|-------------|-------|
| Khe Sanh Picture (T Only (Lg, XL Only) | | | 15.95 | |
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| Title (T Only) | | | 13.95 | |
| Git Some (T Only) | | | 13.95 | |
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| Khe Sanh Logo (T/Sweat) | | | 13.95/19.95 | |
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| POW Names - March For Freedom (T Only) | | | 15.95 | |
| Marine Tradition - Wife (T Only) | | | 13.95 | |
| Postage Stamp (T Only) | | | 13.95 | |

| HATS: | PRICE |
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| Khe Sanh Veteran (Red, Black, Blue, White) | 8.00 |
| Khe Sanh Logo (Red, Black, Blue, White) | 8.00 |
| Marine Corps (Red, Black, Blue, White) | 8.00 |

JACKETS: See Explanation sheet for descriptions. Call for prices and Availability of Sizes.

| | |
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| Windbreaker: Khe Sanh Logo | |
| Marine Corps | |
| Vietnam Vet: Lest We Forget | |
| POW/Mia | |
| They fought for Your Freedom | |
| Loved One's Jacket | |

| LICENSE PLATE FRAMES: | PRICE |
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| The Khe Sanh Veteran, Eternally Bonded | 5.95 |
| POW/MIA, Bring them home | |
| Semper Fidelis, U.S. Marines | |
| World's 911 Force, U.S. Marines | |

| BUMPER STICKERS: (ALL) | PRICE |
|--|-------|
| Khe Sanh Veteran | 2.00 |
| My girl said she'd leave me if I joined the Marines. (Sure am gonna miss her) | |
| MARINES, How's my driving? Call 1-800-USMC | |
| MARINES, America's 911 Force | |
| MARINES, America's Force of Choice | |
| MARINES, The World's 911 Force | |
| No God, No Peace - Know God, Know Peace | |
| WARNING, I brake for flashbacks | |
| Friends don't let friends ride Jap bikes | |
| American Flag window sticker. | |

| BOOKS: | PRICE |
|--|-------|
| Valley of Decision (Hardcover) | 25.95 |
| Forced Recon (Softcover) | 5.95 |
| One on One (Softcover) | 15.95 |
| Where Light is of Darkness | 8.95 |
| Macho Man | 20.95 |
| Flags (American, Marine, Army, Navy, Air Force, POW) | 12.95 |

SIZE QTY PRICE TOTAL

Telephone: (414) 694-8512
 Fax: (414)694-8330

Khe Sanh Veterans PX
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| Poncho Liners | 24.95 |
| NECKLACES: | |
| Marine Corp Emblem (plain) | 20.00 |
| Marine Corps Emblem (encircled) | 15.00 |
| POW/MIA dogtag | 8.95 |
| Duffel Bag (Khe Sanh Emblem) | 24.95 |
| Khe Sanh Patch (Embroidered in 6 colors) | 7.95 |
| Khe Sanh Window Decal | 1.00 |
| Khe Sanh Anniversary Pin | 3.00 |
| Khe Sanh Anniversary Picture | 7.95 |
| POW Windsock | 10.95 |
| CLOCKS: | |
| Bulldog | 21.95 |
| Grenade | 18.95 |
| Vietnam Wall Clock/with personalization | 35.00/42.00 |
| TOTAL _____ | |

Listed below are the sayings on the various shirts in the PX inventory.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. The Title: It cannot be inherited nor can it ever be purchased. It is impossible to rent and an it cannot be lent. You alone and our own have earned it with your Sweat, Blood, and Lives. You own it Forever. The Title, "United States Marine</p> <p>2. The Warrior: Warrior by Day Lover by night Drunkard by choice Marine by God.</p> <p>3. Postage Stamp Shirt: Has a POW/MIA emblem appearing in Marines, a stamp form with the words: It's worth a lot more than 32 cents</p> <p>4. Marine Wife: If you think being a Marine is tough, Try being Married to one.</p> <p>5. Clinton Shirt: Only in America can a homeless vet sleep in a cardboard box while a draft dodger sleeps in the White House. (Has picture of the White House and the POW/MIA emblem.)</p> | <p>7. Warning Shirt - Ladies I suffer from P.M.S. and become very violent with only slight provocation. The Surgeon General has determined that both mental and physical harassment of my person may be harmful to your health. So to avoid the O.J. or Lorena Bobbitt thing STAY OUT OF MY FACE. (Back of shirt reads: LEAVE ME ALONE.)</p> <p>8. Warning Shirt - Men Warning! I suffer from occasional loss of mental stability and become very violent with only slight provocation. The Veterans Administration has determined that both mental and physical harassment to my person may be hazardous to your health and well being. So please, for your sake STAY OUT OF MY FACE. (Back of shirt reads: DON'T BOTHER ME.</p> <p>9. Why Waltz when you can Rock and Roll (Picture of an M-60 machine gun)</p> <p>10. Khe Sanh Logo Shirt: Khe Sanh Veteran, Eternally Bonded with Logo</p> <p>11. Marine Tradition Shirt: Marine Wife Marine Mother Marine Tradition PROUD!</p> <p>12. Postage Stamp shirt: Has a POW/MIA emblem appearing in a stamp form with the words: It's worth a lot more than 32 cents.</p> |
|---|--|

ADD \$1.00 FOR 2XL SIZES.
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 BE SURE YOUR SIZE IS MARKED.
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If you enjoy the quality of this newsletter you must do your part. We have over 2500 members but are receiving monetary donations from only about 10%. A few generous members have given substantial donations which have kept the magazine going. This will not continue. We have a very dedicated and responsible board of directors and officers who want this organization to thrive. Our magazine is the only way we can connect with everyone. We will soon have to make a decision whether we can continue to provide this magazine to members who do not contribute. Please consider making a contribution. Send in your dues notices that were previously mailed to you. We hope to publish a new membership directory in January 1996. Help us. Send in ten dollars and we will print the name of any buddy of yours who was KIA or has since passed away as a special entry in the directory. This is in addition to any dues you send in. For those who wish to advertise or memorialize anyone in the magazine our rate is \$200 per page, \$100 per half page or \$50 per quarter page.

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BEST WISHES TO ALL KHE SANH VETS
THEIR FAMILIES AND LOVED ONES

REMEMBERING

THOSE WHO FOUGHT AT KHE SANH
BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER
THE SIEGE TET '68

LT.COL. FREDERICK J. MCEWAN, USMC RET.
CO 1/26 16MAR68 — 16AUG68
S-4 26THMAR 15JULY67 — 15MAR68



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*there are those times i walk down paths
which share the sights and sounds
of long past nights on distant trails
amongst the hungry hounds*

*when death was my dear brother
and blood was in the air
and images swirled in my head
of them—someone, somewhere*

*as moonlight fell down endless vines
no ripples on earth's floor
we watched for them, they watched for us
awaiting corner's whore*

*and when we met, and when we fought
to blend the fear and rage
our souls were cleansed, so pure, so white
self's trust fixed on the page*

*That no one was immortal
except the each of us
and no one would fall prey to death
nor pass from dust to dust*

*but those whose names are on the Wall
did what we did not do
and walked a trail of different sorts
that no one wanted to*

*and met their silence early on
of duty, honor, fate
yet left us here to question why
our turns must come so late*

*bill cowan
3/26*

Khe Sanh

*by Robert Ratkevich
DET A 5COMM*

*In years to come some old gunny will tell
Of this place calle Khe Sanh on the border of hell
He'll tell some young boot bout the old Corps Marines
The tough fighting men of his mighty Green Machine
He'll tell of the days when the skies rained hot lead
Of the padre who knelt and prayed for our dead
In years to come some old gunny will tell
An he'll clilche the words—the words war is hell
But few will remember and less-less will care
Except for some Jarhead Marines that were there*

*Twenty-seven seconds for each mortar to fall
From Hill 881N "incoming" we did call
Twenty-seven years and the echo is still there
Those haunting memories, sometimes so hard to bare
Our lives go on, the older and greyer we become
But we remain eternally bonded equally as one*

*Doc Dave Steinberg
I 3/26*

KHE SANH
FIRMLY STAND
THE FEW
COURAGEOUS
SHARING LIFE
IN SERVING
VICTORIOUS
SEMPER FIDELIS
by Ray Stubbe

Was the month of July 1967
 Just graduated, turned 18 and was close to heaven
 Cause I was sweet on a girl
 Who was pretty as could be
 But I had a bad case of a thing called
 Jealousy
 One hot afternoon I called her on the telephone
 It rang and it rang
 But she was not at home
 So I went to the pool where she often went to swim
 There she was laughing and talking to Tim
 I started to shake and I started to scream
 Reached for her hand and I took back my ring
 Said "oh my darling I'm gonna show you
 I'll join the Marine Corps and I'll make you blue
 In less than a week I was at South Caroline
 At a place called Parris Island about to lose my mind
 Thought to myself now this just can't be true
 Sir, Mr. D.I. may I have a word with you, Sir
 Don't take this wrong Sir but I don't want to stay
 I had no idea that it would be this away
 He started to yell and then he started to swing
 He knocked me on my butt
 I could hear the birdies sing
 That was back then, now it's 1995
 I went to Vietnam and I thank God I'm still alive
 They put me in an outfit up on the DMZ
 A little place called Khe Sanh we were making history
 Now, in my dreams I remember it well
 The fear the death the bravery in that man made hell
 People tell me I lost what little sense I had
 Guess it may be true, I'm only happy when I'm sad
 You ask what happened to that girl from my childhood
 I see her now and then and she still looks so good
 She walks over to me, hugs my neck and wishes me luck
 She married Tim, my psychiatrist
 And me, I drive a truck

William R. Yates
 W 1/13

Why I Am Who I Am

by Richard A. Goodwin
 HM2 1/9

You may wonder why I'm so different
 Why I have so many unusual ways
 But feel not alone, for I wonder, too
 But in answer, this is all I can say
 My life before Nam was quite normal
 Not a prep course for what I'd encounter
 And in your wildest dreams you'd never imagine
 How intense just living in Nam could be
 Well, here is part of the story of life in the Nam
 Of how I was changed into what I am
 Over there you didn't see a tree in a forest
 You saw an ambush behind every leaf
 There were no fields of grass to romp in
 Just another place for booby traps and pits
 There were spiders and snakes, elephants, tigers, insects
 None of which seemed to care much for me
 And of course the people of a different culture
 Who wanted me to die more than they cared for their own life
 So listen to this story and find out who I am
 I'm a man changed by the misery of Viet Nam
 I have walked through a river of blood
 While death tugged at my shirttail
 I have slept with the corpse of a friend
 Who hours before was my bosom buddy
 I have lived in the stench of feces and urine
 While rats scampered across my feet
 I have held men to young to shave in my arms
 While they gasped their very last breath
 I have cried at the loss of a comrade
 And I wondered why it was him and not me
 I have eaten food with blood caked on my hands
 While I sat among the wounded and dead
 I have endured great hunger for food
 While my lips were parched with thirst
 I have lived in a hole in the ground with vermin
 While my brains seemed to cook in the sun
 I have invaded a land that was not my own
 And I hated a people I didn't even know
 I have had muscles ache from extreme fatigue
 While my eyes bore witness to extreme horror
 I have run unafraid through artillery and bullets
 While wondering if the next round would get me
 I have grown faint from fear
 While my mind entombed the living nightmares
 I have witnessed pain of intolerable degree

The Souvenir

An aviator friend of mine
gave me a pair of sunglasses
standard issue pilot's type
MIAI
He had four kids
was the flight leader
would stop and shut down in the LZ at Dong Ha
he didn't really want to fly
there just weren't any joy rides to Khe Sanh-
only artillery rounds and land mines
under fire
touching down an extra time for the wounded.
He took in whole blood.

Did his four children
flash in his eyes
was he blind in the sun
when the 152 millimeter
artillery round got his tail rotor
and sent him spinning
into an aircraft revetment
broke his blades off like drumsticks
sent them splintering through his cabin
cut his co-pilot in two
shattered his 50 caliber bulletproof vest
tore his cockpit out?

I kept those sunglasses
for five years
had a replacement lens ground
they were in a car
that got stolen from me
taken for a joy ride, abandoned
without those sunglasses.

Jim Epps
C/1/26

Ed note: Jim was the supply coordinator at Dong Ha during the siege. He helped put together the supplies for the Super Gaggles. The aircraft he refers to is the CH-53 which crashed just outside the 1/26 command bunker. A picture of it is frequently displayed in books which cover the siege. It is amazing how stories evolve. Jim's recollection comes from word he received at Dong Ha. According to what was passed back, a 152 arty round hit the CH-53. I remember it taking an 82mm mortar hit just after lift off. The round hit above the cockpit. I remember the crash and the loud screaming sound of the engine on full power after it crashed. The 1/26 air liaison officer, Jeff McElroy and I ran out of the 1/26 command bunker. He shut the aircraft engine down. I remember the pained look on Jeff as he directed the removal of the two pilots from the crumpled craft. Jeff is a member of our organization. Anyone else have any memories of that incident that they'd like to share? Tell what you remember of that day.

The Other War

You answered a call not meant for our ears,
Heard the cadence of drums and marched through our tears.
You picked up your pack, shouldered your gun,
And boarded the plane...A war had begun.

It ripped through the jungles, roared over the hills,
Made dust out of mountains, maimed loved ones and killed.
Please God, not my husband, please not my lover,
Not my father or son, please God, not my brother.

Such were the prayers sent up hour by hour.
We battled our fears and fought not to cower
Before thoughts of carnage, of blood and of pain.
We awoke every morning to fight on again.

In dreams conjured up by dread in the night,
We saw you blood covered, eyes without sight.
Hearts that awakened us pounding with fear,
Would not quiet when thoughts at last became clear.

It's over now, won by brave men like you.
I look in your eyes, still steady, still true.
Yet sometimes I wonder, in the dark of my night,
Did you know of the war the we had to fight?

TO MY BROTHER AND HIS FAMILY
IN GRATITUDE FOR THEIR SACRIFICES
Cheryl McIntosh
January, 1994

Ed note: Cheryl is the sister of Ken Pipes, B 1/26

*Dennie D Peterson
 Quang Tin-1967*
 Dawn and dark, curtains of the day
 Called unwilling actors to the play
 To mime and mouth an unknown part
 The director, laughing cast.*

*Killer, victim, savior, wounded
 Hero, coward, living, dead.
 Ancient roles with archaic lines
 Sounding in silence, screams and guns.*

*Chosen for Hero on your final day,
 What did you gain? What did you pay?
 What price your gift of life for life?
 Who still remembers? Who is deaf?*

*You'll never catch a woman's eye,
 Or hear her laugh, or feel her cry.
 Nor will you live your childhood dreams,
 For dreams are things that war devours.*

*An unspoken darkness in a mother's mind.
 A faded snapshot some friend may find.
 A vague warm memory to a woman then a girl.
 A once bright ribbon on a father's wall.*

*Those who shared your life and death,
 The unmasking donees of your breath,
 Know the role of Hero's cast.
 The honor was the risking, not the loss.*

**2nd Lt. Dennie D. Peterson, USMCR was awarded, posthumously, the Navy Cross. "He gallantly gave his life for his country." He saved five men's lives. He became the medal. The medal becomes him.*

*Charles Patterson
 HQ 3rd MarDiv*

Listen
 Listen close
 there is a voice for each and every name
 a silent picture for a distant friend
 a memory shared with subdued words
 timeless conversations easing the pain of loss
 left behind
 yet carried where weary feet drag
 through the passage of time
 And its sudden stopping
 imparting a message to the stunned
 the living those stumbling for meaning
 crying in their relief
 mourning the loss
 Avoiding the answer
 of when
 of who
 of why
 Tomorrow or today
 for some even yesterday
 And then there is the future
 the utterance of all
 Of companionship
 And Love

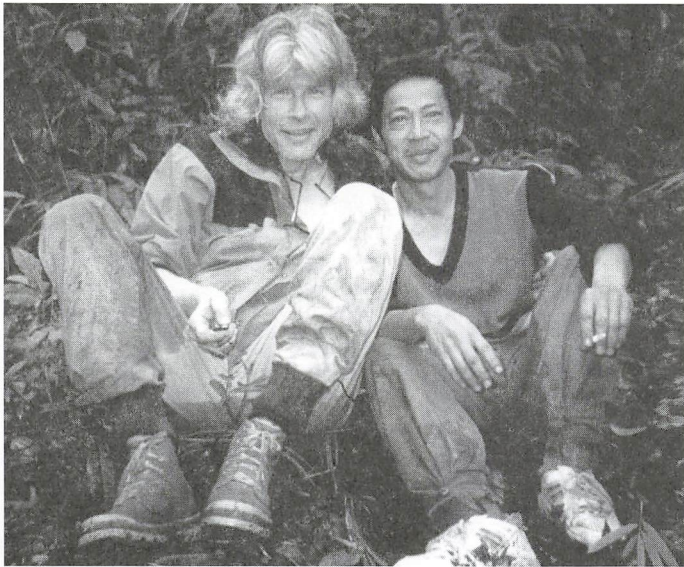
*Talis Kaminskis
 CAC-O*

Dear Editor:

I hereby present The Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., with a film which will add to the documentation of the Khe Sanh experience. The film is about me meeting two of my former enemies: Thanh and Cao Khai.

Thanh was a second lieutenant with the North Vietnamese Army's 72nd Local Force Battalion during the siege. He was entrenched close to our perimeter, and he survived our firepower. Thanh lives outside of Dong Ha. On a cold, misty day in March, we met one another at Khe Sanh.

In 1968, Khai was the commander of one of the battalions of the 36th Regiment, 308th Division. He remembers well that June 7 day, 1968. Khai ordered the ambush that my second platoon walked into. Our losses were so extensive that our platoon was deactivated. I was one of the serious casualties. Swedish television filmed Khai and myself at the ambush site which is near Liberty Bridge and the Thu Bon River, 25 kilometers southwest of Da Nang.



Swede and Hung

A two-man team, reporter and cameraman filmed me during the first part of my visit. Though the executive producer, I was given no say as to the film's final outcome. It was shown on Swedish television last spring. To get a full grasp of the film one has to not only understand the language, but also the Swedish culture and social history.

Approximately 50 percent of the 52-minute documentary film is straightforward. But the rest of the film is made up of the sly, subjective reporter's efforts to entertain the viewers. In doing so, he derides and insults me and frequently takes my words and sentences out of context to convey meanings different from what I originally said or intended.

The film looks good. The thrill of the journey, the fantastic people overshadows the bad parts of the film. After the film crew departed, I took a train from Hanoi to Lao Cai, on the Chinese border. We ascended the vast Hoang Lien mountains. Viet Nam's highest summit, Fan Si Pan at 10,311 feet, towers above the rest.

For me this was to be my ultimate act of reconciliation, I would climb this mountain with my former enemy. Nguyen Thien Hung was a tank commander with the 12th Regiment, 312th Division.

He had fought us and the ARVNs and was now my guide and partner for my ascent of Fan Si Pan.

After a hard climb, at 7,000 feet we cleared the clouds. We were hit by strong winds and rain. The climb grew more arduous and treacherous. We crested the summit and were hit by hurricane strength winds and rain that seemed to whip at me, lashing at me. Dense, dark clouds forced our quick retreat, back down. The demanding climb drew Hung and I together. We became close. We laughed and cursed together. Slept side by side. We came to depend on one another during those four days. My four-day climb with Hung will forever remain one of my fondest, most treasured, incredible life experiences.

I have journeyed now to Viet Nam three times. I have met a good number of our former enemy. They had a cause, they sacrificed, they won.

We, Khe Sanh vets, believe we are special, we saw a lot of shit—"We did Khe Sanh." All well and true. But I believe that the ones who really did Khe Sanh were the NVA. My wish is that in the near future, we, The Khe Sanh Veterans Inc., will cooperate with our former enemy so that we will at last know and understand the complete history of Khe Sanh.

Cpl. Per-Olof R. "Swede" Odman
USMC-Ret.
D-1/26 67-68

Ed note: "Swede" forwarded two tapes to Ray Stubbe that will go in the Khe Sanh archives. One is of the trip to Khe Sanh, the other is a long interview with Dan McGravey, "Swede's CO during the June period in 1968 when Swede got gunshot and fragged by the NVA.

Beyond The Call Of Duty

March 1968, Khe Sanh

Certainly, there were countless acts of heroism at Khe Sanh, but few match this one. Many accounts of personal bravery and self-sacrifice have never been recorded, lost to failing memories and the passing of time. Mine is different. This story is forever etched in the minds of many who served with B Battery, 1/13. This is the whole truth and only slightly embellished.

I got word that my stateside buddy, Karl MacMackins had just arrived at Khe Sanh and was with Lima company 3/26. Lima was at the northwest end of the combat base. My battery was at the opposite end of the base. I had been with my battery since the beginning of the siege. We were less than a mile apart, but it might as well have been a thousand. Karl got word to me that he wanted to do a secret mission. Even the Lion of Khe Sanh did not know about it. Shoot fire, the CIA didn't know. My sergeant, a fella by the name of Hewitt, gave me eighteen hours leave to visit my buddy. His parting words of encouragement were memorable. "Get outta my sight! And, don't get yourself blown away. I don't feel like writing any more letters to the parents of stupid privates." Little did he know what we really had planned.

By this time, the siege was so old that I was brain dead. Evidence: I began covering the length of the base in broad daylight. I scurried from trench-to-hole-to-bunker-to-trench, on and on I made my way Westward. Horace Greely would have been

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proud. I took incoming twice, the second time it was real close. The rocket exploded in the hole next to the one that had just swallowed my skin and bones, but what almost killed me was the clumsy gyrene who dove in on top of me. Foxhole intelligence is sometimes stunning. "Hey, what are you doing here?" he asked with a bewildered look on his face.

"Providing padding for you," I quipped. "Now, do you mind getting your number 12s out of my face?" After a short round of "ride-em-cowboy," Texas style, I shook him loose and scrambled to another nearby trench line. I kept asking if anyone knew where Corporal MacMackins was and got replies such as, "Who is this headcase, what in the world are you doing here?" After stumbling around for what seemed like an eternity, someone finally muttered, "Yeah, I know him. He's right over there. He must be commandant or you must be dense, risking your hide to come up here." Being a private and the guy being an officer, I bit my tongue and did not show him my superior intellect by responding.

Seeing that Kentuckian, MacMackins brought tears to my eyes. We hugged and slapped each other's flak jackets until we were choking from the red dust. He was the only one who appreciated my bravery in reaching him. What a great guy! We retired to his hooch to plot and plan the commando raid.

As soon as it got dark we made our way over to where the old mess tent had been, and more important, the collapsed bunker which still held some culinary treasures just waiting to be liberated. Our objective was the sugar and sour cherries. Being fairly astute, I asked, "You gonna make a pie or something?" He pulled rank and gave me a look of exasperation.

"Brew," he said with a sneer. Thinking we would take the supplies to the Bru Montagnards, I became subdued. The raid went off without a hitch. Later that night I learned the real reason for our secret mission. It wasn't for the Montagnards at all. Given a secret formula, I could make cherry wine for medicinal and other purposes, like morale and such. I dashed back to my area under the cover of an early morning fog. With my stash of supplies held tightly to my chest I returned to my bunker. Chief, a native American Indian from Pocatello, Idaho shared my rat hole of a bunker. Lacking my newly gained insight, he said, "What are you gonna do with all that trash?" I revealed my secret.

"Brew," I said.

"Montagnards?" he responded.

"No. Medicine." He must have been part medicine man or something, because he immediately caught my drift. We artillery boys aren't as dumb as we look.

"How you gonna make it?"

"Secret formula. All I need is a five gallon water can...full of water."

After he got up off the deck having fallen over in laughter, he replied, "Sure Spider, and I'm gonna make some pheasant under glass." He couldn't fool me. There wasn't a pheasant within five miles of Khe Sanh because of all the bombing and I told him so.

"There isn't that much water in our entire area. We only get a half canteen a day."

"Well, somebody someplace has water. We just gotta find it."

The next day Chief furtively filched five gallons of water from who knows where. He never would say. "I ain't risking my sugar and cherries on gook water," I told him. He assured me that it wasn't gook water.

Besides, he said, the fermentation process would purify it. So, after much debate I committed my ingredients to the mysterious water. Day after day we hovered over our secret, until one day someone asked me how it was coming along. Our secret had gotten out. I thought to myself that I was doomed and before I got court martialed, I'd strangle Chief. Chief was cool about it.

"Don't worry," he assured me. "No one's gonna tell the Gunny...they promised."

"Why should they promise," I rejoined.

"Cause they won't get any ifen they do," he said.

"Well, no stinken sardines!" We're gonna get caught. It'll get confiscated and we'll be shot at dawn," I said and pouted. But, Chief was right. The secret never got to the higher ups and the days turned into weeks and the stuff started fermenting out of the top of the can.

The Gunny was doing his rounds one day and asked me. "Loehrer, what the hell is that stench? Change your socks will you?" Indignantly, I reminded him that I hadn't worn socks since the last pair rotted off a month ago. He wandered away cursing the supply sergeant. Though very much a Marine, he obviously was a man of low culture. Imagine the ignorance of the man. Confusing my fine wine with the stench of old socks. Inferior upbringing no doubt. Wait till you need some medication, I thought to myself.

As the days stretched into weeks, the level of anticipation grew among the inner circle who shared my secret. What a laugh, watching the gun grunts trying to whisper above the sounds of incoming. Chief and I grew very nervous. Then, one morning it was Gone! Gone! I blamed Chief. "What happened to it Chief?" I said accusing him. "Where is it?" He swore he didn't drink it and didn't know who stole it. He laughed at my accusations until he was crying.

"I don't know who stole it, but if you wanna know who drank it go outside and look around. Everybody who had any is sicker than a dog. Go look. Anyone who's green around the gills drank some." He busted a gut laughing.

Chief and I could never agree on the cause of the sickness. I said it was the water. He says it was the recipe. Just after the incident I saw a water buffalo just outside our area that was painted with a sign saying "Non Potable water." In any case, I hope that everyone who drank my wine has amoebic dysentery for the rest of his life.

Mike "Spider" Loehrer

B/1/13

A FEW MOMENTS OF JOY WITH HIS NEW BOOTS

From Pacific Stars And Stripes
Monday 15 April 1968 pg. 11

By John Randolph, The Los Angeles Times

Khe Sanh — "It was the saddest thing of all...to have to cut his new boots off..."

Pale and haggard from lack of sun and sleep, wearing an overnight stubble and a stained and sweaty flak jacket, Lt. Donald J. Magilligan stood in the underground medical bunker and shook his head slowly and heavily.

His voice softened and deepened by compassion, the young but very tired Navy doctor had been telling the story of 19-year-old Jonathan Spicer, a laughing, round-faced little Marine whose death, even by the harsh standards of this place, was both heroic and pathetic.

And when Magilligan came to the part about those wonderful new boots that Spicer had wanted for so long, and had such a short time to wear, the tears welled up in his eyes.

Unusual

Private Spicer, the rarest kind of Marine—a conscientious objector—died recently in the U.S. Naval Hospital at Yokosuka, Japan. It was the tragic end of a desperate, week-long struggle by Navy doctors to save his life from shell fragments that hit him while he was serving as a stretcher-bearer at Khe Sanh.

Although "Marine" and "conscientious objector" are a contradiction in terms, young Spicer, son of a Methodist minister in Miami, Fla., had nevertheless been allowed to enlist in the Corps as a volunteer. And though his stipulation—that he not have to risk taking a life—was never officially conceded, the Marines solved the problem informally with common sense by "passing the word" and refusing to make an issue of it. When the shooting started, his outfit, 1stBn., 26th Marines, simply loaned him to the Navy medics for stretcher duty. In battered and beleaguered Khe Sanh, that is a duty almost as important as shooting—and even more dangerous.

"He was one of the bravest men in Khe Sanh," said Lt. Magilligan, a warmhearted Irishman from Brooklyn. "It was always the wounded first with him."

"And those boots...how he had wanted to get those boots...you were here yourself...you remember how happy he was..."

The Boots

Khe Sanh is a small place, full of chance meetings and coincidences and I had been there when Spicer got his boots.

It happened this way:

About noon, an enemy mortar shell had wounded a young woman freelance correspondent—Jurate Kazickas, 24, of New York and Chicago, a long-haired, laughing and unusually good-looking girl. Steel fragments had caught her in the forearm and lower leg and in the middle of the left side of the part she sits down with.

Word of her being wounded raced around Khe Sanh, and I got to the bunker just in time to see her and talk for a moment. Then a four-man stretcher crew led by Pvt. Spicer hoisted her up the wooden bunker steps and raced her at a run to a big medical evacuation helicopter that had just touched down, rotors roaring for a fast takeoff. Although the 150 feet from the bunker to the pad are well known to the communist gunners, and comprise by far the deadliest patch of ground in all Khe Sanh, Jurate was lucky. The Viet Cong didn't shoot this time, and the helicopter soared up and away.

The stretcher crew dashed back to "Charlie Med"—as C Co. 3rd Medical Bn. is called in Khe Sanh—and Spicer came clattering down the bunker steps. Suddenly, he seemed to remember something. With a quick dive, he reached behind a big metal tub used for old field dressings, waste, torn uniforms and castoff field gear cut off wounded Marines, and pulled out a pair of unusually tiny but perfectly new and authentic Army green jungle boots.

Spicer was grinning from ear to ear. I glanced at his feet and saw why. He was wearing the sleazy black high-topped sneakers issued to Vietnamese soldiers—obviously the only small size tropical boots that Spicer, a real half-pint had been able to get. He held the gleaming new ones up in his hands, almost dancing with pleasure. Then he suddenly noticed me watching him. His grin vanished.

For Friendship

"I think these were an extra pair she had with her pack," he explained. "See—the laces aren't cut. They would be if these were the ones Mr. Finnegan had cut off her with the surgical shears. She must have taken the others and forgot these."

Then he asked me if I would take them back to her when I left.

But friendship is one thing and suicide is another. The act of leaving Khe Sanh is by far the most dangerous moment of any visit—a desperate sprint, often under spine-chilling fire, for an airplane or helicopter that can hardly wait to take off. I was to leave the next day, and since half-a-dozen correspondents have been wounded on such dashes, I have mentally resolved to dump every last thing I had if it would help me reach that aircraft in time. Jurate's boots had no part in that program, and I told Spicer so.

He was enormously relieved, and his Christmas—morning grin blossomed out again like a big neon sign.

"Mr. Finnegan," he called out across the bunker, "the correspondent here says he can't take the lady's boots back to her. Is it all right if I keep them?"

"Sure," replied Finnegan with a smile. "Hope they fit."

Pure Joy

In a moment the sneakers were off and Jurate's boots were on—a perfect fit.

We talked for a moment. He laced up the boots, using a fancy pattern. I told him he should get some of the new style braided yellow nylon laces—they are springy and lace up and pop open more easily than the government kind. He said he thought he had some with his stuff at Dong Ha and would get a friend to bring them up as soon as possible.

I watched the funny, happy, little Marine hopping about, warming us all with his own joy. Then I left.

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continued from page 23

About two hours later, they carried in a wounded artilleryman. His heart stopped. The doctors massaged it back to life. Then Spicer and his stretcher crew raced him to another helicopter and started back to the bunker. This time the Viet Cong were quicker. A heavy shell came straight into the center of that deadly pathway. Spicer upright and running, had no protection. Survivors carried him, unconscious, and literally dying, back down into the bunker.

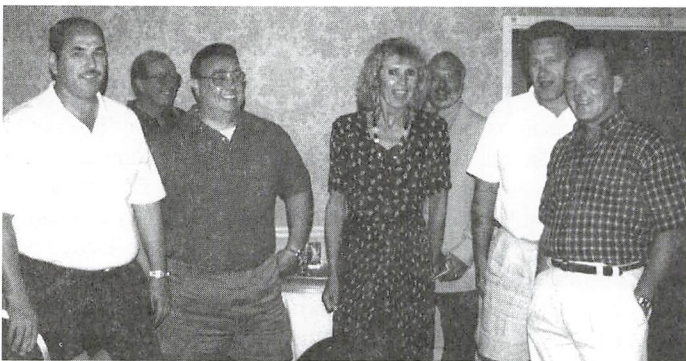
Magilligan and Finnegan and their assistants managed to push death back.

When Spicer's own heart stopped, Magilligan and Finnegan massaged it back to life.

Then the man who carried so many stretchers was himself carried back along that deadly path to another helicopter—then to Dong Ha...Da Nang...Yokosuka...and death.

Ed note: There an inaccuracy in this story. Spicer was not liked in his unit when it became known that he was a C.O.. Ray Stubbe "saved" him by making him his chaplin's assistant. When the siege started all the chaplins' assistants became stretcher bearers. Every one of the chaplins' assistants at Khe Sanh was Killed-In-Action. Spicer received the Navy Cross posthumously. Father Driscoll, who was a stretcher bearer with Spicer that day, was also gravely wounded. Does anyone else have any memories of this man Spicer? Read on, for more on this story.

* * *



L-R: John Lambert, Tony Cuccaro, Jurate, Brian Prochaska, Ted Stratford

Oct. 4, 1995

Dear Ernie,

You've asked me to write some words about the Las Vegas reunion last July. Several months have gone by and with them, the intensity of my feelings and impressions. Caught up now in the daily humdrum of my life—researching and writing, taking kids to school, seeing friends, working out—sometimes it's hard to believe those three days ever happened. Just like time and time again, I still can't understand how I ended up in Vietnam and ultimately Khe Sanh. Experiencing the war as a combat correspondent profoundly affected my life, but don't ask me to tell you how. One day I hope to be able to put it into words. One thing for sure, the shrapnel I picked up in Khe Sanh on March 8, 1968—especially the pea-sized metal I can feel rolling around my ankle—is a constant reminder that the war was—and still is—very real to me.

I am grateful that Rev. Ray Stubbe somehow tracked me down two years ago and told me about the Khe Sanh Vets. When I



Back at Khe Sanh

heard about this reunion, I hesitated about going but Bill O'Conner reassured me and indeed, he and his wife, along with John Kaheny and so many others made me feel welcome.

I wanted to go to the reunion because in April I went back to Khe Sanh and the emotions that brief visit stirred up overwhelmed me. And just like it had been for the past 25 years, when I came home, I could not talk about the war to anyone. People would ask perfunctory questions, but I could tell they weren't really interested. I never sought out any veterans all those years for the obvious reason that I was not a soldier. More likely though, I don't think I ever really wanted to relive the war.

But standing there on the barren nothingness that is Khe Sanh today as the red dirt stung my eyes, I felt such a connection, and I knew I had to find someone who would understand—without ever having to say a word. The vets of Khe Sanh.

In some ways, sitting in the chilly meeting rooms, I was the reporter again—observing and listening to life stories—like I did in Vietnam. I still have all my battlefield notebooks, filled with hundreds of names and hometowns and quotes about the politics of war, the horror of it, the fear, the loneliness, but also the pride of duty and courage. The warriors—they were all so young! I used to joke that I fell in love a dozen times a day out there in the boonies with the best. And they were the best! And I tried to tell their stories so people at home might understand what war was like and hasten its end.

But the stories were so different now. I was stunned to hear how many men admitted to broken marriages, alcohol and drug abuse, job instability and how many had suffered from PTSD. But how heartening that men could open up that way and share the pain and finally tell of recovery and rehabilitation. The men always took care of their buddies in battle. What so impressed me back then was how they loved one another! And once again, I saw that same compassion and caring as life sagas were revealed. I have the feeling you will never stop helping each other.

I was interested to see that for some, Vietnam is still the peak experience of their lives. In truth, nothing else in life could ever compare, rightly or wrongly. For some the war has given their lives meaning and purpose and it was gratifying to see how many work with vets in trouble. And then there were the successful business executives who emphasized that not everybody who survived Khe Sanh was still running around in camouflage and combat boots. But to me that's what made the gathering so spe-

cial. Such a diverse group. You came from all over with the baggage of 25 years, men with different jobs and careers or no jobs at all, and in an instant, were equalized because of a year in time. And what a year.

I loved hearing those "war stories" and the laughter. God knows there were so many crazy and weird moments in Khe Sanh and hey, if you couldn't laugh, you had to cry. With every tall tale I could see how many memories were being stirred and I'm sure there were some long, late nights in Vegas when the time machine really got rolling. And once again, I thought to myself, oh how young we were then!

I had just turned 25 when I choppered into Khe Sanh for my fateful 24 hours there. I was on assignment for WOR Radio in New York to interview local Marines on how they were coping with the constant bombardment. Some of you at the reunion said you remembered seeing me (though I was a brunette then, by the way) and some even recalled serving me coffee! My feeble mind raced trying to remember the faces and names and truthfully, I've forgotten so much. But I had no trouble at all connecting with Dr. Ed Feldman who operated on me and removed that infamous chunk of lead from the base of my spine—as I prefer to describe it in my prim old age. What a hero he was with all the lives he saved and the emotion he showed in his words moved all of us.

But I could not help thinking of all those men who were not there. Who were not anywhere. In the end, I was left with such sadness because so many died in Khe Sanh, in Vietnam and we as nation will never stop asking ourselves—why? Leaving the reunion, I was filled with very conflicted emotions. As one vet said to me, "I don't know how many more of these I can take. It's too heavy." So many memories were stirred, so many suppressed feelings came to the surface. Maybe guys who have been in therapy over the years deal with it better. I'm not so sure I want to replay everything I saw in the two years I covered the war.

But Khe Sanh was unique. I may not have any right to label myself a Khe Sanh vet but I was there, I saw, I felt and walked away with a lifelong souvenir or two. The men who fought and died, who fought and lived are heroes—one and all—and I am proud to have met you and in the slightest of ways, shared your moment in history, your camaraderie, and even the terrible fire from the North.

Just last weekend I was wearing my red "Siege and Sacrifice" Khe Sanh sweatshirt when I went to a small grocery store in North Salem, New York. A fella in a baseball cap with a belly hanging comfortably over his jeans came up to me and said, "Welcome home," and I thought I was going to cry. It turned out he was a Marine in Vietnam in 1969. Of course, he assumed my husband was the Khe Sanh vet. But then he began to talk and talk and I just let him.

And that's what the reunion was about and why it was great. There was so much to say and at last, someone was listening.

Khe Sanh will always be more than a place. It was an experience like no other in the annals of the Vietnam war. Forgive me for rhetorically including myself but the Khe Sanh experience may have scarred us (literally for some) but in a profound sense it also transformed us, and every now and then, I think, especially after Las Vegas, even enriched us. And I'll repeat what a nurse

said to me when I asked her if she regretted having gone to Vietnam. And she said it took a long while for her to reconcile it all but now she's glad she was there. "Because," she said, "Vietnam made me who I am today and I like who I am today."

What a legacy of war!

Love,
Jurate Kazickas

Ed note: Sister, you are a Khe Sanh vet. No more apologizing, please.



L-R: Ed Feldman, Ken Pipes, Ernie Spencer, Jim Wilkinson

REMEMBERING, NAME BY NAME

By Ray Stubbe

*Some come, O Lord, this day to pause,
Remember our fallen, remember our cause,
Memorial Day of '94:*

*Here, precisely here, You're here!
In wars, on crosses, You're always near—
Our hurt, our heart, our groan—Your own.*

*Some are here, hearts full of pride:
They gave their all—life, love, and died.
Greater love hath no one than this:
To live Your life is to follow bliss.*

*Some are here—filled with anguish and pain,
In black hole graves, their spirit remains.
God shall wipe away all tears,
Shall comfort us, hold us, and calm all our fears.*

*Some with anger and rancor are spewing,
Primeval volcanic erupts, exploding—
Pierced, battle's incoming violence, seared—
Souls, branded, marked, feared.*

*Here, precisely here, You're here!
Perhaps unfelt, perhaps unknown.
In wars, on crosses, You're always near—
Our hurt, our heart, our groan—Your own.*

*In aircraft crashed, in planes of fire.
In jungle heat—mud, muck, and mire.
On sandy shores, in urban walls
In night of fright, in hurt heart halls.*

*Here, precisely here, You're here!
Perhaps unfelt, perhaps unknown.
In wars, on crosses. You're always near—
Our hurt, our heart, our groan—Your own.*

*In shattered body pieces—no peace.
In unhealing wounds of no release.
In results of warfare still unfolding,
In silent death, church bells still tolling.*

*On a heap of ashes an old woman gropes
Through her fingers pass the dust of burn hopes,
A serviceman writes home for some clothes for his friend:
A tribal child he's there to defend.*

*Here, precisely here, You're here!
Perhaps unfelt, perhaps unknown,
In wars, on crosses, You're always near—
Our hurt, our heart, our groan—Your own.*

*War is not soldiers who kill other soldiers,
War is not numbers on papers in folders;
War is civilians—in deep anguish ensnared,
War is the young man forever impaired.*

*Today, O Lord, we remember our dead.
O may, we pray, our life be led,
To honor these dead by serving the living;
As they gave so fully, may we be so giving.*

*We all recall the name of another:
A friend, a father, a husband, a brother,
O Lord, we place them in Your hand
Though fallen, they there will always stand.*

*Ken in a storm cloud who charges the fight;
He yells like a Tarzan, so wild and so strong.
He cares for his men through the terrors of night.
Fallen in ambush, his body doth lie;
Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?*

*John is a cirrus cloud—so fleecy, so long.
He jumps in a river, although not a swimmer.
He drowns—saving tribesmen who struggle, who throng
He dies saving others—his cloud is so high.
Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?*

*A cumulus cloud is James, Sergeant Major
He visits and cares for his troops—his demeanor
A shrieking rocket, Valkyrie's cry: Die!
Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?*

*A comforting shade-cloud in battle's heats
Is Jonathan, a Conscientious Objector
He carries our wounded, many days, many weeks
When others take cover, beside them he'll lie
He covers their body, lays down his life
A mortar round kills him—there—in that strife
Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?*

*Your sky, O Lord, all clouds contain
The bright ones, the dark ones, those that cause rain.
So hearts of pain, of pride, of fury
Within Your heart of love we bury.
Bless and keep us in Your way.
O Lord, Amen. Today we pray.*

Ed note: Ray is referring to specific individuals who died at Khe Sanh. Ken is Kenneth "king" Claire, John is John Hinson, James is James Gaynor (see cover) and Jonathan is Jonathan Spicer who received the Navy Cross posthumously (see Memoirs).

J
 A
 K
 E



Quiles Ray Jacobs died of Agent Orange-related cancer at home in Compton on April 19, 1995. His passing came, coincidentally, 27 years after the conclusion of the Siege of the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

Quiles was born, enlisted and returned to Compton. In the years following his honorable discharge, he became a highly successful general contractor, civic leader, and active member of the Khe Sanh Veterans organization. He was known to his family, friends, business associates and brother Khe Sanh vets, as a kind, loving and concerned man who was severely tested throughout his life.

His individual acts of courage and heroism, from the DMZ to the Arizona Territory, are legendary within the ranks of B 1/26. In addition to the Silver Star, his personal decorations include: the Bronze Star and Navy Commendation Medals with Combat "V," Purple Heart Medal with Gold Star, the Republic of Viet Nam Cross of Galentry with Bronze Star.

This fallen Warrior will be missed, his place in line difficult to fill. Sergeant Jacobs was escorted to his final rest in Inglewood Park Cemetery, Inglewood, California by his Khe Sanh Company Commander, Ken Pipes, Lieutenant Colonel USMC ret., and Reserve Gunnery Sergeant Patrick Fitch; friend and squad mate in B 1/26 during the siege.

Kenneth Pipes
CO., B 1/26

The 'Snake'

by Michael O'Hara
B 1/26

When he arrived on Hill 881
 I wondered about this big black man with a gun
 His eyes had a sparkle apart from the rest
 Soon I would learn he was one of the best
 He was younger than I and had more stripes
 Soon we would both engage in the fight
 As the days wore on I listened and learned
 From this big black man whose stripes he had earned
 We soon left the hill to enter the fight
 Soon thereafter we would both earn a stripe
 Through dysentery, leeches, rats and the rain
 With the big black man there was never disdain
 With the loss of the Third our hearts would be broken
 Our next patrol would only be taken
 He would be shot across the back
 Only to turn and help pick up the slack
 Three men down needing medevac
 My help would be this man shot in the back
 In little over a week, with his dressing still bound
 We would return to the hill where our brothers would be found
 And leading the squad as he had done in the past
 We beat the NVA back, finally, at last
 And now years later our love has grown
 Far beyond what could ever be known
 And after suffering through all of that strife
 A hidden enemy now threatens his life
 I no longer have bullets left in my gun
 I only shoot prayers to the Almighty One
 When you see shooting stars in the heavens at night
 Be assured I am engaged in the fight
 Committed to fight whatever it may take
 To protect my friend they all call "The Snake"

Clarence Tolentino
S/Sgt. D Company
1/26



Killed In Action
6/17/68

The Khe Sanh Veteran Newsletter

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