

Special 30th Anniversary Edition

Khe Sanh

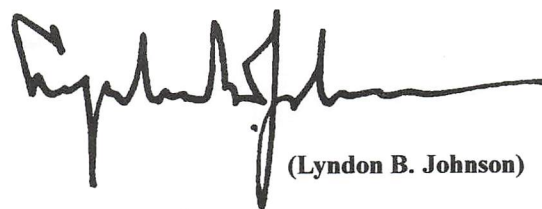
The Siege

UPI/CORBIS-BETTMANN



The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to the TWENTY-SIXTH MARINES (REINFORCED, THIRD MARINE DIVISION (REINFORCED)) for service as set forth in the following CITATION: For extraordinary heroism in action against North Vietnamese Army forces during the battle for Khe Sanh in the Republic of Vietnam from 20 January to 1 April 1968. ...the 26th Marines was opposed by numerically superior forces...The enemy...was determined to destroy the Khe Sanh Combat Base...The 26th Marines, occupying a small but critical area, was daily subjected to hundreds of rounds of intensive artillery, mortar and rocket fire. In addition, fierce ground attacks were conducted by the enemy in an effort to penetrate the friendly positions. Despite overwhelming odds, the 26th Marines remained resolute and determined, maintaining the integrity of its positions....

inflicting heavy losses on the enemy.the men of the 26th Marines stood defiantly firm.....Through their indomitable will, staunch endurance, and resolute courage, the 26th Marines contributed substantially to the failure of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army winter/spring offensive. The enemy forces were denied the military and psychological victory they so desperately sought. By their gallant fighting spirit and their countless individual acts of heroism, the men of the 26th Marines (Reinforced) established a record of illustrious courage and determination in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service

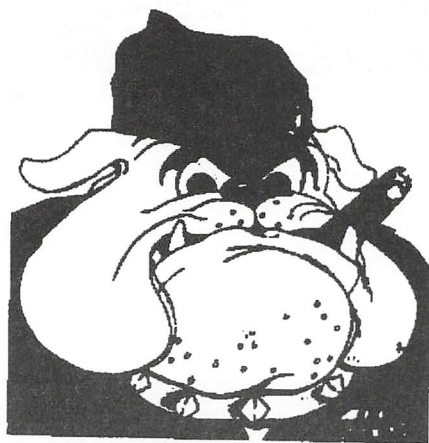


(Lyndon B. Johnson)



RED CLAY

Issue NO. 42 (Summer, 1998) Red Clay is a publication of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.



The Word for This Edition: Make thy ball to lie in green pastures, not in still waters.

Arnie -3: par 72

Welcome Home G.I.!

The past four and one-half years I have labored with great pride as Editor of the Florida Recon Report, a publication of the State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. Last year I was rewarded by being chosen as Editor of the Year - the Recon as magazine of the year, the best in the country.

Winning awards is great fun, but continuing that pace, and living up to the standards required to achieve that status is, at best, a monumental task. And following in the steps of a truly dedicated legend such as Ray Stubbe will also be a monumental task.

Ray has set a standard for your publication that any veterans' organization would be proud to have. A great writer with extreme sensitivity to the needs of the membership, a historian in the truest sense of the word.

I have personally always thought the true measure of a man is in what he gives to an organization, not in what he takes, and in Ray's case, what he has given is immeasurable. I cannot even begin to tell Ray Stubbe thank you enough.

For myself, as your new Editor, I will tell you I will give the position the respect it is due, and I will work as hard as necessary to insure it remains a valuable asset to our organization.

By no means am I a historian. The history of Khe Sanh is in the hearts and minds of our membership, and it is they that will tell the stories. I am but the medium by which those stories will pass through so everyone will be able to share in them.

In my heart I am still a Marine, and in my mind I still remember that nasty little road from Dong Ha, J.J. Carroll, and Cam Lo leading up to Khe Sanh. Highway 9 as I recall. Share your stories, your photos, that's what will keep Red Clay a great publication. Send 'em in.

My tour as your editor is dedicated to SSgt George Walbridge, KIA Khe Sanh, my best friend, and my cousin, Jerry Truelove, KIA, Vietnam, my uncle Jim Brown, WWII, USMC BARman, POW 3 1/2 years, my son Rick Truelove, WO1, USMC active duty 14 years. Semper Fi!

Ray Truelove

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RED CLAY

Red Clay is a publication of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a nonprofit veterans organization. *Red Clay* is issued three times yearly (spring, summer and fall).

Non-Khe Sanh veterans may subscribe. A subscription form is printed in this publication for your convenience. Information on membership and an application is also included herein.

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Red Clay Reports

Officer Reports

President.....4

Dick Peloquin

Remembering Khe Sanh

Poems and other writings.....5

Khe San Photo Section

Scenes of the Siege.....9

Other Articles

Facts about the 1968 Tet Offensive

By Richard Fulton.....15

Reunion Information.....18...19

Veterans Benefits News.....23

Asian News Briefs

"Hanoi Hannah" comments about
her time on the air.....28

San Antonio Reunion After Action

Report.....29

The Truth About VA Healthcare

Enrollment.....32

COVER PHOTO CREDIT:

03/21/1968-Hill 881, South Vietnam - ORIGINAL CAPTION READS: With a Marine bugler sounding "Colors" at the mornings first light, a US flag is hoisted atop a 15 foot radio antenna. A long line of wounded U.S. Marines heads for a helicopter standing by to evacuate them, during an attack South of Hill 881 on April 30th. An 11-day fight for this triangle of high ground less than 10 miles from North Vietnam, has taken a toll of 118 marine lives and wounded 338 U.S. troops. The enemy has been described as elite forces from the North. (The following credit line is obligatory): UPI/CORBIS-BETTMANN.

Gen. Al Gray to be Speaker at Reunion

Thanks for your trust and confidence by electing me your President! I accepted the job when I knew who the Board of Directors were: Vice President Dave "Bulldog" Smith, Secretary Dave Doehrman, Treasurer Vince Griffith, Chaplain Jim Epps, Sgt at Arms Tom Eichler, Members at Large; Larry McCartney, Russ Turner, and Michael Worth.

Larry is hard at work revising our bylaws and should have a copy on the table by reunion time. Russ Turner is doing a fine job putting our Reunion together along with Michael Worth. Bernice Penn is putting together a package to include; name tags, a commemorative pin, wreath for "The Wall", etc. Our good friend and hard worker (DC Liaison) Bill Jayne has gotten our permits for "The Wall", Arlington National Cemetery, reservations for the "Sunset Parade" and is having our Khe Sanh Vet's Plaque cleaned and replaced.

Ray Truelove, a highly qualified individual is our new Editor. You will be pleased with his work. Ray Stubbe will remain our Asst. Editor and Archivist and our forever Chaplain.

We are extremely privileged to have as our Guest Speaker for our Reunion, the 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps (The War Fighter) General Alfred E. Gray, the Marine that innovated the Marine Expeditionary Unit-Special Operations Capable MEU (SOC), and made the Marine Corps the most formidable and capable force of warriors in the world.

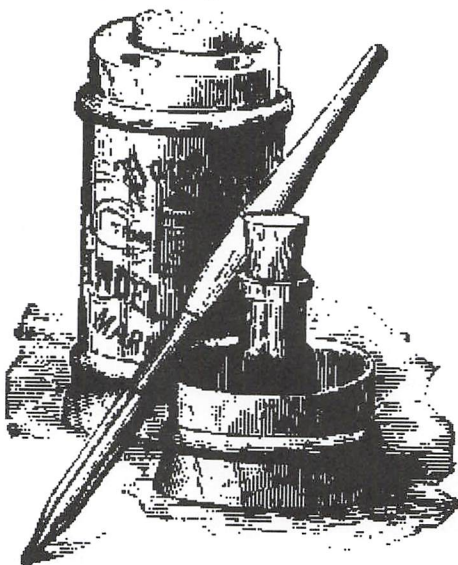
As you know, this is our 30th Anniversary of Khe Sanh, the Hill Fights, and all the Special Operations

(CAC-FOB) etc., surrounding Khe Sanh. DC is the appropriate place to properly commemorate and pay due respect to those who didn't make it back - and those that did. They will never be lost, that are remembered.

Registration forms are included in this issue of Red Clay -- July 1-6 is the time frame (the 6th being check-out day), the 4th will be Banquet night.

Our organization is comprised of Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Civilians and Family members. I was extremely pleased to note at our reunion at St. Louis that there were no "Cliques" of units, but a general integration of all Khe Sanh Vet's -- And that's the way it should be! See you all in DC.

Dick Peloquin



Editor's Ramblings

I am extremely pleased to tell you that I received an abundance of mail from throughout the membership in response to Ray Stubbe's request in the last edition of Red Clay.

It is always nice to have more than enough material for publishing. Unfortunately, as with most veteran publications it is not always possible to print everything due to a lack of space, cost of printing, etc., but I will do my best. Please don't feel left out if something you submit is not printed., it is not a personal matter, just business.

I realize many of you do not have typewriters, computers and so on, but if at all possible please try to submit your copy in something other than handwritten form. It will help me by making it much less difficult to read, decipher, typeset, etc. Most of all, typewritten copy helps eliminate errors in names, places, and so on. So, when possible, please submit your copy in typewritten form - if not possible, then just do what you have to do and I'll do the best I can.

Photos are always welcome with your copy (try to remember to ID people in pictures when you can) - your photos are important to you, so when submitting them it might be a good idea to be sure you have the negative on file or make a copy of the photo before sending it in just in case this Editor accidentally loses it. I haven't misplaced anyone's personal photos for about the last four or five years, but that doesn't mean I won't misplace yours, so protect yourselves from me!

I am always open to suggestions, ideas and constructive criticism about what a publication should be, what should be in it, and generally, try to listen so the membership receives something worthwhile. However, I am aware after many years of doing the job of Editor that it is NOT possible for me to please everyone all the time. So, if I please most of you all the time and only half of you are upset part of the time, then I guess we'll be at least reasonably successful...

I very much enjoy doing military publications and was trained as a photo journalist, Editor in the Marine Corps, though it took me many years beyond my time in the Corps to reach the level I am currently at.

My only goal is to serve the needs of your organization. Listening to you and working together virtually as a team will result in a highly successful publication, one that I will be proud to tell everyone I am the Editor of, and one you will be proud to show everyone.

Together then, together again.
Semper Fi! and Welcome Home!
Ray Truelove



*Khe Sanh Remembered...Poems and other writings submitted by those
having served there, those who care, and those having lost loved ones there.*

P.T.S.D.

*Three AM in the morning
I sit in my back yard & stare up
at a silent moon
There's cold beer in the
refrigerator
& I think about getting one
I think about the warm bed and
clean sheets vainly waiting
for me
I think about the beautiful
daughter I'll soon wake up
for school
I think about old comrades that'll
never have any of these things
'Cause they lost it all
one dark night
somewhere in South Vietnam
That wasn't even on the
God Damn map*

Robert McLane Aka "Buddah"
Fox-2-12
Life Member

Days pass so slowly
when you're up all night
But after all, night is
just the dark part of the day
The part when its hardest to see
It was the longest year of my life
that first sleepless year
Soon, I hope, the big sleep
will come
I am so tired...

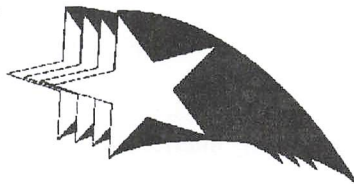
W. Seabooh
"G" Btry, 65th Arty
Quad 50's
Jan '68 - Jan '69

Christmas 1967

*By William O'Connor
Former CO, C-1-13 (Reinf)*

On this thirtieth anniversary of a momentous battle in the Vietnam war, I feel it appropriate to recount my story of Christmas amid Combat.

During Christmas 1967 I was a U.S. Marine Corps Captain stationed in South Vietnam as Battery Commander of "C" Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marine Regiment. Our combat base was an isolated, desolate one known as Khe Sanh. The prior period was fairly calm but we were aware that enemy activity was beginning to escalate.



A truce was declared for Christmas Eve, but, as usual, the enemy did not honor the truce and we were forced to return fire with our 105mm howitzers that evening. Christmas day was uneventful, and exceptional given that there was nothing to put us into the Christmas spirit. There definitely weren't any USO shows.

One of the few comforts I had reminded me of Christmas back home in Indiana. It was a small Christmas tree my wife sent to me, complete with multi-colored lights. The tree occupied a special place in my bunker and brought to me the only Christmas spirit I could have in Khe Sanh. I also remember that our Christmas dinner was outstanding solely for its mediocrity. My troops were equally disappointed with the meal and I couldn't blame them. It certainly wasn't like mom used to make.

Christmas was a very depressing time for us since we were half a globe away and an entire world away from our loved ones. This was not the first time I had been away from home for Christmas. As a young Second Lieutenant, I had spent my first Christ-

mas abroad in Hong Kong. However, on that occasion, I was in a decidedly less perilous situation.

Soon after the New Year in mid-January, we were attacked by a force of North Vietnamese soldiers. Although we fought with everything we had, they greatly outnumbered us and nearly overran our safe perimeter. When the smoke cleared we were alarmed to be surrounded by a hostile force of over 5,500 from the Communist North. Our supplies were depleted, ammunition was nearly spent, and a supply shipment was nowhere in sight.

During the course of the battle, we not only lost our aiming posts but the lights which provided the ability to target our guns amidst the smoke and darkness. Our instincts, ingenuity, and Christmas spirit revisited us when we dismantled my Christmas tree, using its lights to illuminate our aiming posts. In the middle of warfare's destruction, we looked to the reds and greens of the Christmas lights to revitalize our holiday. Our sentiments were kept alive alongside our mission and struggle for survival.

Every Christmas I am reminded of those terrible moments in Vietnam. But the Holidays also bring to me a deep warmth and respect for the brave Marines who served with me in the terrible siege of Khe Sanh.

Red rust to dust
Who can we possibly trust?
L.B.J.....Dean Rusk?
How long must we lay buried alive?
C-rats and separate black cats
My God! How large are these rats?
4,000 V.C. I am told
Dr. Spock, how dare you scold
40,000 N.V.A. enfold
My clothes all have mold
Christ! We all have colds
Uncle Sam, I am not sold
Must we remain entrenched?
Death has such a stench
Why dig another trench?
I still smell the French
Mario's just lost his wits
and Westmoreland's throwing fits
Please, lets call it quits!

Peter R. Ross, USMC B-112 F 2/3
Khe Sanh & LZ Hawk 1968

Khe Sanh Remembered...

The following article is a report, once classified Secret, written by the Vice Director of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. I found it interesting...and hope you will also....Editor

1. The attached Fact Sheet was developed pursuant to your oral request of 5 April 1968 and is provided as a source document for possible press releases.

2. The Fact Sheet makes these two significant points:

a. The US/GVN forces holding Khe Sanh tied down approximately two divisions of NVA troops during the crucial period of the TET Offensive. These well equipped and trained enemy forces would otherwise have been available to join the attack on the cities; and their intervention could have altered seriously and detrimentally the course of battle.

b. The NVA forces in the vicinity of Khe Sanh suffered a severe defeat. They failed to accomplish their military, psychological and propaganda objectives and it is estimated that they lost approximately one half of their committed fighting troops. The extent of their defeat becomes more apparent as our forces, now conducting operations in the Khe Sanh area, gather mounting evidence in the form of ammunition and equipment caches, enemy bodies in mass graves, and battered fortifications.

John B. McPherson, Vice Dir. JCS

FACT SHEET

1. The following facts are in answer to the question "Why Khe Sanh?"

a. Friendly Strategy

General Westmoreland's purpose in establishing forces at Khe Sanh was to place his power astride the Route 9 - Route 911-92 intersection to support interdiction of enemy logistic activity on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, to impede enemy west-east movement on Route 9 and into the Ba Long Valley, and to secure a key route which he might later wish to use in a major thrust into Laos. In his evaluation, General Westmoreland considered Khe Sanh to be of significance; strategically, tactically, and most importantly, psychologically.

b. Enemy Strategy

In the DMZ area, particularly at Khe Sanh, the enemy's strategy was to build up powerful forces around our fixed strong point installations, while concurrently exerting strong pressure on U.S. and Free World forces throughout the length of Vietnam, attacking the Revolutionary Development program and invading the urban areas in order to destroy the Vietnamese governmental structure. There is no certainty, from intelligence presently available, as to which of these endeavors the enemy regarded as his main strategic effort. It is quite possible that he did not actually establish a main effort, but rather was prepared to exploit any one of his thrusts which promised great success.

c. Strategic and Tactical Geography

1. Khe Sanh is at a strategic crossroads, standing in the way of enemy movement into the Quang Tri littoral and looking down on the north-south routes into the Laos panhandle. Khe Sanh is 30 miles from the ocean, 23 miles from the logistic base at Dong Ha, 10 miles from a fire support base at Camp Carroll, seven miles from the fire support base at Thon Son Lam. Route 9 was physically interrupted for a space of about seven miles, but, in April 1968 was put into useful condition in a relatively brief time.



2. Khe Sanh is dominated on the north, and, to a lesser degree, on the west and south, by mountains which rise 800 meters above the valley floor. The base area itself, excluding the outposts, is about three kilometers long and one kilometer in width. A stream runs along the north edge of the occupied area, providing adequate water, but in a relatively vulnerable location.

The following facts form a recapitulation of the combat activity at Khe Sanh from 1 November 1967 to 1 April 1968:

Resources

1. In the immediate Khe Sanh area there were as many as 20,000 to 25,000 North Vietnamese in some 21 battalions, plus supporting forces. This represents more than two divisions and about 50 percent of the NVA forces in I CTZ. Readily available in the overall DMZ/Laos panhandle area there were another 24,000. They were reasonably well trained, reasonably well motivated and very well armed with weapons up to and including 152 mm artillery, as well as some tanks, assault guns, 122 mm and 140 mm medium range rockets, and anti-aircraft guns up to 57 mm. They were well supplied with ammunition and the essentials.

2. Friendly forces in the Khe Sanh combat base itself numbered 5,700 Marines and about 500 Vietnamese. This represented about three percent of the total friendly forces in I CTZ. They were armed with 18 105's, five 155's, 10 Ontos with six 106 mm recoilless rifles each, 32 individual 106 mm recoilless rifles, five tanks, and 98 mortars. Within a radius of 10 miles of Khe Sanh there were 3,800 more Marines and 500 Army. And, within 40 miles of Khe Sanh, there were at least 37,000 more friendly troops. The U.S. forces were uniformly of high quality. The Vietnamese exhibited their trustworthiness. Logistics support was satisfactory throughout the battle. The garrison wanted for very little. Its supply levels were adequate.

3. Fire support capabilities in the DMZ area were impressive. In addition to the artillery, mortars and recoilless weapons in the Khe Sanh base, there were 16 175 mm guns and six 155 mm howitzers at Camp Carroll and at Thon Son Lam which supported the battle. There were at least 45 B-52 sorties available per day. It was not uncommon, in a single day, to drop as much as 1,800 tons of bombs in the Khe Sanh area, and this figure could have been exceeded if surge requirements demanded. Then there was the matter of ammunition variety and lethality - - gun ammunition, mines, delayed action influence bombs, and napalm - - all contributed to the fire support array. And finally, the radar bombing capability, either ground directed or conducted with organic aircraft radar extended the fire support system into night and foul weather. **CONT'D NEXT PG**

Khe Sanh Remembered...

Continued from previous page

4. Our air transport capability, built around a comprehensive in country system of C-130, C-123, Caribou, and helicopters, met the daily requirement of the Khe Sanh garrison (175 tons), and built up a reserve of about 20 days of supplies at combat active rates, across the board. The helicopter round trip to Dong Ha is about 45 miles. The fixed wing round trip varies between 45 miles (Dong Ha), 55 miles (Quang Tri), 100 miles (Phu Bai), 180 miles (DaNang), and, while bad weather had some adverse effect on aerial delivery, it did not stop it, because of the GCA capability at Khe Sanh.

5. During the siege, an average of 194 short tons per day of supplies and 70 troops per day were air delivered to Khe Sanh. This represents a total of 14,356 short tons of supplies and 5,180 troops. The total resupply airlift involved an average of 15 fixed wing and 20 helicopter sorties per day. Of the fixed wing support sorties, 12 made air drops, one delivered by extraction, and two landed. The total number of helicopter sorties reached 7,870, which, in addition to cargo, carried in 17,254 passengers. No figures are available on the total number of passengers extracted from the compound; however, it is approximately the same as the number of passengers delivered since the total number of personnel in the Khe Sanh area stabilized at about 6,200.

b. Intensity of Conflict

1. The Khe Sanh compound came under fire and ground attack during the week of 18-24 January 1968. Between then and 1 April 1968 the area received a total of 11,114 incoming artillery, mortar, and rocket rounds. This is an average of 150 incoming rounds per day, which was the average for all of I CTZ in 1967. The peak bombardment on 23 February 1968 reached about 1400 rounds. Understandably, it was difficult to ascertain, in all cases, the type of fire being received; however, the data in the reports show totals of 1,284 rounds of artillery, 3,184 rounds of mortars, 742 rounds of rocket, and 5,904 rounds of mixed or undetermined fire.

2. In support of Khe Sanh, U.S. forces fired a total of 117,643 rounds of artillery. Only 14,786 rounds were fired prior to 20 January 1968. Most of the total was 105 mm and 155 mm howitzer fire; however,

12, 441 rounds were from 175 mm artillery pieces.

3. In addition, B-52 forces flew 2,602 sorties and delivered 75,631 tons of ordnance. For the 74 days this averaged 35 sorties and 1,022 tons per day. This was approximately 85 percent more sorties and 82 percent more ordnance delivered than the daily average over all of SVN and the DMZ area for the past 12 months. The bombed area extended part way into Laos; however, the majority of the sorties delivered ordnance in SVN. In fact, 533 sorties delivered ordnance within three kilometers of friendly ground forces in the perimeter areas around Khe Sanh.



4. From 7 January to 1 April 1968, tactical air fire power supported the Khe Sanh forces with a total of 15, 266 attack sorties. Only 49 of these were flown prior to 20 January. The daily rate of 184 sorties in support of Khe Sanh was equivalent to the daily rate furnished in support of all of the I CTZ during the past year. Records on associated air delivered ordnance for this area are not readily available.

c. Results

1. U.S. forces had 204 personnel killed in action, five prior to 20 January. They suffered 1,622 troops wounded in action with only 22 of these prior to 20 January. Of the total WIAs, 845 were serious enough for medical evacuation. The current most reasonable estimates for VC/NVA casualties in the Khe Sanh area during this period are in excess of 10,000 KIA. There were also 41 detainees and nine NVA prisoners of war. Compared to U.S. KIAs, this is a 50 to one kill ratio. Since 1 April 1968, the number of additional grave sites which have been found indicate that the kill ratio will be considerably higher. The overall kill ratio in SVN prior to Khe Sanh had climbed

to between five to one and six to one.

2. U.S. forces captured at least 178 weapons and, by best estimates, the USMC had two 155 mm howitzers damaged.

3. U.S. aircraft losses in support of Khe Sanh, during the period 1 November 1967 to 1 April 1968 totaled eight fixed wing and 13 helicopters. Of the fixed wing types, four were attack aircraft, one was an observation type, and four were transports.

Conclusions

3. The following conclusions are drawn by logically relating the opposing strategies at Khe Sanh with the documented action which occurred:

a. The purpose of Khe Sanh was to impede expansion of enemy influence.

b. The enemy's strategic purpose was targeted not just upon U.S. forces or ARVN forces but upon the country at large, the military power in general and, most of all, upon the governmental structure.

c. Khe Sanh is strategically located and was accessible to help, not only in the form of logistics, but in the form of counterattack forces.

d. The external fire support and counterattack capability coupled with efficient and flexible logistical support tended to reduce the overall risk of the Khe Sanh operation.

e. The U.S. and ARVN forces numbered some 6,200 in the combat base plus 4,300 within a ten miles radius of Khe Sanh for a total of 10,500 troops opposed by an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 NVA. This is a ratio of approximately two to one in the enemy's favor against the Khe Sanh complex.

f. At Khe Sanh, the simplest way to put it is that the enemy was trying to do again most of the things he did to the French at Dienbienphu; - - the hardening of his weapons positions, the slow closing in of the infantry, the probes and interdiction; - - all of these were evident. His fire on the airfield was not successful, even at a level of over 1,000 rounds of high explosive in a day, largely because of the AM-2 matting could be easily replaced. In this connection, our emplacements stood up better under heavy rocket and artillery (up to 152 mm fire) than did the French at Dienbienphu.

Continued on next page

Khe Sanh Remembered...

Continued from previous page

g. There was no significant difference in the enemy's tactics between Dienbienphu and Khe Sanh.

h. Though the enemy was much better equipped, trained, and supported than the Viet Minh in 1954, the U.S. and ARVN forces were much better equipped, trained, and supported than the French of that period. By comparison Khe Sanh became a Dienbienphu in reverse.

Significant Observations

4. The enemy had the choice of two courses of action relative to Khe Sanh -- they could have attacked or bypassed the position. A victory by them would have opened the western approaches to the northern provinces of SVN. Since the objective was a strong US/GVN position, it also would have given the enemy an extensive psychological and propaganda advantage. Accordingly, they concentrated approximately two well organized and fully equipped divisions against half a division of friendly troops who were relatively immobile. Also, the enemy underestimated the logistic and fire power support capability of U.S. forces. This resulted in 20,000 to 25,000 NVA troops engaging in a lengthy and unsuccessful siege.

5. The US/GVN forces holding Khe Sanh tied down approximately two divisions of NVA troops during the crucial period of TET Offensive. These well equipped and trained enemy forces would otherwise have been available to join the attack on the cities; and their intervention could have altered seriously and detrimentally the course of battle.

6. The NVA forces in the vicinity of Khe Sanh suffered a severe defeat. They failed to accomplish their military, psychological and propaganda objectives and it is estimated that they lost approximately one half of their committed fighting troops. The extent of their defeat becomes more apparent as our forces, now conducting operations in the Khe Sanh area, gather mounting evidence in the form of ammunition and equipment caches, enemy bodies in mass graves, and battered fortifications.

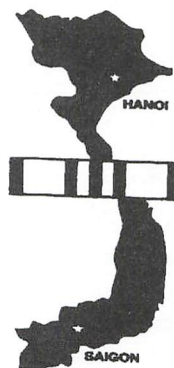
This report prepared by: Cdr J.H. Cullen, USN, LtCol J. McG. Bohen, USA, Maj R.C. Lyons, USAF, Combat Analysis Group J-3. (17 April 1968)

The following is an account of a church service I conducted during the siege at Khe Sanh on a Sunday in March 1968.

**By Chaplain Wm. R. Hampton
3/26, 3d MarDiv.**

"They descended the dirt stairway quietly and cautiously, taking great care not to be noticed. They were not an impressive group by typical standards. Their appearance was that of a group of laborers coming in after a hard day's work, with dirty clothes and dirty bodies. One thing did stand out however, and that was their youthfulness.

Only about a dozen could gather at one time in the underground cave-like chapel. Their surroundings were starkly simple and earthy--a makeshift table, a plate of bread, a cup of wine, worshipers and a leader. The atmosphere couldn't help but remind one of the stable--cave in which the Son of God became human flesh. And now in this small, underground assembly, he promised to be present again with his glorified humanity, under the forms of bread and wine.



A young man was called out of the group and presented himself before the table. On his forehead the leader signed a cross, the symbol of his new loyalty. Using the phrases of the Creed of the Apostles, the leader asked him questions about his faith. The young man answered with a serious, 'I believe!' When asked if he promised to remain true to this faith, he answered, 'I do, by the help of God!' The signs of emotion were obvious. The young man then knelt, and while the leader applied water and spoke the baptismal words, the concussion of a great explosion above ground shook loose some of the dirt wall. The worship continued with the Prayer of Thanksgiving and the newest member of the

Sacred Body of Christ joined the others as they came to the table to receive the Holy Sacrament. The leader gave the final blessing and the worshipers began to file out one at a time, with a deliberate time interval between each person's leaving.

And another celebration of the Holy Eucharist had brought the peace, joy and strength of the forgiving love of God into the lives of that community. For not knowing what lay in the future, they were now prepared to face another period of days."

Although this could almost be the story of a group of Christians worshiping in the catacombs so long ago, it is the story of a group of Marines meeting to celebrate the Eucharist. It is hard, if not impossible, for Christians living in the United States in 1968 to grasp what it must have been like for the early Christians who dared worship only in secret and at great risk. But for many of the United States Marines at the enemy surrounded outpost of Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam, there is strong feeling for those early brothers in the faith.

I Wonder

(But really don't want to know)

I see them still, those drawn, gaunt faces
Of men and boys from many races.
They keep appearing in the damndest places.

So many names etched upon the wall
Of those who came and gave their all.
For freedom's future they had to fall.

It's a vital link, they used to say
Of that far off patch of blood red clay
Before we blew it up and walked away.

Now I have to wonder why
So many had to bleed and die
When we gave it up and still get by.

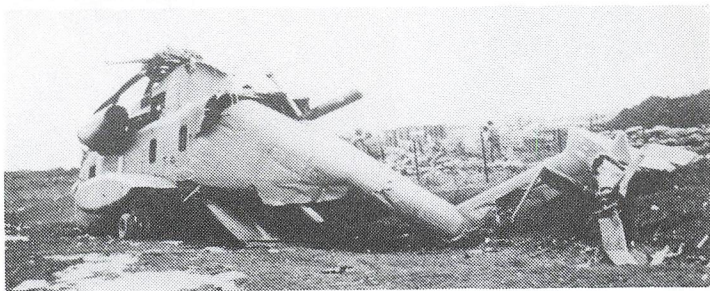
A.D. Shoup, Capt. USMC Ret
S-2 Chief, 26th Marines

*If anyone knows where I can locate
Marshal P. Yates or Marvin Hodook,
Khe Sanh vets, please contact me - 2208
NW 8th Wilton Manors, Fl. 33311
Allen Shoup*

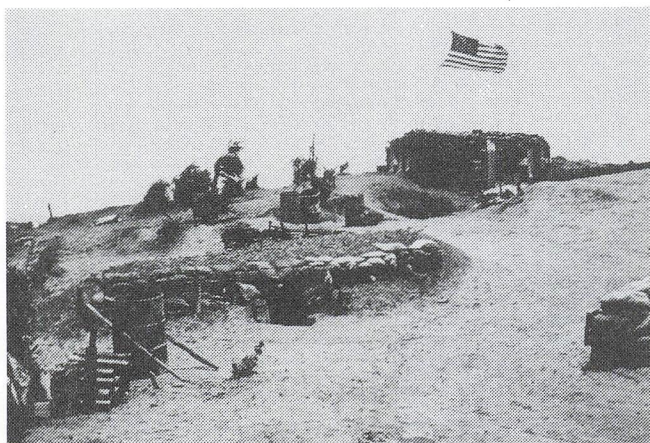
Khe San Remembered...A few flicks for you viewing pleasure



Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe conducting worship services at Khe Sanh. Hill 1015 is directly over the head of the man with the flak jacket reading "Chicago, Ill". Hill 950 is between the Chaplain and the head of the other man. The photo was taken on the north perimeter lines, east end, "Blue Sector" of the base perimeter. (USMC photo A190294 by SSgt Reid)



Rear view of the wrecked CH-53 of 22 February 1968 (USMC photo 190674)



Command Post bunker on Hill 861 with U.S. flag. USMC photo 193263



This photo shows some of the close air support in action at Khe Sanh during the siege - photo by E. C. Husted Jr.



Incoming on Khe Sanh Combat Base.

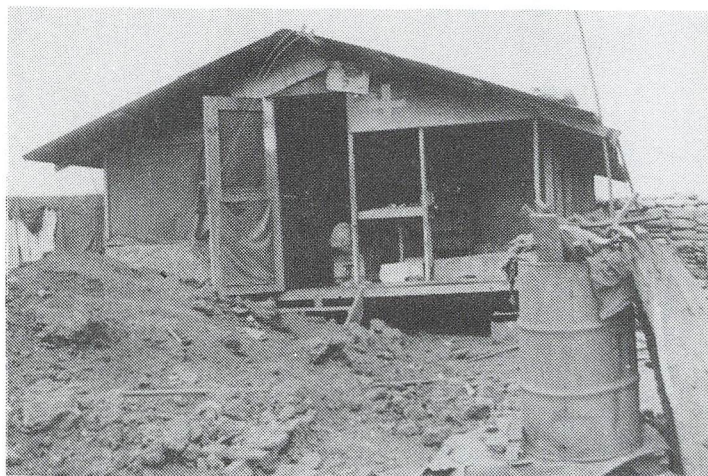


Brou house with water buffalo in front and children at middle right. Photo by Ray Stubbe.





Welcome sign at Khe Sanh airstrip - photo by Ray Stubbe



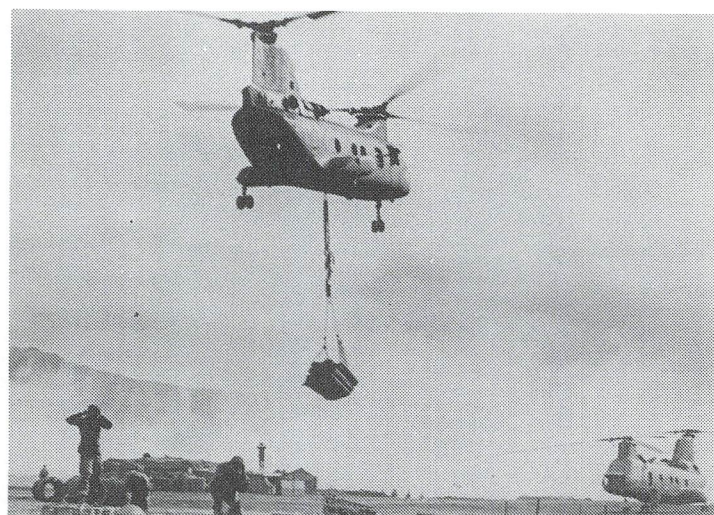
*Recon Dispensary at KSCB 24 Feb 68 - Photo by Sgt Patterson
USMC Photo A190706*



10 *Marine FO's at KSCB - USMC Photo A190852 Sgt J.S. Ryan*



Brou mother and child - USMC photo A191149



*CH-46A helicopter unloading supplies by external load on 23
January 1968 at Khe San combat base.
USMC photo A190243 by Sgt. T. H. Nairns*

Tribute and Tribulation

To the men who scaled their mountains
and seized that far flung plateau,
To the men that held the arena
Against the best the enemy could throw.

Who walked the jungle covered valleys
And waded the leach laden streams;
Who moved through the green shrouded alleys,
Till their muscles cramped and screamed.

To those who fell wounded and bleeding,
Yet arose to fight on 'til the end.
To those who fell wounded and bleeding,
Never to rise up again.

To our comrades who carried the rifle;
Who fired both cannon and gun.
To those that supplied and fought with us
We knew that they'd never run.

To the pilots who flew the fast movers,
And herded choppers all over the sky.
Who calmly watched the green tracers
As they went arching and howling by.

To Gentleman Jim, our commander,
And Jacques, Claire, Morris and Chief.
To Snake, Mike, Chaves and Spencer,
And other heroes we respect and keep.

To Stubbs, our brave Navy Chaplain,
Who interceded for us as our link.
And to DeMaggd, our battalion surgeon,
Whose skilled hand drew us back from the brink.

To Blanchfield, and our Navy Corpsmen,
The finest and most courageous of all;
Who daily and nightly fought to reach us,
Refusing to succumb to the law.

So now as we move far from the valley,
And the years march away to the fore.
We and our families remember,
All those who made it happen; and more.

Capt. Ken Pipes, B Co. 26th Marines

Things Remembered

*The laughter, the mud, the rats and the bugs,
the FNGs that soon became brothers.
The rain, the heat, and the hunger not so great,
as to tempt the ham and mothers.
A trip to Dong Ha, ID the remains, a buddy,
a letter, someone's son.
A friendship still strong that grew in a bomb
crater hooch on the finger of 881.*

*The lines on the south side by the gate, being
given command and told to hold on.
We'll get help before long, office pogs, snipers,
cooks and recon.
The listening, the thumping, for cover we'd go running.
Could there be anyone who'd ever forget the incoming?*

*The new lieutenant who came, the respect he did earn.
He said I'd get a medal.
Forgotten or lost its all part of the cost, what I got
was a leg full of metal.
Inquire I've been told, but now its so old, and
I have to admit to my shame.
Like some of the others, I've forgotten his name.*

*The rockets and shells, the smells and the sound.
The dump when it blew, remember the view,
flechettes, they covered the ground.
A fear above all, to sit in the open,
at times due to natures call.
A worse way to go we wouldn't know,
just pray Charlie's rockets won't fall.*

*The assault on 950 with 3/26, sniper sergeants on point!
We didn't resist.
Didn't look like the others, all clean and green,
just ragged and red and really lean.
Just stayed way out front, to far to get crap.
A young Marine on his second day, lost to his own booby trap.*

*The last day of a tour twice extended
I'll get out of here if they get that damned runway mended.
Shrapnel trails in the dust. I never heard the bang.
The docs gentle voice, another trip in pain
to NAS, Danang.*

*Then as a pilot some years later, flying for the LAO
in secret gave chance.
A look down at deserted clay, red stained now fading.
Where so gallant many gave their best, too many of
which bought the ranch.
And we just walked away.*

***Vince Gable
Sgt. 1/26 Snipers***

I'm Proud to be a Khe Sanh Veteran

By Neil Mc Crossen

Back a few issues in Red Clay, someone asked if anyone received or knew of the Playboy magazines he shipped to KSCB. I can only testify to the fate of one month's issue, and I don't recall which month it was. I'll get back to this later.

I arrived on 16 January 68 from Phu Bai with Foxtrot 2/26. As soon as I deplaned I knew the party was over for me. I'd "skated" into a world of shit. My MOS was 0141 (clerk) and that was just fine by me. I'd been stationed at Marine Barracks, Boston and gone on many funeral details, seeing many heartbroken relatives and friends of Marines KIA. At one of those funerals the mom broke away from the people trying to console her and rushed by me to embrace her dead son in his coffin. That memory remains strong in my mind and will always probably.

Anyway, by the time I arrived "in country," and was sent to Phu Bai, I had no thoughts of volunteering for the "grunts," as I'd done back at Camp Geiger after being assigned to Boston as an 0141. Hard-backs and no "incoming" suited me just fine. But, then, the Marine Corps doesn't ask if it's a suitable assignment does it? So, after two months of comparatively easy duty, I, along with the grunts were told to "saddle up" and be ready to move out to a place which nobody seemed to know the name of. Even if the name was known, it probably wouldn't have meant anything to most of us. The name of that place means a great deal to all of us today, doesn't it?

We boarded transport and landed after an uneventful flight of an hour or two. I really don't remember much about the flight, but I'll never forget the feeling I got when I stepped off the plane and into a nightmare. We marched outside the KSCB perimeter and "dug in" right away. Shrapnel from previous fighting was all around, and the fog was pretty heavy. After a while the grunts set out for the hills around the base and the rear echelon moved back to KSCB presumably to set up our rear area. Things were a bit uncertain it seemed at the time, but one thing was certain, "this was for real."

That night I slept near the tank (I think) and we received no incoming. As a matter of fact, that night I had, for some reason, good dreams, and slept through the night uninterrupted.

We set up our tents and dug holes on each end, although we had nothing to cover the holes with. I'm not writing to complain or point fingers at anyone, but there should have been material to roof our holes with. Whether the timber was prioritized to build the McNamara "Barrier" on the DMZ, or sitting on a runway in Danang doesn't matter now. I've read the books on Khe Sanh and I know I wasn't mistaken. Somebody could have made the timber a priority for KSCB and a lot of lives would have been saved. Cringing in an open hole for hours during incoming was the closest I came to breaking and it could have been prevented.



My first taste of incoming was the night of 21 January 68 when the NVA rocket attack destroyed our main ammunition dump. I didn't like it and with no sleep added to the fear, I was starting to lose it. Next night on perimeter I kept hearing things during my watch. I woke the man with me once too often, and he questioned my courage. He was on his last month and was waiting for a plane to Danang, but wasn't thinking that far ahead. Instead, he told me that he hoped the NVA did try to penetrate us so he could kill some more before he left, and that I'd better be thinking the same way as him!



At the time I didn't want to hear it, but I had a long talk with myself later and calmed down a bit. When I accepted the probability that I would die here and vowed to hang tough and do whatever I had to but wouldn't shirk my duties - and do everything I could to stay alive. The Marine who questioned my courage in the hold that night probably saved my life. In no way could I have continued running scared without something bad happening to myself, and, or the Marines with me. I have to idea what the guys name was, but I think he was from Oregon or Washington state. If read and remember this brother, thanks for the ass chewing 'cause I needed it.

My first mission to improve mine and our rear position was to scout around for some timber for bunkers. I took a "mule" and went on a search. When I rode by the airstrip, I came across a pallet of timbers along the side of the road. I couldn't believe it! There was enough wood for myself and the others back in the company office. I loaded as many pieces as the mule would hold and took off toward home. Me and my mule got about 3 or 4 feet when someone yelled "Halt! Halt! You xxxxxx" The voice commanded respect and right away I knew that when it seems too good to be true -- it usually is. I braked the vehicle and turned around to see a group of 4 or 5 men coming toward me with fire in their eyes, and an officer ranking on their collars. The lead officer was especially pissed and ordered me to attention right there by the airstrip and proceeded to ask me if I knew that the wood I was trying to take was to be used for the underground hospital to treat my wounded brother Marines.

The officer chewing on me was, I

Cont'd on next page

Khe Sanh Remembered...

Continued from previous page

believe was General Tompkins, who had been discussing (I surmised) plans for the underground "C" Med with the other officers when he spotted me.

My reply to the General's question went something like this: "With all due respect, sir, I had no idea what this wood was intended for. All I know is there is nothing to build bunkers with, and I don't want to be one of the Marines being treated underground." The General seemed to mellow a bit but still ordered me to put the timber back on the pallet. I turned and began unloading when I heard the same voice say "Marine". I straightened and turned back around. The General said, "You may take one piece of timber." I replied, "Yes Sir, Thank you Sir!"

I wouldn't have traded that one piece of wood for anything. It was my main roof support for my bunker. I'm just glad its strength never had to be tested with a direct hit!

Now, getting back to the Playboy magazine story...

Part of my vow to try to stay alive was never to get lax when I even thought I heard incoming. I learned to do the Khe Sanh shuffle very quick and in a big hurry. Toward the end of the siege, one sunny morning, I sat at a field desk in our company tent and started writing a letter. It was the first and only time I let my guard down. I'd never exposed myself to incoming unnecessarily. Carrying the wounded, work detail at the ammo dump while still popping, perimeter duty at night, digging the big hole for the company office all left me exposed but that was duty calling. I had written a few lines when I heard the first incoming of the day and I ran out of the tent and into one of the holes. I waited a while and went back up to continue my letter. I also noticed a Playboy magazine on the drawer side of the desk. I heard another incoming and ran to the hole again. I waited a short time, then it was back to trying to finish my letter and check out the new magazine. I almost finished writing the letter before the next incoming. There it was again! This time I broke my vow and said screw it and kept on writing. I heard the rocket whistle overhead and hit far from me. However, I soon heard a "thut"

sound coming quickly through the air when suddenly the sound came through the tent canvas. The Playboy magazine went flying across the tent and a lone piece of shrapnel hit one of the tent poles and fell to the ground. Only ten to twenty inches to the left and I would have been hit chest high.

Another member of my company had gotten complacent at the same time, and we bumped into one another going opposite ways for cover after we saw how close it round had come and how foolish we'd been. We tried to laugh it off but when we saw what the Playboy looked like we stopped laughing. The shrapnel had ripped through its entire thickness and about 3/4 of the way from top to bottom. I tried to salvage it but the girls were too far gone.

Anyway, I'd like to thank whoever sent it. Thank you for thinking of us. From time to time I have thought of the magazine and wondered where it came from. Now I know.

I'm proud to be a Khe Sanh veteran and I'm grateful to be a part of this organization.

Semper Fi!

Neil Mc Crossen



Photo Caption for photo below

Big Boost For Scholarship Fund... LtCol. Andy DeBona USMC (Ret) (M-3-26) our third battalion 26th Marines Khe Sanh Veterans Memorial Scholarship Coordinator through his tireless efforts has managed to amass a most welcome amount of \$4,250 from various activities and miscellaneous donations. The check was forwarded to 1stSgt Dick Peloquin USMC (Ret) (I-3-26), Massachusetts Coordinator for the Khe Sanh Vets, which was presented on 24 April, 1997 to Dr. Harry Coumiotes, Vice President for Development at American International College, Springfield, MA. Dr. Coumiotes informed Andy that since its inception the 3/26 Scholarship has been awarded to a Marine or the son/daughter of a Marine. Andy has forwarded to A/C, two books, Ambush Valley by Eric Hammel and Lima Six by Dick Camp. Future generations will understand the sacrifices that Marines of 3/26 made. When we eventually join those who have fallen, the scholarship which is our legacy will continue to remind the students of today what Marines of another era have done in the name of God, Country and Corps!

Assisting with the presentation was Capt. Nick Peters OIC of the Chicopee, MA Officer Selection Office and 2ndLt. John Salvatore.



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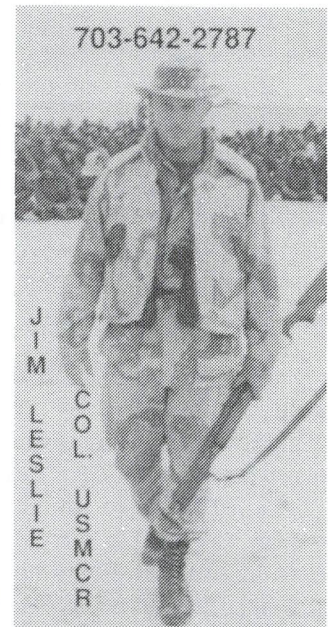
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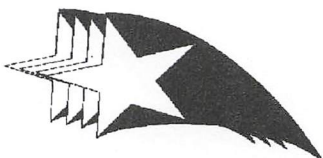
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Facts Concerning the 1968 Battle To Defeat the Enemy's Tet Offensive

A report compiled by Richard P. Fulton

31 January - 30 June 1968

Historians will remember the key battle of the Vietnam War as the fight to repulse the enemy's Tet Offensive, a fight which primarily took place during the first six months of 1968. Forces under North Vietnam's control throughout the operating theater sustained combat losses of approximately 100,000 (the equivalent number of 10 entire divisions). During the same period of time, the allied force's military losses were fewer than 20,000.

The primary assault was made by the communists during the closing days of January and the month of February. Another series of attacks was made in early May, but, like the first attack, the attempt was a dismal failure for the enemy. Many surrenders of communist troops were recorded, especially in the summer of 1968. The enemy planned a renewal of fighting in August but this planned strike never got off the ground, and the 1968 campaign ground to an end as an unmitigated military disaster for political leader Ho Chi Minh, military leader General Nguyen Giap and the communists.

From a military point of view there was no doubt about which side achieved victory; yet, politically, there were mixed results. The battle called the Tet Offensive was the most disastrous defeat of arms North Vietnam suffered in the long war but, paradoxically, it was also the most important political victory in the portion of the war fought against the Americans.

Beginning on 31 January 1968, the large battles were mostly over by the end of February. Of the 85,000 troops that had been committed to the fight's opening offensive, it is estimated that more than half were dead, many thousands were injured, other thousands were captured, and the hoped for general uprising by the people of the south against the government in Saigon did not happen.

On the credit side for the enemy, the bombing of the north had been curtailed. The political scene in the US had been thoroughly jumbled. The pacification program in the Republic of Vietnam had reduced emphasis and negotiations to end the war were being planned. There were many thousands of refugees created and the

economic situation of RVN was critically impacted, and physical damage within metropolitan areas and down through the hamlet level was unusually severe.

On the debit side for the enemy, the offensive had united South Vietnam in solid opposition to the north, and had galvanized and drawn commitment from the urban residents, in particular, against the insurgents. The people blamed the communists for the widespread killing. General mobilization became possible for the Republic of Vietnam after Tet. The military forces of the RVN gained a well deserved sense of respect and confidence and pride in the way they had reacted to the attacks and in the counter attacks they had made. Mass murder carried out by the enemy did much to destroy the credibility of communist claims to be of and for the people. Never again would the Viet Cong be able to recruit in the south, without force.

Tet was a benchmark for both sides. For the communists, it was a severe military defeat on the battle-grounds themselves. But it was also a psychological victory for them, particularly in the United States. Yet, even as many Americans were becoming convinced that a major military defeat had taken place, the people of the Republic of Vietnam saw what had happened in quite a different light. Indeed, much more was lost for Hanoi than gained, politically, within the Republic of Vietnam, as a result of the battle. The reason for the crushing military defeat of the enemy involves the principle of mass. Strategically, by attacking everywhere, the communists had superior strength nowhere - and that is why they lost.

Some Other Major American Military Battles (in comparison to Tet):

Gettysburg:

This crucial battle of the American Civil War involved a Confederate invasion of the north. The battle took

Cont'd on next page

Continued from previous page.

place 1-3 July 1863. Casualties were approximately 23,000 Federal soldiers and 28,000 Confederate soldiers. The Gettysburg Battle was not decisive and Lee was able to retreat with his force mostly intact back into Virginia. Had Gettysburg ended with as severe a defeat of the Confederacy as the allied military victory represented in the Tet Offensive over the communist Viet Cong forces of South Vietnam, the American Civil War would have probably ended in 1863. After Tet, the fighting in Vietnam became primarily against regular North Vietnamese forces, rather than against guerrilla insurgent forces.

Guadalcanal:

This battle was the first major allied land victory over the Japanese in World War II. Japan lost 25,000 men; American losses were 1,500 dead and 4,800 wounded. The number of Americans killed in action during the 1968 Battle of Tet was about the same number of countrymen our nation lost on Guadalcanal; however, in Vietnam, there were many more Americans (over 7,000 in fact) who were wounded in action than in what was the pivotal WWII battle in the Pacific.

Specifics about the Enemy's 1968 Tet Offensive:

Tet is the Vietnamese holiday celebrating the arrival of the Chinese lunar new year (like Christmas, Easter and New Years in the west, all rolled into one). A seven day truce had been announced by the communists for Tet, to run from 27 January until 3 February. The bait of the potential of a permanent armistice was offered. In previous Tet cease-fires, there had been minor activity but no major military maneuvers. Saigon announced its own plans for Tet, a 36 hour pause to include the time from 6 p.m. on 29 January on through 31 January, with an exception for the area around Khe Sanh.

Contrary to general belief in the United States, the battle of Tet was much more than just the few small unit actions poorly covered by network television crews (including the small and very unsuccessful platoon-sized attack against the American Embassy in Saigon), and more than just the killing by a South Vietnamese police official, General Loan, of a VC officer who had been captured wearing civilian clothing and who had ordered

his men to use neighborhood residents as human shields.

In full scale assaults on the first day of Tet (30 January) the enemy made a series of hit and run raids in five provinces in the center of South Vietnam (Kontum, Pleiku, Binh Dinh, Darlac, Khanh Hoa) and also in Quang Nam, on further to the north. The next night, they hit Saigon and seven more provinces with attacks by large units. The next day, eight more provinces experienced attacks. The province to be hit last was Bac Lieu - some twelve days after the opening engagements.



In all, there was fighting in 36 of 44 provincial capitals, five of six autonomous cities, 64 of 242 district capitals, and in 50 hamlets. Every airfield was hit as were many different kinds of military installations, ranging from small US Special Forces A Team camps along the borders and in the highlands (including one near Khe Sanh that was overrun by Soviet-designed PT-76 light tanks), to very large cantonments and garrisons hosting large joint and combined organizations, including the MACV headquarters complex itself. The initial raid involved about 70,000 communist soldiers, mostly members of Viet Cong units.

The enemy plan had been to have a series of battles in the fall of 1967 to draw combat power away from populated areas, then to hit and inflict serious damage to the RVN governmental structure to encourage a popular uprising of the Vietnamese people against the national structure centered in Saigon, and to draw the conventional military forces into a set-piece kind of battle similar to that which the Viet Minh had won against the French at Dienbienphu. It was felt such a battle would destroy or seriously harm large American forces involved in the war, and the many casualties would thus force the American people to sue for peace. (Cont'd next pg.)

Continued from previous page.

The Viet Cong expected to be heralded as liberators and they also expected that the military forces of the Republic of Vietnam would not fight. They were very wrong on both counts. It is true that the people of RVN rose up, but they did so in major resistance to the invaders. The ARVN forces, in particular, fought extremely well, and one of their most important battle actions was major contribution to the successful defense of Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon, site of the MACV general headquarters.

The enemy lost more than 40,000 out of 84,000 initially committed to the action; mostly members of Viet Cong insurgent units. During the most active phase of the battle, the South Vietnamese lost about 8,000 wounded and had more than 3,000 killed, and US losses were about 1,500 killed or missing and 7,764 wounded. About 800,000 people became refugees, at least for a time, as a result of the fighting, and the communists are thought to have murdered about 6,000 civilians.

The 77 day siege of the 6,000 US Marine sat the combat base at Khe Sanh and of USMC hilltop defense points in the immediate area of the base may have really been intended as a feint by the communists, with their true objective being the capture of Hue in order to cut off the two northern provinces of the Republic of Vietnam. Though the official number of American dead was set at 205, it is believed by most who were there that at least 475 US Marines, alone, who died at Khe Sanh during January, February and March.

There were also many US Special Forces, as well as numerous conventional Army, Air Force and Navy losses in that same area. At least 5,000 of the native Bru people of the region also died. It is believed that the North Vietnamese surrounded the Americans and ARVN troops inside the base with at least 20,000 soldiers, and lost more than 10,000 of them in the fighting. The ground siege was officially lifted when elements of the Army's 1st Air Cavalry Division, participating in Operation Pegasus, broke through enemy lines and linked up with Marine units in April.

The attack the communists made against the ancient imperial walled capital city of Hue began on 31 January and the enemy held entrenched areas of the old city for 26 days before being thrown out of the area. It is estimated that 142 Marines were killed in the fighting and 857 were wounded. The American Army lost 74

soldiers KIA and had 507 members wounded. Military forces of South Vietnam lost 384 personnel killed and had 1,830 wounded.

In the Hue fighting, the enemy is believed to have lost over 5,000 personnel killed. There were 89 prisoners taken. More than 50 percent of the city was destroyed and more than 116,000 people were made homeless. Another 5,800 were dead or missing, including some 3,000 killed by the communists as "enemies of the revolution." The "crime" of some of these had been that they spoke a few words of the English language.

While soldiers, Marines and US Navy personnel, regardless of daily duty assignments ranging from truck driver to finance clerk, were armed with rifles and machine guns and played an active role in repulsing ground assaults of the enemy forces, enlisted airmen of the United States Air Force at Tan Son Nhut, Bien Hoa and other air bases throughout the Republic of Vietnam did not have an ability to defend themselves, other than for a few illegal personal firearms, because the USAF leadership refused to issue weapons.

Airmen, like soldiers, were trained in their basic military orientation how to take orders and how to fire M-16 rifles. However, when it was learned the enemy probably would launch a strong ground attack, senior Air Force leadership decided that the only personnel on the air bases threatened which would be armed were those assigned to security police units. This reflected both their mistrust of their enlisted personnel's basic military capabilities, and also a continuing pattern of the Air Force officer corps taking operational actions supporting selfish career protection rather than a selfless concept of providing proper military leadership.

The result was the fielding of a very thin line of airmen assigned police duties who were more used to security or law enforcement requirements than to the dictates of infantry-style combat. Hundreds of others in housing and work areas on the base itself armed themselves with clubs and knives and watched with dismay as red flares and arcing tracers out on the perimeter marked a determined enemy assault.

Had the several hundred enemy Viet Cong soldiers attacking Tan Son Nhut not been flanked by a US Army Cavalry unit, and also had their probe not been blunted by steadfast members of the Republic of Vietnam armed forces, they would have stood an excellent chance of

Continued on page 20

KHE SANH VETERANS REUNION 30th ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEIGE

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NAMES/RELATIONSHIP OF OTHERS IN YOUR PARTY _____

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Please indicate any special needs with which we may help: _____

	<u>Cost</u>	<u>No. People</u>		<u>Total</u>
Registration Fee (Per Person, Non-Refundable)	\$15.00 x	_____	=	\$ _____
Banquet (per Person) Choose one entree	Prime Rib	35.00 x	=	\$ _____
per person - incl. salad, rolls, potato	or			
and dessert. (tax & Gratuity incl.)	Salmon Filet	35.00 x	=	\$ _____
Bus (to Arlington & Iwo Jima Memorial)	9.00 x	_____	=	\$ _____

Total Reunion Package only \$59.00/Person

TOTAL REMITTED \$ _____

**KHE SANH VETERANS' REUNION - 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEIGE
JULY 1-6, 1998, HOLIDAY INN CROWNE PLAZA WASHINGTON, DC**

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 1 July - Wed 1200 Check-in - Hospitality Room Opens**
PX opens
No group events scheduled. Free time, sightseeing, unit or committee meetings.
- 2 July - Thu 0900 Board of Directors Meeting - Old Business ***
- 1800 Group Visit to Vietnam Veterans' Memorial (The Wall)**
The wall is close to the Korean Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Womens Memorial, etc.
1800 - ** Depart Hotel and travel 3/4 miles on foot, as a group, to the Wall.
1900 - Service at The Wall
- - - - Return from The Wall recommended in groups - shuttle/taxi times to be decided
- 3 July - Fri 0830 Arlington National Cemetery (Bus Transportation)**
0815 Buses depart hotel
0905 Full honors Wreath laying by KS Vets at Tomb of the Unknown
1000 Posthumous combat valor award presented to Family of Khe Sanh Vet,
Joseph Roble, E 2 -26, for actions later at LZ Margo, where he was KIA
1100 Assemble at Khe Sanh Monument for Wreath laying, Service & Reflection
1145 Assemble and board buses
1200 Stop at Marine Iwo Jima Memorial (visit and group photographs)
1245 Board buses for return to hotel
- 1400 Board of Directors Meeting - New Business ***
- 1900 Sunset Parade , 8th & I, (Bus Transportation)**
1800 Buses depart hotel
- - - - Parade begins at Sunset
- 4 July - Sat 0900 General Membership Meeting**
Next Year's reunion sight is an agenda item.
- 0900 Women's meeting (Hospitality Room)**
- 1700 Cocktail Reception and Banquet (All Service Color Guard)**
1700 Attitude Adjustment Hour, No Host cash Bar
1800 Invocation - Dinner
1900 Speaker, General Al Gray, USMC retired, Khe Sanh Veteran and
former Commandant of the Marine Corps - Awards and Recognition
- 5 July - Sun 1000 Healing Meeting (Hospitality Room)**
Hospitality Room Open - Closing time TBD
Check out and/or Free Time for sightseeing
- 6 July - Mon - - - - No Scheduled Events. Check out Day or Free Time**

* Interested General members are welcome and invited to attend all board of directors meetings, although attendance is not required.

** Walking to The Wall rather than busing was a cost consideration. The 3/4 mile walk is manageable for those at an average fitness level. Please note need for alternate arrangements due to disability on registration form.. The hotel will assist with accommodating those needing taxi or shuttle. Tribute placed at The Wall will be non-perishable.

The Registration Fee incorporates costs for wreaths, registration package and supplies etc. Every effort was made to keep all costs as low as possible for attendees.

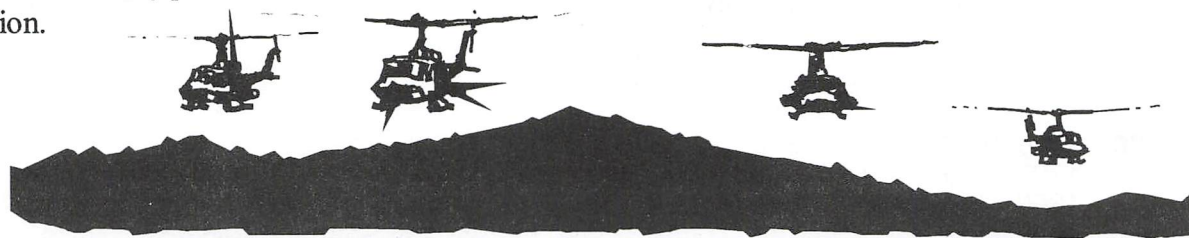
ON SITE VOLUNTEERS WILL BE NEEDED AT THE REUNION - IF YOU ARE WILLING TO HELP, PLEASE SO NOTE ON THE REGISTRATION FORM OR CALL.

For More Info: Call Russ Turner : (314) 282-2263 Vince Griffith (909) 676-6047 Mike Worth (773) 763-5415

military success. Had they cracked through what was, in reality, a very weak and thin defense line, they could have easily overrun undefended work and housing areas, and there would have been major American loss of life because clubs, empty bottles and knives simply cannot stand up against AK-47 assault rifles and SKS carbines.

As shown by events in the Middle East, the Air Force's continuing philosophy of being unwilling to be fully responsible for its own ground defense continues on into the late 1990s. In the overall ground environment, this unwillingness by the Air Force to trust its people's military skills and to assume proper responsibility for installation ground defense (to a degree, out past the perimeter) seemingly remains as a major tactical problem for joint and combined situations, and impacts operations and planning, availability of resources, and force morale.

To the Air Force's credit during the Tet campaign was an ability to effectively use air weapons in finely tuned coordinated manner with the other services under a unified structure of command and control against large ground formations of an entrenched enemy. Air Force pilots and crews usually performed the mission with relative precision.



Another important USAF contribution was aerial resupply of Khe Sanh, using the LAPES method. LAPES stands for "Low Altitude Parachute Extraction of Supplies." C-130 aircraft were flown in touch and go configuration along the combat base air strip. Heavy cargo pallets moving on rollers in the aircraft floor were jerked out the back of the plane by parachute and usually came to rest in a haze of red dust at the end of the strip. This aerial activity was usually accompanied by heavy enemy artillery, mortar and rocket fire.

A little known civil affairs contribution the Air Force made during the campaign was support of a Vietnamese Air Force program established by the 41st VNAF Wing at Danang Air Base which involved delivery of food and medicine by USAF C-7 Caribou aircraft to the refugee camps of Hue. The flights were made at a time when the

central government mechanism in Saigon was stoutly in opposition to such an effort, fearing the supplies would fall into the hands of the communists. The first flight, launched from Danang, carried rice and American medical personnel. A public affairs photo team was aboard to document the event. This aircraft landed in Hue when the sound of hostile small arms fire was still a routine fact of life in that city. In fact, it was the first fixed wing aircraft to land at Hue City Strip, after the attack.

A noteworthy senior US Army General is Louis C. Menetrey, a leader who by his cool and competent military professionalism made significant contribution to sustaining peace in the Pacific, stability in Northeast Asia, and the continuation of freedom for the people of the Republic of Korea during the turbulence of the 1970s and 1980s. As a lieutenant colonel during the Vietnam War, Menetrey commanded the 2/28 infantry battalion (Black Lions) of the 1st Infantry Division. Right before Tet, Menetrey's unit was deployed northeast of Lai Khe which was just to the north of Saigon, and was facing mostly North Vietnamese Regulars who have been attacking fire bases.

In the course of the action, the Black Lions uncovered rather large caches of supplies and it was later learned the area was one of the main infiltration routes into the Saigon area. When the Tet Offensive started, Menetrey's instinct was that, sitting on top of an enemy supply line, his unit should stay in place so as to intercept the communists when they retreated north after what he was (so correctly) sure would be their inevitable defeat. However, as the battle developed, the battalion was ordered further south.

General Menetrey has a typical battalion commander's view of the unfolding event but, from his perspective, the issue was never really in doubt. That same viewpoint was common among many other superb field grade level leaders of the period, many of whom took part in the battle, and who were the officers who

Continued on next page

would later provide the leadership in the rebuilding of the US Army after the Vietnam War ended. With the offensive, the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese had done just what these officers had hoped they would do, and that is they came out into the open to do battle in places where allied firepower could be used against them, and with optimum advantage. The result was sound and unquestionable military defeat.

In particular, the Viet Cong -- whom General Menetrey believes was by far the most effective element the enemy fielded during the war -- was decimated.

Now, almost thirty years later, many thousands of veterans of the campaign question why the American people at large don't understand don't believe that the fights which repulsed the enemy offensive cumulatively represented a major military victory in the Vietnam War.

The questions about why victory became defeat are many:

How did every this happen? Did the leadership of the allied side in country as well as in Washington simply err in calling for more forces than were truly necessary? Or was the problem much more insidious, involving manipulation of national understanding of the war?

Did the Department of Defense and MACV Public Affairs mechanism make major mistakes in dealing with the media? If so, what were they?

How did these mistakes contribute to the on-scene press reporting of the battle?

To what extent did the media err in its choice of words and images in presenting the battle?

Was advocacy journalism simply a tool of deliberate propaganda for the enemy or for the movement to end the war?

How objective were the reporters who were on the scene? Were they truly on the scene or did they simply represent themselves that way when, in reality, their reporting was of isolated or fringe events?

Should the military have done more to place the reporters into the center of the fight? If not, why not?

An allegation has been made by some historians that the initial Tet fighting began just as national television networks were starting their evening news broadcasts, and that resulting national misunderstanding was simply an accident of timing. To them, this explains why the first reporting of Tet by major network figures was quite negative in tone and stressed that the enemy had achieved successful surprise.

Rather than admit their initial account was incorrect, did major media figures decide within 48 hours to continue charging ahead with their initial assessment, regardless of information later received?

If so, the question then is, again, why? The fact is that the enemy gained a tremendous psychological advantage the first couple days of the event as homefront morale plummeted as a result of the faulty press reporting.

Was this a planned propaganda action?

If, as some believe, there was an attempt by a small senior management group to manipulate public opinion by deliberate circumvention of the truth, why then was there no formal investigation by the government to determine if our national laws had been violated?

With Americans dying on the battlefield, and then continuing to die for several years thereafter as misunderstanding piled on top of misunderstanding, and with the side of freedom then ultimately losing the war, there remains a strong and pungent whiff of ignorance, misbehavior or both.

In particular, there are many questions which veterans have about the role of those in the news media/press community above the actual on-scene reporting level. This focus is on those who molded national opinion via development of overall editorial content and who then ensured distribution of their viewpoint by strongly managed control of communication channels.

Bottom line, there is much about the fighting during the 1968 Tet period which remains unfinished business:

Continued on next page.

Continued from previous page.

Some military lessons still to be learned, particularly in the area of application of basic military skills by the Air Force;

Overdue honors rendered all Americans who participated in achieving the victory;

And a judicial examination to determine if there was any deliberate wrongdoing at home with regard to the information linkage between the government and the public.

Though thirty years too late, our nation character demands it is time for America to finally do the right thing in properly remembering the 1968 battle of repulsing the Tet Offensive, and to do so truthfully, honorably and with a full accounting of legal, moral and civic responsibility. No other standard is acceptable.

IN MEMORIAM

John D'Adamo remembered by Percy C. Albritton * **Echo/2/3** remembered by Tom Rice * **Those who continue to pay the price** remembered by Joe Miller * **Victor Driscoll, Garber, Frazier** remembered by Tim Haley * **H Btry 3/12** remembered by Rick Davis * **Lt Ken Johnson Supply officer 1/26** remembered by Jim Wilkinson * **Thomas Bystrom** remembered by M. Syrjanen * **Michael Marshall Clayton** remembered by Charles Bunner * **Sgt Eugene Castaneda A Co Recon** remembered by Karel J. Muns * **"Freddy" Frederickson** remembered by Charles Rost * **Sam Sharp** remembered by Dale Sare * **Lt Frank Distefano**, by Michael D. Fleming - 30 years ago - 81s, 2/26, Nov 67-68 remembered by Bruce Pilch

If you wish to remember someone in the Memoriam section please send the information to the Editor and an appropriate donation to our Treasurer, Mr. Vincent Griffith.

Notices Bulletins and More

Buy your Khe Sanh T-shirts, Jackets,
Patches and caps from our PX

Contact Carl Oksnee
1768 21st Ave.
Kenosha, Wi. 53140

Check pages 18 and 19
For the latest info on our
upcoming reunion in D.C.

Our Khe Sanh Veterans Home Page
can be reached like this:

<http://www.geocities.com/heartland/7228>

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Veterans Benefits News

VA Pushed One Step Forward; Takes Two Steps Back

CUE PASSES

On Nov. 21, President Clinton signed into law a new opportunity for vets whose cases had been denied by the Board of Veterans' appeals to challenge the denials. Pub. L. No. 105-11.

Over the opposition of the VA, the new measure elevates the VA rule on clear and unmistakable error, 38 C.F.R. 3.105, to a law-preventing the VA from simply changing the rule, 38 U.S.C. 5109A.

The measure also overturns court cases that had barred vets from using CUE to challenge VA decisions that had been considered by the BVA. Now, challenges based on CUE must be filed directly at the BVA and then can be appealed to the Court of Veterans Appeals regardless of the Notice of Disagreement date. Sec. 7111.

The BVA is drafting rules to implement the law and will not act on cases until the rules are in place.

ATTACKS COURT

On Dec. 9, 1997, the BVA proposed rules that fundamentally challenge vets' opportunity for judicial review. The BVA wants to stop its current program of withholding a portion of vets' past-due benefits to pay the attorneys who helped the vets win. The BVA says this will not affect the availability of attorneys.

In a year when the BVA churned out 5,000 more denials than in 1996,

and the rate of vets who could not find an attorney to help them file their appeal at the court reached 73%, more attorney involvement is called for -- not BVA actions that will lessen the chance to find help with appeals.

It remains to be seen whether the BVA's rule will go into effect.

Eligibility Verification Reports

VA Central Office has informed veterans organizations that VA will no longer require recipients of Section 306 and Old Law non-service connected pension to submit Eligibility Verification Reports (EVR). This will affect about 50,000 veterans and dependents. VA's reason for this is that very few of these recipients have had any significant income changes over recent years, and the EVR is burdensome for them to fill out and for VA to process. Recipients must still notify VA of income changes which affect their eligibility.

Discharge Exam Made Claim Well Grounded

The Court of Veterans Appeals agreed with a veteran that his claim for service connection for knee disability was well-grounded and reversed and remanded it to the BVA (Hampton V Gober).

For such a claim to be well-grounded generally requires medical evidence of an in-service injury, medical evidence of a current disability and medical opinion linking the injury with the current disability. The BVA rejected the vet's claim because it claimed he did not produce medical evidence of the link between the service injury and current disability.

The Court reversed the BVA and held that since the vet's March 1993 separation exam diagnosed a knee condition, and the vet had applied for VA benefits for that one month later, then the separation exam "provides evidence of both a current left knee condition and a relationship to service."

The Court ruled the claim was well-grounded and sent it back for the VA to comply with its duty to assist by getting an exam report that "specifically opines as to whether the appellant currently suffers from a left knee disorder and, if so, the probability that such condition is related to service."

Survivor Could Not Prove VA Did Not Send Application

The Court of Veterans' Appeals denied a survivor's claim for an earlier effective date for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation because it

Benefits cont'd next pg.

Veterans Benefits Cont'd

presumed the VA really had sent her an application for benefits when it said it did -- even though the survivor said she didn't get it. The survivor was represented by Sean Kendall of Boulder, Colorado.

The survivor was granted DIC as of June 1991 based on receiving her May 1991 application. She argued that her application for burial benefits in 1989 should have been considered an informal claim for DIC. After filing a Notice of disagreement with the VARO, she received a statement of the case that said she had been sent application for DIC in February 1989 and August 1990. During her appeal, the VARO gave her an effective date to August 1990 "based upon her claim for service connected death benefits through Loan Guaranty benefits claim filed on 7-25-90."

The BVA remanded her case in 1995 to determine whether she really had been sent an application for DIC in February 1989. The VARO insisted it had sent the form as "evidenced by a computer half sheet dated the same date and filed in the veteran's claim folder."

To win her claim, the survivor had to show clear evidence to rebut the presumption of regularity, i.e., the presumption that the VA did what it said it did. Here, even though there was no cover letter in the file that normally accompanies a DIC application, and even though the court acknowledged that computers, like the people who operate them, are not perfect and can fail to produce the work that is required of them, "that was not enough to count as clear evidence" that she did not get the Feb. 1989 DIC application.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



Khe San Veterans, Inc.

Name _____ Phone _____

Street add _____

City, State, Zip +4 _____

Are you a Khe Sanh Vet? If YES, please give branch of service, unit, & when you were at Khe Sanh _____

Mail this application and payment / subscription (\$20.00) for one year, or \$150.00 for Life membership) to: Treasurer - Mr. Vincent Griffith, 27280 Jefferson St., #200, Temecula, CA. 92590.

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Sandi & David Kramarczyk

Mac, you knew you weren't coming home.

I didn't believe it when you told me.

Maybe the death in war was meant for some,
but not for you Mac, not for you.

Why didn't someone prepare me for death?

Who prepared you Mac, God?

Maybe He's using your death to prepare me. Thanks, Mac.

I miss you.

Written in memory of Reuben Carl Mc Mackins, Jr. L/3/26, KIA during the fight to retake 881N during the Siege of Khe Sanh, 14 April 1968.

Michael C. Loehrer, 3717 W. County Road 4300, Frost, Texas 76641-9540

1998 C&P Rates

SERVICE-CONNECTED COMPENSATION

Rates effective Dec. 1, 1997; amends 38 U.S.C. § 1114.

	%	monthly	annually
(a)	10	\$95	\$1,140
(b)	20	182	2,184
(c)	30	279	3,348
(d)	40	399	4,788
(e)	50	569	6,828
(f)	60	717	8,604
(g)	70	905	10,860
(h)	80	1,049	12,588
(i)	90	1,181	14,172
(j)	100	1,964	23,568

Additional Compensation for Dependents, 38 U.S.C. § 1115(1). Allowance available where veteran is rated at least 30%; allowance adjusted proportionately to the rating; the following rates are for dependents of veterans rated 100% disabled:

- spouse: \$114
- spouse and one child: 195
- each additional child: 60
- no spouse; but child: 78
- dependent parent: 92
- child in school: 180

NONSERVICE-CONNECTED PENSION

Rates effective Dec. 1, 1997.

MAXIMUM RATES FOR: VETERANS

	annually	monthly
single veteran:	\$8,665	\$722
with one* dependent:	11,349	945

Housebound

single veteran:	10,591	882
with one* dependent:	13,275 ...	1,106

Aid and attendance

single veteran:	13,859 ...	1,154
with one* dependent:	16,542 ...	1,378

*each add. dependent: 1,476 123

SURVIVORS

	annually	monthly
surviving spouse	\$5,808	\$567
with one* child:	7,607	633

surviving spouse:	7,101	591
with one* child:	8,895	741

surviving spouse:	9,288	774
with one* child:	11,082	923

NOTE: 12 monthly payments often do not equal the annual pension rate given VA policy to round down. Pension rates increase with Cost-of-Living Allowance each December. Increased payments show in January checks.



Chaplain John McElroy of 3/26 conducting Mass on top of Hill 950 as Marine Sentry looks towards Hill 1015 through mist in top of remains of a tree. USMC Photo 193262 by Ray Stubbe.



Marine with captured NVA crew-served weapon from 1/9's assault of Hill 471. Photo by Ray Stubbe.

ASIAN NEWS BRIEFS

Hanoi Hannah' Has No Regrets Over War Role

By David Lamb
Los Angeles Times Service

HO CHI MINH CITY - Her voice was as smooth as silk, her English impeccable and, as Hanoi's most prominent propagandist during the Vietnam War, "Hanoi Hannah" tried to convince U.S. soldiers they were fighting an immoral war that America had turned against.

For eight years, soldiers tuned in to her daily radio broadcasts in godforsaken outposts with names such as the Rockpile, Ben Het and Con Thien. Although virtually no one took her seriously, they did wonder if she was as lovely in person as she sounded, and many considered her Vietnam's most prominent Communist after Ho Chi Minh.

Hearing this, the now 67-year old Hanoi Hannah - whose real name is Trinh Thi Ngo - giggled, feigning surprise. "Oh my," she said, "I wasn't a celebrity. I did love that time in Hanoi, but I was just an ordinary citizen trying to contribute to my country."

Petite and lovely, Mrs. Ngo did the last of her 30-minute broadcasts in 1973, when the bulk of the U.S. military withdrew. She moved to Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) in 1975 with her husband, an engineer who is now retired. They live in a modest three-bedroom apartment near the former Presidential Palace that she used to call the "den of puppets" and listen faithfully to newscasts on the Voice of America.

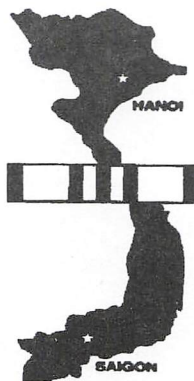
Although she earned a First-Class Resistance Medal for her work and still does occasional translation and voice-overs for the Voice of Vietnam, Mrs. Ngo has slipped quietly into anonymity, surrounded by young Vietnamese who have never heard of the Rockpile, much less of Hanoi Hannah.

"This is Thu Huong calling American servicemen in South Vietnam," her daily broadcast would begin, using an alias that translates as Autumn Fragrance. Then she would play a melancholy song ("Where Have All the Flowers Gone" was a favorite), read news of anti-war protests back in America and, on Fridays, read names of Americans killed in action from the U.S.

military newspaper Stars and Stripes.

"My goal was to tell GIs they shouldn't participate in a war that wasn't theirs," she says now. "I tried to be friendly and convincing. I didn't want to be shrill or aggressive. For instance, I referred to the Americans as the adversary. I never called them the enemy."

Her scripts were written by propagandists in the North Vietnamese army who lifted their material from articles in magazines such as Time and Newsweek and newspapers such as The New York Times that North Vietnamese diplomats stationed abroad had sent home. Sometimes members of the U.S. based anti-war movement brought the articles to Hanoi.



Mrs. Ngo smiled as she recalled the activists she had befriended, among them the one-time student radical Tom Hayden and the actress Jane Fonda, who was married to Mr. Hayden for a time.

"They were very helpful," she said, "in helping us explain to the GIs why the war should be solved by the Vietnamese themselves, not Americans."

She paused, perplexed. "You know," she said, "Jane Fonda never came back at all after the war. I wonder why? She'd made a tape I played that was very good. I heard that some years ago she made an apology in the United States for coming to Hanoi during the war. Is that true?"

Ten years ago, Ms. Fonda made a televised apology to Vietnam veterans and their

families for her 1972 visit, during which she was famously photographed at a North Vietnamese gun emplacement.

In many ways Mrs. Ngo seemed an unlikely candidate to become the voice of communism. She grew up in Hanoi under French colonialism, the daughter of a prosperous glass-factory owner. She took private English lessons and perfected her command of the language watching French-subtitled Hollywood movies including "Gone With the Wind."

After working as a volunteer at the Voice of Vietnam, she was chosen in 1965, largely because of her unaccented English, to begin broadcasting to U.S. troops as Thu Huong.

"Yes," she recalled, "I wanted to make them a little bit homesick."

It wasn't until several years later that she learned that American GIs nicknamed her Hanoi Hannah.

The trouble for Hanoi Hannah - as for other wartime propagandists such as Tokyo Rose, Seoul City Sue and Baghdad Betty - was that her broadcasts weren't very credible. The reports were also wildly exaggerated, announcing annihilations of entire U.S. divisions and losses of hundreds of U.S. planes in a single engagement.

Even the North Vietnamese themselves did not trust the news they heard on the Voice of Vietnam. If they spoke English, they tuned to the Voice of America, the BBC or Armed Forces Radio, a network run by the U.S. military, for their news of the war.

Now, with her broadcasting career winding down and herself having recovered from a motor-scooter accident that had left her laid up for two weeks, Mrs. Ngo says she hopes one day soon to visit the country she spent eight years talking about.

"San Francisco has always been a dream," she says. If she could make one more broadcast what would she say to the GIs of Vietnam? "That's easy. I'd tell them let's let bygones be bygones. Let's move on and be friends," she said.

San Antonio Reunion After Action Report

By Dave Rogers

Veterans of Mike Company, Third Battalion, Third Marine Regiment sponsored a reunion May 2-3, 1997 in San Antonio to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the battle of Hill 881 South. During the battle, which took place on April 30, 1997, Mike Company was the lead rifle company and suffered 26 killed in action and 51 wounded. Kilo Company, Third Battalion, Ninth Marine Regiment was also actively involved in the intense fighting and suffered 17 killed in action and 35 wounded. Other units provided support, either directly or indirectly.

The reunion was organized by Joe Cialone, former executive officer of Mike Company during the battle, and now a corporate attorney with Baker and Botts in Houston, TX. The Sheraton Four points (formerly Holiday Inn Riverwalk North) was selected as base camp due to its close proximity to Veterans Memorial Plaza, site of the bronze statue titled "Hill 881 South." The Governors Suite at the top of the Sheraton served as the command post and hospitality room where attendees mustered to meet old friends with whom they had served, share poignant memories, and meet the families of fellow veterans.

FRIDAY

Friday evening was spent socializing, having dinner together on the San Antonio Riverwalk and gathering around the statue based on an eyewitness event during the battle

sculptor, painter and writer Austin Deuel. The statue depicts radioman Donald Hossack looking skyward for an evacuation helicopter while rendering aid to fellow Marine PFC James Arthur Randall, who later died of inflicted wounds. Approximately ten feet tall at its highest point, 23 feet long and 12 feet wide, it is the largest of its kind in the country, weighing in at more than ten tons. It was dedicated on November 9, 1986 with General William Westmoreland serving as the keynote speaker.

Several veterans had old photographs, letters, notebooks used in the field, newspaper clippings, etc., that brought back old memories. Joe Cialone brought along topographic maps depicting the locations where Mike Company had been located during its days in Vietnam.

SATURDAY

On Saturday a memorial service was conducted at Veterans Memorial Plaza, located only a short distance from the Sheraton, to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice during the battle, and recognize those who had participated in it. Over 100 people attended the 30th anniversary service, which was covered by local news media, including three TV stations and the San Antonio Express-News. A Marine Color Guard from the Fourth Reconnaissance Battalion in San Antonio marched to an area behind the speaker podium before the service began. Joe Cialone, who presided over the service, welcomed participants and guests, and then introduced speakers.

The first person introduced was Chaplain LCDR Paul Worley who started the memorial service with a prayer. Chaplain Worley prayed that

all of those who had lost their lives in Vietnam be remembered as "true Americans." Near the end he prayed that God "bless our gathering as we celebrate camaraderie that is found only in the fighting force that has been tested and found worthy. We celebrate the spirit of the man, even in the worst times."

The next speaker was Lt. Col. Michael Kachilla, Commanding Officer of the Fourth Reconnaissance Battalion. Lt. Col. Kachilla spoke of today's Marines and their connection with Marines of the past, asking the question, "Is one era of Marines better than another era?" After having met and talking to many Marine combat veterans through the years, he concluded by saying, "And what I want to tell you today is that the Marines of today understand the traditions we are building on of our past Marines. And what the Marines did in Guadalcanal, World War II, Korea and Vietnam, Hill 881, the Marines understand that and they're living up to that tradition. They are ready when called on to do their duty."

Joe Cialone recognized "an old friend of mine, Luis de la Garza, a classmate of mine in Basic School and in college who flew Phantom's, F-4's, in Vietnam. He has been so helpful to us. He is now a lawyer with Valero Energy. He's been so helpful to us in putting this program together. Thanks, Luis."

The person whom most people would agree was responsible for the monument being located in San Antonio, John Baines of San Antonio, was then introduced. John stated that, "approximately fifteen years ago, a very good friend of mine, Bill Stencil, who is here today, and I conceived an idea. And even though I get a lot of credit for this plaza, the

Continued next page

idea that the memorial is here, I have to share that with Bill because he was with me when we conceived the idea and was with me throughout the process. And we developed a long-standing good friendship with Austin Deuel, the gentleman who created the memorial that we have here today, "Hill 881 South."

Austin Deuel, former Marine Combat Artist, then came forth and added, "As John was saying, there are a lot of good friends here, and we go way back to the beginning of this thing. And Major Bill, good friend and good Marine, was contacted by actually an Army Captain, who happened to see this small piece that I did for a show I did, called "Vietnam Experiences," in 1981 in Minneapolis. He and John Baines took it to heart and went to work. You can see the final results. I want to tell you that the survivors of this battle have lived with it every day and I'm proud to be with them. It was as horrific of a battle as any Marine company ever fought. And it will live with us until the day we die. I'm glad to be here. Thank you."

Joe Cialone then introduced out of town guests, including veterans of the battle, Ray Calhoun from San Diego, Don Hossack from Montana, and John Colvis from Colorado. Laurie Mitchell came from North Carolina while her mother Paulette Mitchell Freeman traveled from Alabama. Paulette was the wife of 2nd Lt. Joseph Robert "Bussey" Mitchell, Jr., and Laurie was their ten month old daughter at the time of his death on Hill 881 South.

Doug Campbell of a local Vietnam Veterans organization said the following as his concluding remarks,

"I cannot speak for Brother Randall or Private Kotik or the rest of the soldiers who didn't come home. But I think if they could, they would say to you, the ones who made it home, thanks and welcome home brothers."

John Colvis and Dave Rogers were then asked to read their poems titled "The Hill Fights," and "Death at My Door" respectively. Both of these poems were published in the Spring 1997 edition of the Khe Sanh Veterans Newsletter, which was dedicated to veterans of "The 1967 Hill Battles."

Joe Cialone announced that the names of persons on the Honor Roll would be read. Dave Rogers and Ray Calhoun were selected to read the names of those from M/3/3 and K/3/9 respectively. During the reading of the Honor Roll, Don Hossack and John Colvis transported the wreath from the podium area and placed it in front of the statue titled "Hill 881 South." Joe Cialone then asked Chaplain LCDR Paul Worley to close the memorial service with a prayer. After the prayer, a bugler from nearby Fort Sam Houston Army base played taps.

Joe Cialone once again thanked all of those who had attended and helped to make the memorial service a success. Everybody was then invited to attend a reception back at the command post. Several people remained in the area to take pictures, reminisce and talk to others, including news reporters. Later on local veterans and others visited with former members of M/3/3 at the Sheraton. In mid-afternoon, a call was received from MajGen John Admire, USMC, located at Camp Pendleton, CA. The speaker phone was turned on and everybody in the room was able to talk to the General.

He had been a former platoon commander and executive officer of Mike Company in 1966 before joining the 3/3 battalion staff in December 1966.

The day was capped by dinner on San Antonio's famous Riverwalk, and one last gathering in the Governor's Suite. It goes without saying that everybody had a wonderful time and is now looking forward to the 40th anniversary!

Personnel Attending:

Lee Ashburn.....North Carolina
John Baines.....San Antonio, Tx.
Merv Benson.....Navasota, Tx.
Cheryl Burnam.....Mesa, Az.
Ray Calhoun.....San Diego, Ca.
Joe Cialone.....Houston, Tx.
Brenda Cialone.....Houston, Tx.
Joseph Cialone.....Houston, Tx.
John Cialone.....Houston, Tx.
Jacey Cline.....KalisPELL, Mt.
John P. Colvis.....Littleton, Co.
Barbara Colvis.....Littleton, Co.
Rebecca Colvis.....Littleton, Co.
Luis de la Garza & family...San Antonio, Tx.
Austin Deuel, Scottsdale, Az.
Paulette Mitchell Freeman...Wetumpka, Al.
Christine Guykens.....Houston, Tx.
Col. Michael H. Harrington, USMC (Ret).....Houston, Tx.
Donald Hossack.....KalisPELL, Mt.
Lt. Col. Michael Kachilla, USMC San Antonio, Tx.
Laurie Mitchell.....Banner Elk, NC
Ron Rismon.....Kent, Wa.
Terry Rismon.....Kent, Wa.
Constance C. Rogers.....
David G. Rogers.....Arlington, Tx.
LCDR James P. Worley, USN San Antonio, Tx.

**We never lose the ones we
Love**

**For even though they are
Gone**

**Within the hearts of those
who Care**

**Their memory will always
Live On**

VA HEALTHCARE ENROLLMENT

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WHAT IS VA HEALTHCARE ENROLLMENT?

The new VA healthcare enrollment system will provide access for veterans to a comprehensive package of healthcare services tailored to individual needs. Enrollment is the new annual process of accepting veterans for one year of care in the VA healthcare system. Veterans applying for enrollment (see details below), will be assigned by VA to one of the newly established priority groups. VA will send a letter confirming each veteran's enrollment for healthcare according to their assigned priority group.

VA will extend enrollment to every group for which resources are available. The enrollment process began in October 1997 and will be repeated every year.

AM I REQUIRED TO BE ENROLLED?

You must be enrolled to receive healthcare after October 1998 unless you are in one of the following categories:

- * You are rated by VA as having a service-connected disability of 50 percent or more
- * It has been less than one year since you were discharged from military service for a military determined and rated compensable disability that was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, and which has not yet been rated by VA
- * You are seeking care from VA only for a service-connected disability. VA encourages veterans in the above categories to also apply for enrollment so we can better plan for your healthcare needs.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR ENROLLMENT?

If you have received VA healthcare services after January 1, 1996 you do not need to apply. In this case VA will process an application on your behalf. When your enrollment is confirmed, VA will notify you in writing. Starting in October 1997, all other veterans may apply by contacting the nearest VA healthcare facility. You can apply for enrollment anytime during the year.

HOW LONG WILL I REMAIN ENROLLED?

You will remain enrolled for one year. Your enrollment will be reviewed and renewed each following year depending upon your priority group and available resources. If VA cannot renew your enrollment for another year you will be notified in writing 60 days before your enrollment expires.

PRIORITY GROUPS

Priority Group 1

- * Veterans with service-connected* conditions rated 50 percent or more disabling

Priority Group 2

- * Veterans with service-connected conditions rated 30 or 40 percent disabling

Priority Group 3

- * Veterans who are former POWs
 - Veterans with service-connected conditions rated 10 or 20 percent disabling
 - Veterans discharged from active duty for compensable conditions
 - Veterans awarded special eligibility classification (38 USC, Section 1151)

Priority Group 4

- * Veterans who are former POWs receive a VA pension plus aid and attendance or housebound benefits
 - Veterans who have been determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled

Priority Group 5

- * Non-service connected veterans and service connected veterans rated zero percent disabled whose income and net worth are below the established dollar thresholds

Priority Group 6

- * All other eligible veterans who are not required to make copayments for their care including
 - World War I and Mexican Border War veterans
 - Veterans receiving care for exposure to toxic substances or environmental hazards while in service
 - Compensable zero percent service connected veterans

Priority Group 7

- * Non service connected veterans and noncompensable zero percent service connected veterans with income and net worth above the statutory threshold who agree to pay specified deductibles and copayments

*The term service connected refers to a VA decision that your illness or injury was incurred in or aggravated by military service and resulted in some degree of disability. Generally, we will pay compensation to you if your service connected disability is determined to be at least 10%.

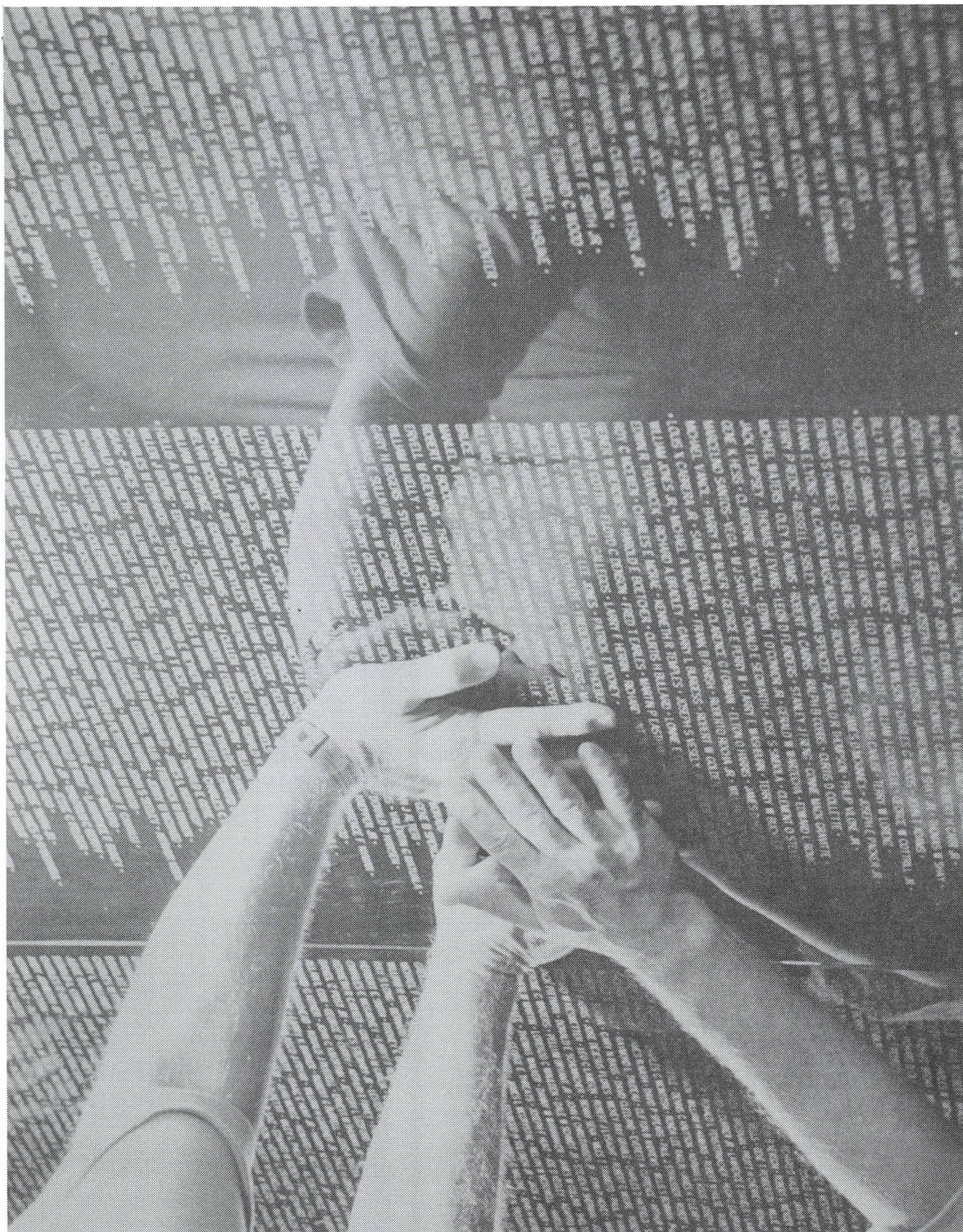
For more information contact your nearest VA healthcare facility or visit our WEB site at www.va.gov.



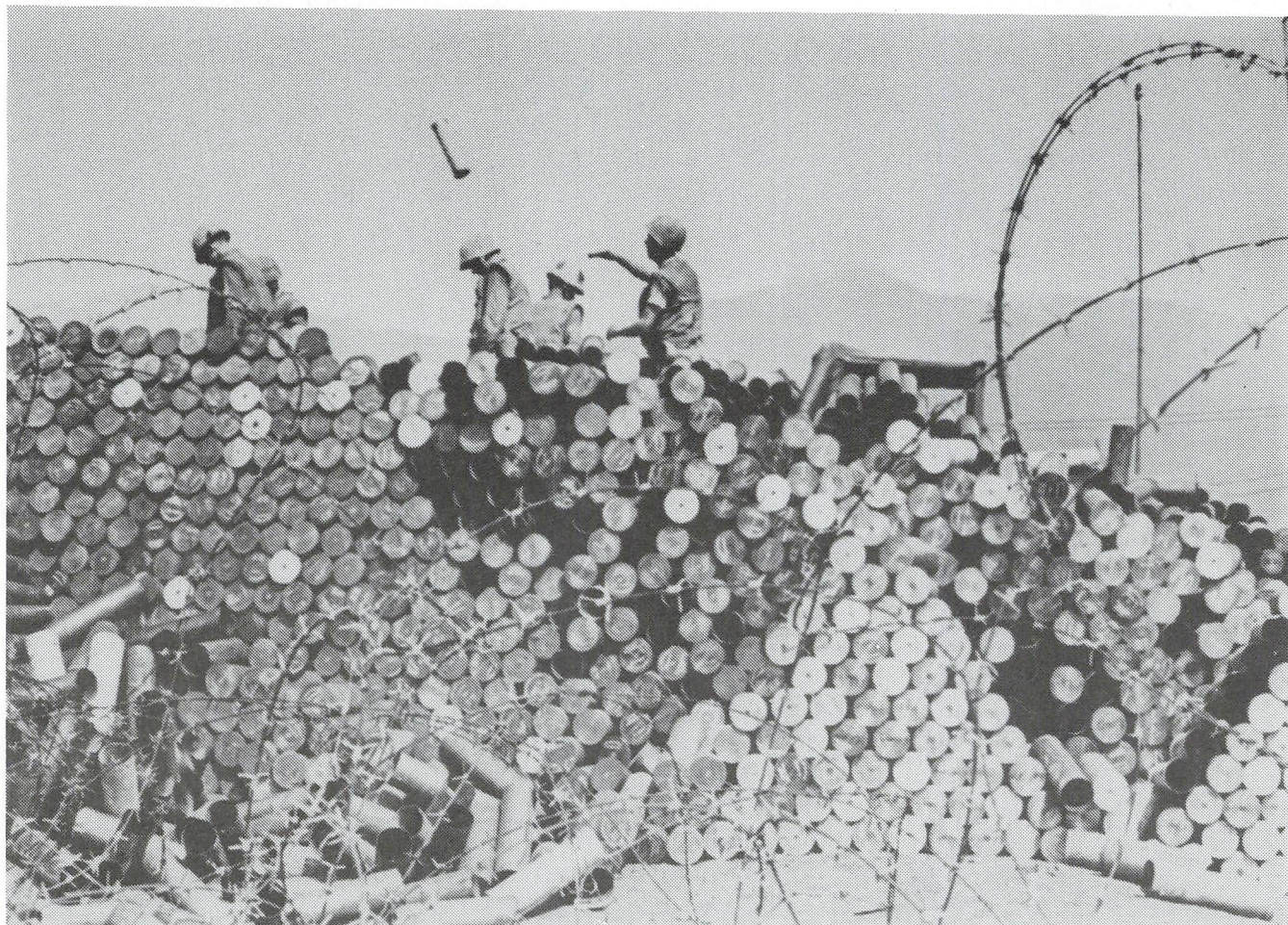
The Marine Prayer

Almighty Father, whose command is over all and whose love never fails, make me aware of Thy presence and obedient to Thy will. Keep me true to my best self, guarding me against dishonesty in purpose and deed and helping me to live so that I can face my fellow Marines, my loved ones, and Thee without shame or fear. Protect my family. Give me the will to do the work of a Marine and to accept my share of responsibilities with vigor and enthusiasm. Grant me the courage to be proficient in my daily performance. Keep me loyal and faithful to my superiors and to the duties my Country and the Marine Corps have entrusted to me. Make me considerate of those committed to my leadership. Help me to wear my uniform with dignity and let it remind me daily of the traditions which I must uphold. If I am inclined to doubt, steady my faith; if I am tempted, make me strong to resist; if I should miss the mark, give me the courage to try again. Guide me with the light of truth and grant me the wisdom by which I may understand the answer to my prayer. Amen.

1965



The photo above, titled ***"hands of the brothers"*** was taken in Orlando, Florida at a Moving Wall Ceremony sponsored by a local chapter of Vietnam Veterans. More than 20,000 people viewed the wall during its week-long stay on the hospital grounds. Photo taken by Ray Truelove, Red Clay Editor - October, 1997.



105 MM artillery casings being stacked - tossed during the Khe Sanh Siege. This photo was taken on 29 January 1968 - Hill 950 is hiding in the background. USMC photo A190802 taken by Sgt. T.H. Nairns

THE KHE SANH VETERAN

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