



Members of the **KHE SANH VETERANS** Association take pleasure in presenting the "DOC" Medal To
CORPSMEN, MEDICS, DOCTORS AND EVACUATION TECHNICIANS
Is Hereto Awarded the "DOC" Medal

For service set forth in the following:

For extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance in action against North Vietnamese Army forces in the Republic of Vietnam from, January 1962, to December 1970, during Operations in Quang Tri Province, and the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Throughout this period, imbued with an unrelenting combat spirit, determination, and initiative, they remained undeterred by heavy hostile artillery, mortar, and small arms fire. Our Corpsmen, Medics, Doctors, and other medical personnel were there, saving lives. We, and our families, whom are here because of that loving care, say "Thank you." These individual awards were designed and presented by members of the Khe Sanh Veterans to personally thank each and every one of you for your service. You are all an enduring reminder that *No Man, hath greater love for his fellow man, then when they were willing to lay down their lives to protect the lives of those in their care.*

Presented at the 2002 Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion, Irving Texas, 06 Jan 2002.
For The President KSV



James "Jimbo" Wodecki
Secretary, Khe Sanh Veterans

Awarded at the 2002 Reunion

William H. Morrison Sr.
James D. Beall
Charles L. Haig IV
John A. Cicala
Donald Ballard
Robert S. Whitman
David A. Martinez
James D. Armbrust
Dr. Edward M. Feldman
Ronald K. Townsend
Lee P. Webber
John R. Roberts Sr.
Robert Shippen (USA Medic)
George B. McClellan
James B. Thomas
Rod M. Fink



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and a sprinkling of your poetry throughout	

Reflections Reunion 2002

From the Vice President

On behalf of the Khe Sanh BOD, I want to thank our Secretary James "Jimbo" Wodecki, his lovely wife PJ, Ray Addington, members of their immediate families, as well as Ray's Young Marines (YM) for all the hard work and professionalism in putting together a most successful reunion. We heard nothing but accolades from our membership. Your hard work will become a model for all reunions to follow. The hotel was a class act, their staff went overboard to accommodate our every request (some times breaking their own rules). The facilities were first class all the way, and the buffet we were served was out of this world.

The award ceremony directed by Ray Addington was another professional presentation — from Megan, the beautiful young YM, who sang a beautiful rendition of our Nation's Anthem, to the many other Young Marines, who received a standing ovation. The first "DOC MEDAL," designed by James Wodecki, was presented by Retired Major General Mulberry to Don "Doc" Ballard, recipient of the MOH while serving as a corpsman in Vietnam and now a retired Lt. Col., USA. The "DOC" Medals were then presented to all the other Medical Personnel of the KSV.

John A. Alstad was presented his long overdue Purple Heart by Doc Ballard and Earle Breeding, former C/O E/2/26. In a surprise, the Colors of G Company 2/26 were returned to two of their members by Robert Schaefer. (See article "Welcome Home," by Tom Eichler for the complete story.)

Our day at the Dude Ranch was different and a lot of fun. Folks went on hayrides, pitched horseshoes, learned how to line dance, and do the Texas Two-Step. As for myself, being a Police Officer on the West Side of Chicago, I gave a lesson in roping to other members (see photos). Bruce Geiger attempted to compete but as you can see, his horse lost its legs — New York Cowboy. We were again treated to a fine feast at the barbeque, even though we had to ration a bit after Neil Kenny and Bob McLane finished. (James "The High Sheriff" Wodecki, maintained order.)

Back at the hotel, we relaxed and watched a fireworks display from the outdoor veranda, complete with another delicious barbeque buffet. Members chilled out for the rest of the evening, renewing old friendships and finding new ones.

Again, Thank You,
Tom Eichler, VP

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.

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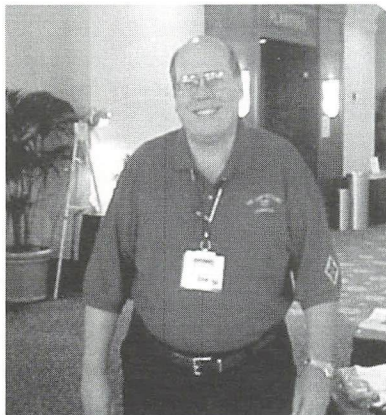
Frank CeniserosMember At Large

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BOD NEWS

At the 2002 Board meeting, the resignation of our Treasurer Vince Griffith was accepted. Vince served in that capacity for many years and did an outstanding job. He has in the past graciously stayed on until we could find a replacement. A nomination was made and accepted — Ray Addington was appointed to the position of Treasurer. Ray has outstanding credentials in the field of banking and is directly involved in the organization's functions.



Ray Addington

The BOD voted to have the entire membership vote on the site for the next reunion in 2003. Three locations were in the running for the 2003 reunion — Hawaii, South Carolina, and Washington D.C. A vote by the membership at the General Meeting resulted in Charleston S.C. being selected for the 2003 Reunion. Complete details will be provided in the next newsletter. We are providing basic information in this edition. The proposed By-Laws are included as a separate attachment. Please read them carefully. If you have comments or are in disagreement, kindly let the BOD know.

Tom Eichler, VP

2003 KSV REUNION



**The 2003 KSV Reunion
will be held 2-6 July 2003
Charleston International Airport
7401 Northwoods Blvd
Charleston, SC 29406
Ph: 1-843-572-2200
Fax: 1-843-863-8346
Reservations 1-800-Clarion**



The Board at work.

Notes from the Membership Committee

Since the last reunion, we have lost 20 members to death or moving without leaving a forwarding address. We gained 70 members for a net increase of 50. This brings our total membership to 3,050. With a list provided by Reverend Ray Stubbe, I have included in this issue the names of Khe Sanh Veterans who died after their service there — either KIA or non-combat-related Deaths. It is a hard job keeping track of our entire membership. If you learn of anyone now or in the future that we missed, please let us know.

Tom Eichler, *Chairman*

Notes from the Publishing Committee

Again, Ernie and I are out hustling for stories in order to make the newsletter work. We need input and stories from our members. God knows, at this year's reunion I heard a million of them. All we ask is that you write them down and send them to us. Do not worry about grammar or spelling. We will take care of it for you. I have just completed the last and final version of the Membership Directory. All the mistakes and omissions in the old version have been corrected. As soon as this issue of the newsletter gets out, I will begin mailing them. All those who pre-paid and received copies, will get new ones. When you receive the latest version and find a mistake, let me know, so I can include the corrections in the Winter Issue of the newsletter.

Tom Eichler, *Chairman*

Memorial Page

The following is a list, compiled by Reverend Ray W. Stubbe, of fellow members who died after service at the Khe Sanh Combat Base. I have included all of the men who died at LZ Margo, since it is impossible to determine which of them were actually at Khe Sanh prior to the debacle at LZ Margo.

NAME	UNIT	RANK	DOD	CAUSE
ADAMS, DWIGHT LEE	H/2/26	PFC	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
AUEN, DAVID OLIVER	D/1/26	LCPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
		*		
BAKER, RUSTON LEE	A/1/26	LCPL	18 AUG 68	KIA
BANKS, HENRY DUANE	A/1/9	CAPT	14 JUL 68	KIA
BECKER, MICHAEL PAUL	A/1/26	PFC	07 JUN 68	KIA
BENNETT, PRENTICE J.	B/1/9	CPL	17 JUL 68	KIA
BOHANNON, EDWARD J	K/3/9	CPL	21 MAY 67	KIA
BOND, GEORGE ALLEN	H/2/26	LCPL	08 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
BRADFORD, EDWARD LEWIS	A/1/26	LCPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
BRADFORD, RODNEY	F/2/26	CPL	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
BREES, WILLIAM MARION JR	H&S 2/26	HN	08 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
BROWN-BEY, LANCASTER	H&S 2/26	LCPL	01 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
BRYAN, LAWRENCE GEORGE	H&S 2/26	LCPL	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
BEVILACQUA, RENATO M	A/1/26	PFC	08 JUN 68	KIA DOW
CABANO, GEORGE A.LLEN	G/2/26	PFC	03 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
CALZIA, FRANK VINCENT	B/1/26	HN	10 MAY 68	KIA
CAMPBELL, WILLIAM ROGER	E/2/26	PFC	06 JUN 68	KIA
CARTER, JAMES D JR	B/1/9	2LT	07 JUN 67	KIA
CAROTHERS, CECIL WAYNE	H&S/2/26	HM3	11 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
CAUDILL, JAMES	A/1/26	LCPL	18 AUG 68	KIA
CHAMBERS, JAMES LARRY	D/1/26	PFC	18 MAY 69	KIA
CHAPMAN, KURTIS NOLAN	D/1/26	LCPL	09 MAY 68	KIA
CHRISTMAN, JERRY NOLAN	A/1/26	PFC	07 JUN 68	KIA
CLARK, LARY GENE	A/1/26	PFC	15 JUN 68	KIA
COATES, CHARLES T.	E/2/9	LCPL	27 MAY 68	KIA
COLEMAN, CHARLES L	D/1/26	CPL	31 MAY 68	KIA
COLEMAN, WILLIAM FRANK	D/1/26	PFC	16 APR 68	KIA
CONKLIN, RICHARD DOUGLAS	A/1/26	PFC	15 JUN 68	KIA
CORES, THOMAS RICHARD LL	A/1/26	SGT	07 JUN 68	KIA
COYNE, KEVIN MARK	A/1/26	LCPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
CUFF, DONALD MERRITT	A/1/26	SSGT	07 JUN 68	KIA
COTTINGHAM, DUANE ROGER	D/1/26	LCPL	13 JUN 68	KIA DOW
CUNNINGHAM, EDWARD	E/2/26	PFC	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
		*		
DABUZZO, DENNY	E/2/26	LCPL	06 JUN 68	KIA
DAFFIN, GARY	E/2/26	LCPL	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
DEFAZIO, PHILLIP FRANK	H&S 2/26	PFC	11 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO

NAME	UNIT	RANK	DOD	CAUSE
DESCHAINED, NORMAN C	D/1/26	CPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
DESCHENES, MICHAEL HUBERT	H/2/26	PFC	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
DIXON, DAVID ERNEST	C/1/26	CPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
DONOGHUE, JOHN MARTIN	E/2/26	PFC	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
DONOGHUE, STEPHEN SCOTT	B/1/26	PVT	29 MAY 68	KIA
DURHAM, JAMES C BUIL	E/2/26	PFC	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
*				
EISENBRAUGH, D.L.	H&S/2/26	HN	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
ESPY, JOHNNIE BEE	D/1/26	CPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
ESSARY, GEORGE ARTHUR	A/1/26	CPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
*				
FERNANDEZ, EUGENIO E JR	D/1/26	PFC	09 MAY 68	KIA
FIKE, DANIEL EUGENE	A/1/26	LCPL	18 OCT 68	KIA
FREED, DAVID BRUCE	F/2/26	LCPL	19 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
*				
GEERDES, DKONNIE DELBERT	D/1/26	LCPL	13 JUN 68	KIA
GILLASPY, EDWARD ANDREW	D/1/26	PFC	09 MAY 68	KIA
GRANT, STEPHEN MITCHELL	A/1/26	PFC	15 JUN 68	KIA
GRASSI, CLEMENT JOHN	A/1/26	CPL	15 JUN 68	KIA
GRIFFIN, THEODORE STEVEN	A/1/26	PFC	15 JUN 68	KIA
GUM, EDWARD SHERIDAN	D/1/26	CPL	22 FEB 69	KIA
*				
HACKER, KURT ERIC	A/1/26	PFC	05 JUN 68	KIA DOW
HAGGEY, JIM	E/2/26	LCPL	06 DEC 68	KIA
HANNAH, SAMUEL JAMES	D/1/26	2 LT	07 JUN 68	KIA
HENDERSON, MONTE H. JR	H&S/2/26	PFC	01 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
HENSON, CLARK LEE JR	D/1/26	SGT	16 JUN 68	KIA
HERNDON, W.COLE	H&S/2/26	2 LT	11 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
HOWELL, GATLIN	B/1/9	2 LT	07 JUL 67	KIA
HUGHES, EDWARD JOHN JR.	D/1/26	CAPT	09 MAY 68	KIA
HUNTER, DELON	E/2/26	PFC	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
*				
IMPSON, DOUGLAS GERALD	H/2/26	PFC	15 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
ISGRIG, DENNIS EDWARD	C/1/26	CPL	15 MAY 68	KIA
*				
KIRKEBY, DAVID LYNN	H&S/1/26	PFC	10 MAY 68	KIA
KIZZIE, LEON EDWARD	H/2/26	PFC	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
KNISELY, ROBERT LEE JR	G/2/26	CPL	01 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
KNOX, DAVID	D/1/26	LCPL	08 JUN 68	KIA DOW
KUNSHIER, GARY LEE	G/2/26	PFC	04 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
KUPPERSCHMIDT, JEROME D	A/1/26	CPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
*				
LEIGH, THOMAS ANTHONY JR	A/1/26	CPL	18 AUG 68	KIA
LEONARD, ARNOLD LEE JR		LCPL	16 JUN 68	KIA
LEYBA, RAMON	A/1/26	HM3	07 JUN 68	KIA
LOUGHRAN, JOSEPH M	3/26-XO	MAJ	02 MAY 68	KIA
LOYA, PAUL NELSON	D/1/26	LCPL	13 JUN 68	KIA

NAME	UNIT	RANK	DOD	CAUSE
MARCUM, JERRY LEE	H/2/26	PFC	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
MARKUM, ROBERT BAILEY	D/1/26	CPL	17 NOV 68	KIA
MARTIN, CLIFFORD B JR	B/1/26	HN	29 MAY 68	KIA
MCCLOSKEY, ROBERT ALLEN	A/1/26	LCPL	15 JUN 68	KIA
MCDONALD, D.L.	H/2/26	PFC	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
MCGRATH, PAUL MARTIN	A/1/26	2 LT	07 JUN 68	KIA
MIDDLEBROOKS, CARL MASO	A/1126	PFC	07 JUN 68	KIA
MILLER, CARL ROBERT	D/1/26	LCPL	18 JUL 68	KIA
MITCHELL, HOMER JR	D/1/26	LCPL	09 MAY 68	KIA
MOORE, DENVER JR	G/2/26	CPL	03 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
MOORE, WILLIAM JAMES	H&S 2/26	CPL	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
*				
ONSLOW, ROBERT CRANLEY	H&S/1/26	CAPT	10 MAY 68	KIA
OSKILANIC, WILLIAM JOSEPH	H&S/2/26	LCPL	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
*				
PARKER, WILLIAM THOMAS	H&S/2/26	CPL	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
PARKER, WINSTON GLEN	D/1/26	HM3	09 MAY 68	KIA
PEDEN, CLARK EDMUND	H&S/2/26	PFC	26 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
PEGAM, RICHARD EPPS	FOB-3	SMAJ	23 AUG 68	KIA
PETTLT, STANLEY RUSSELL	E/2/26	CPL	15 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
PEREZ, VICTOR JR	G/2/26	CPL	01 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
PERSONETTE, MICHAEL DARWIN	G/2/26	LCPL	23 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
PHILLIPS, THOMAS MILES	G/2/26	CPL	13 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
POINTER, RONALD JOSEPH	H/2/26	PFC	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
POLLASTRO, DOMINICK	H&S/2/26	LCPL	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
PORTER, JACK EUGENE	D/1/26	LCPL	09 MAY 68	KIA
PRESLEY, JAMES HENRY		LCPL	02 JUN 68	KIA
PROCK, DANNY	E/2/26	LCPL	06 JUN 68	KIA
*				
RAAB, JAMES DONALD	C/1/26	HM3	12 JUN 68	KIA
RALPH, GARY RAY	A/1/26	PFC	16 AUG 68	KIA
REICHARDT, STEVEN JOHN	H/2/26	PFC	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
RICHMOND, JAMES ROSS	D/1/26	PFC	15 JUN 68	KIA
RINEHART, JAMES DALE	F/2/26	LCPL	19 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
RIVERS, HARRY EUGENE	E/2/26	LCPL	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
ROBINSON, HENRY	26MAR/SP			23 FEB 69 KIA
ROBLE, JOSEPH EDWARD	E/2/26	LCPL	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
ROCKEFELLER, RONALD ED	D/1/26	HN	07 JUN 68	KIA
ROSS, MICHAEL ROBERT II	G/2/26	PFC	03 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
*				
SANCHEZ, JUAN OSCAR	E/2/26	SSGT	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
SCARPINATO, JOHN A	D/1/26	LCPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
SCOTT, JOHNNY MAJOR JR	B/1/26	PFC	05 JUN 68	KIA
SECOR, GILBERT ARTHUR	FOB-3	MSGT	23 AUG 68	KIA
SHELLEY, GREGORY ALLEN	A/1/26	CPL	07 JUN 68	KIA

NAME	UNIT	RANK	DOD	CAUSE
SICKEL, ROBERT PAUL	D/1/26	LCPL	09 MAY 68	KIA
SKOCICH, FRANK ALBERT	H&S/2/26	PFC	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
SMITH, JAMES ALFRED	B/1/26	PFC	29 MAY 68	KIA
SONGE, D.L.	H&S/2/26	HN	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
SPILLVER, CLIFTON	E/2/26	LCPL	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO DOW
ST JOHN, DAVID MICHAEL	A/1/26	LCPL	18 AUG 68	KIA
STAPLES, ALTON LEON III	A/1/26	PFC	07 JUN 68	KIA
STEWART, BILLY GRAY	D/1/26	PFC	09 MAY 68	KIA
STRICKLAND, BILLY GRANVILLE	E/2/26	SGT	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
		*		
TOLENTINO, CLARENCE	D/1/26	SSGT	17 JUN 68	KIA DOW
TRAVIS, MICHAEL WARREN	A/1/26	CPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
		*		
VAUGHT, JOHNNIE L JR.	A/1/26	PFC	29 SEP 68	KIA
		*		
WARD, CARL RAY	D/1/26	SGT	15 JUN 68	KIA
WASHUT, WALTER JUNIOR	K/3/9	CPL	20 MAY 67	KIA
WATERS, WILLIAM WALTER	I/3/26	LCPL	28 AUG 68	KIA
WEATHERS, WILLIAM B III	B/1/9	CPL	17 JUL 68	KIA
WESLEY, ERNEST LAMAR	A/1/26	PFC	07 JUN 68	KIA
WIGTON, PHILLIP GREGORY	M/3/26	LCPL	09 MAY 68	KIA
WILKINS, JAMES MARVIN	A/1/26	LCPL	31 JUL 68	KIA
WINDHAM, MELVIN GEORGE	D/1/26	HN	09 MAY 68	KIA
WYROSDIC, WILLIAM EVERETT	H/2/26	CPL	08 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO

A List of Members whom have past away since their service at Khe Sanh Combat Base from causes unrelated to their service at Khe Sanh:

NAME	UNIT	RANK	DOD
ADAMS, LARRY EARL			
ALAIRE, RICHARD	D/1/26		UNKNOWN
ALBERS, CRAIG WILLIAM	CAC 0	CPL	15 APR 82
ASASAKI, JERRY	SEABEES		20 SEP 91
AUCOIN, ROBERT JOSEPH			UNKNOWN
	*		
BABBITT, MANUEL P.	A/3D ATS		
BAIG, MIRZA MUNIR	HQ 26TH MAR		20 APR 71
BAILEY, BEETLE	C/1/9		22 NOV 98
BALDWIN, DANIEL L III	CCN		01 JUN 94
BALL, PHILLIP	F/2/3		05 JUL 01
BARKOWSKI, WILLIAM J	A/1/13		01 JUN 94
BERNARD, ROBERT	HQBN/3DMARDIV		UNKNOWN
BRACKMAN, JAMES T II	C/1/13		21 JUN 93
BROWN, EDWARD J	F/2/26		1988
BRUNE, AL	L/3/3		11 DEC 00
BURNS, EDWARD	A/3D RECON		1989
BURNS, ROY TB1	B/3D RECON		14 OCT 95
BYSTROM, TOM	L/3/26		21 NOV 92
	*		
CANATSEY, GERALD	2/26		24 MAR 02
CASE'E, THOMAS E	B/1/26	HM3	01 MAR 98
CAWLEY, LEO	1/1		21 JUL 91
CEFAIL, NORMAN	H&S/1/26	CAPT	UNKNOWN
CERRA, BERNARD	HMH-463		29 JUN 97
CHVARAK, DON	108TH ARTY		UNKNOWN
COFFEY, PATRICK	1/3/9		1995
CONICK, JOHN E	ISO 3RDMA DIV		08 AUG 90
COOK, WALTER T	26TH MAR S-4		30 OCT 01
COPELAND, CHARLES			09 JAN 87
CORBIN, ARTHUR W	D/1/9		19981119
COSTELLO, GARY M	D/1/9-X0		03 SEP 97
CRAIG, WILLIAM	A-101 LANGVEI	MSGT	29 APR 99
CUMBERLAND, CECIL	MACV TM 4		UNKNOWN
CURTIS, TIM	L/3/3		2001
	*		
D'HONDT, CAMILLE	A/1/9	GYSGT	13 JAN 00
DAMIANO, JAMES	A/1/1		16 JUL 01
DEGRYSE, RICHARD	11TH ENG		08 OCT 89
DORING, GEORGE	H&S/1/26		30 AUG 90
DRISCOLL, WALTER	CHAPLAIN		12 JAN 02
DUFFY, PAT	H&S/1/26	1/LT	1999
DURR, KING	A/3D SP		26 DEC 00

NAME	UNIT	RANK	DOD
EPPS, JAMES	C/1/26	1/LT	18 JAN 02
ERNST, CLAYTON	3D FRC		1995
EVANS, JOHN P	E/2/9		27 DEC 00
EVANS, MIKE	H/2/3		21 DEC 88
EVEREST, CHARLES	M13/26		1993
	*		
FAUREBRAC, LES	A/1/16		1992
FEDYSZYN, JOHN	C/1/12		UNKNOWN
FLOYD, DAVID	A/11/9		11 APR 94
FORNER, DAVID	1/26		2000
FOX, JOSEPH	B/3D RECON		11 JUN 70
FRANK, ERNIE UNKNOWN			
FRANKLIN, FR. ROBERT	4TH MAR		UNKNOWN
	*		
GARCIA, LARRY	3DENG		1994
GARRISON, DANNY	A/1/26		01 JAN 00
GRENAT, RICHARD	D/1/26		26 FEB 99
	*		
HALL, W.C.	VMO-6		1997
HAVLIK, JOHN	MACTU-62		1997
HEINRICH, JOHN	I/3/26		1995
HENDERSON, LARRY	ARMY INTELL		UNKNOWN
HENNELLY, JOHN	1/13-C/O	LTCOL	05 JUN 95
HERB, DENNIS	B/3DRECON	SGT	27 NOV 01
HERNANDEZ, AUMONT	FLC		24 NOV 99
HOLLAND, ROGER LEE			19 FEB 99
HOODY, THOMAS E	B/1/26-HN		09 NOV 01
HORNE, T.M.	SOP	COL	31 DEC 95
HUBER, CHARLES	2/26		11 FEB 00
HUSHER, ROBERT	M/3/26	LCPL	1990
	*		
IZENOUR, FRANK	E/2/3	1 /LT	16 DEC 88
	*		
JABUSCH, WILLIAM	H&S/3/26		08 NOV 91
JACOBS, QUILLES	B/1/26		19 APR 95
JARABEK, JOHN J	HQ/1/11		1996
JENNINGS, ORVAL	B/3D RECON		10 NOV 84
JOHNSON, KENNETH	FO		09 FEB 78
JONES, JAMES A	2/17 CAV 101ST		08 MAY 01
KERCH, RICHARD J	MAG-16		19 JUN 98
KILPATRICK, ELDON	C/11/9		07 FEB 98
KINANE, JAMES	B/3D RECON		16 JUN 94
KOSDTROUM, RONALD	D/3RD RECON		15 DEC 70
KUCHIERA, GARY L	M/3/26		04 APR 92
	*		

NAME	UNIT	RANK	DOD
LACY, STUART	B/1/13		1969
LENHART, GEORGE	MACTU-62		2001
LUCERO, ALFREDO	A/1/13		UNKNOWN
LUMPKIN, ALBERT R	B/3D RECON		09 DEC 01
	*		
MAGILLIGAN, DONALD	C MED	LT	20 JUN 89
MARTIN, ORNAN K	B/3D TANKS		28 OCT 01
MCCAIN, DONALD	G/2/26		30 JUL 81
MCCONNELL, TERRY	C/1/26		1993
MCCRACKEN, JACK H	HMM-165		1967
MCDONALD, JIMMY L	1/13		06 NOV 94
MC GEE, RICHARD L	H&S/1/9		UNKNOWN
MCINTYRE, DONALD M	EOD		06 JUN 96
MCNEAL, JESSE	E/2/26		31 OCT 91
MCNEELE	M/3/26		1989
METTS, ANDREW L	A/11/9		02 NOV 96
MICKE, NICHOLAS	B/3RD RECON		16 APR 71
MOUSEL, THOMAS	1/1		1974
MUMMERT, JOHN D			1998
MURPHY, ROBERT	VMFA-542		1994
	*		
NEFF, ROBERT L	VMO-6		16 MAY 96
NESTER, GARY STEPHEN	G/2/11		1998
	*		
O'DONOVAN, JEROME "CHIP"	HJ2126		22 OCT 99
	*		
PADGETT, ROBERT C			23 JAN 99
PADLEY, JOHN J	RLT-26	COL	06 DEC 91
PARKER, ROBERT A	H&S&B/1/26		05 NOV 01
PARR, RON	B/3D RECON		20 SEP 90
PEHRSON, CHAD	H/2/3		1974
PELLETTER, P.A.	H&S/3/26-81S		27 JUN 96
PIPER, MICHAEL	2/26		07 MAY 99
PLESS, STEPHEN WESLEY	VMO-6	CAPT	1969
PORTER, JOHN			UNKNOWN
PRADO, WARREN	B/1/26-WPNS		09 FEB 02
	*		
RAMSEY, LARRY	11TH ENG		20 NOV 95
RAYBURN, ED	B/1/26		UNKNOWN
RAYMOND, JOHN	A/1/26	CAPT	28 AUG 87
ROBERTS, JOHN P.	20TH TASS	COL	09 MAR 01
RODELL, DAVID L	W/1/13		09 MAY 97
ROMAN, JOSEPH	HMM-265	CAPT	11 JAN 00
ROMINE, RICHARD E	HMM-165	CAPT	31 JUL 99
ROSE, HAROLD K	CCN	COL	11 MAY 90
RUSSELL, VERNER	CAC-0		01 MAY 73

NAME	UNIT	RANK	DOD
SAMMS, TOM	A/1/26		22 NOV 92
SCHAFFENBERGER, WALLY	H&S/3/26		25 MAR 99
SCHRON, COURTNEY			18 MAY 94
SCULLY, ROBERT L	FOB-3		25 MAY 85
SEARLE, HENRY	VMA-211		1999
SILVA, VICTOR	A/1/26		UNKNOWN
SIMS, TIMOTHY C	M/3/26		10 JUN 02
SKINNER, ROGER	B/3DRECON		2000
STAGGS, DAN	E/2/26		04 JUL 99
STEPTOE, BILLY	A-101 LANG VEI		07 FEB 93
STEVENS, EDWARD L	B/3RD RECON		29 JUN 76
STROSS, WILLIAM	G/2/3		17 APR 88
SULLIVAN, WILLIAM	HMH-463		17 JUL 83
SYLVA, DAVID	USAF		23 MAY 99
		*	
TAYLOR, MERYIN	USAF C-130S		2001
THEIS, JAMES M	D/1/26		26 MAR 76
THOMAS, JOHN	A/3D SHOREP		26 DEC 00
TORTI, JOSEPH	I/3/26		15 MAR 98
TOYE, JAMES	E/2/26		11 MAY 98
		*	
UPHOLD, GEORGE	D/3D RECON		25 NOV 74
		*	
WALTERS, FRED M "CHIP"	A/1/9		14 FEB 94
WARD, MARK	G/2/26		23 JUN 99
WATHKE, MICHAEL	C/1/9		1996
WATSON, TALBOT	D/3D RECON	I/LT	12 MAY 80
WEST, JOHN	H&S/1/26		2001
WEDGE, JAMES	B/1/13		02 FEB 99
WHALEN, HARRY D	FOB-1	SMAJ	14 MAY 93

Memorials

In Memory of Jim Epps

My husband Bruce and I attended our first Khe Sanh reunion in Covington, Kentucky. I do not remember if that was the year we met Jim Epps. I do remember searching him out at each of the reunions after we had met. His warmth and friendliness made Bruce and me feel like his old friend. Jim and I connected because we were both victims of COPD, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Jim had severe emphysema and chronic bronchitis, and I have a hereditary deficiency, leaving me with 19% of my lung capacity. I am currently on the lung transplant list in Minnesota. We both struggled with each breath, something others take for granted. I am greatly improved with steroids, which I take before each reunion to enable me to travel.

Jim and I, both on oxygen, shared cabs and tables as our heartier friends walked to ceremonies, restaurants and historic sites in D.C., Philadelphia, or other reunion locales. His generosity was ever abundant, like when he chipped in a \$20 bill to "cover" those less fortunate when a van took us to a function in Washington.

Each year I saw Jim struggle a little more. I wish I had connected with him at his home in California when he missed the last reunion. I wish I had known he would be hospitalized and we would never see him again. But I know his struggle is over, and a warm, wonderful, generous person is breathing easier in heaven.

Susan Saffel

In Memory of Robert Harrell

Shortly after the KSV reunion in Chicago, Bob Harrell passed away from liver cancer. We consider ourselves fortunate to have known Bob and to have seen him again last July. He displayed great courage and optimism, despite the severity of his illness. According to Bruce, these are the same qualities he displayed during the Siege at Khe Sanh, while serving with 3rd Anti-Tanks. For those reasons, we consider him not only a good friend but a good Marine.

We think of him often and will miss him greatly. We find it ironic that the Vietnam War is still taking

lives. Our sympathy and prayers go out to Bob's family and to his wife, Mary.

Bruce and Susan Saffel
USMC 3RD Anti Tank

Fog

Slowly the fog creeps in, at first it was hard to see. The drizzle hid the fog so well it was hard for my eyes to see the sly fog sneaking in.

As I slowly came to realize the fog's presence, I suddenly found myself on an airstrip covered with fog.

The airstrip was empty, no planes, choppers, no one in sight. It was so peaceful and quiet no sounds of engines, no outgoing or incoming. No voices to ruin the quiet.

Peace, the peace of the dead. That fog hid the base from preying eyes of the enemy.

As I stood there I prayed for the fog to both stay and leave. As long as it stayed, we were safe from incoming fire. But I prayed for the sun to burn the fog away so those dead, dying, and wounded could be flown to safety.

The fog is both friend and foe. It means both death and life. I feel selfish not wanting it to leave. I want to live so I am "lost." I can't have it both ways. Sunshine for food and ammo; fog so Charlie doesn't see and can't shoot at me!

Fog, you remind me of Red Clay — a plateau of death and pain!

Sam L. Messer
CBMU-301
DET-B SEABEES

Jimbo,

When that medal was put around my neck, it felt like a huge burden was raised from my shoulders. You guys went above and beyond the call. It was absolutely the proudest, humblest, and most important event of my life...bar none.

Doc Jim Armbrust

Sometimes we become so involved with the fun and festivities at the reunion, we neglect to give credit to those who are so deserving. Many thanks to Tom, Jimbo, and all the others who worked so hard organizing and arranging the 2002 reunion. Thanks again for a job well done.

Tex Seiber
Delta Co 1/26

It happened on a hot Thursday night at the Los Colinas Marriott not long after the fireworks. A few of us diehards decided to move our party and the free beer out to the patio. Lloyd, AKA "Shortround," asked me if I would help him move the beer tub from the reception room to the party outside. "Hey, anything for you, Shortround." We both headed for the elevator. When we reached the second floor I said, "Stand back, Lloyd. I'll handle this!" I then bent over, took a hold on each of the handles on the tub of ice and beer, gave a good heave ho, and took a header directly into the ice cold water. This was about all Shortround could handle. In a fit of uncontrollable laughter, all the while rolling on the floor, he let me know in no uncertain terms that I had made his day. "That was the funniest thing I've ever seen," he said. Brothers, it just goes to show you that we'll do anything for one another.

Semper Fi, See ya in Charleston,
Wayne Shumaker

Dear Khe Sanh Veterans, Families and Friends, I write to thank you for the warm welcome so many of you gave me at the 2002 reunion. Your interest in my POW/MIA exhibit and LASIA (Learning and

Sharing in Appreciation) exhibit is appreciated. Thank you also to the veterans and others who signed up to receive our student (LASIA) letters. I hope your participation in this important endeavor will reap meaningful rewards for you. The students do gain from learning about you, writing to you, and reading the letters of those who choose to write back. I have noticed this gain, not only in their learning, but also in their outlook. I have heard it said that giving gratitude enriches the giver also. I have seen this in these young people. Again, please accept my appreciation and good wishes.

Sharon Lynn Pelon/ LASIA
Lincoln Avenue Elementary School
1817 W. Lincoln Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53215
e-mail dientae@yahoo.com



Jan McIntyre and Sharon Lynn Pelon. Teachers sharing ideas.

Getting acquainted and reacquainted



President "Bulldog" Smith greeting guests including Gold Star Mother Anna "Mickey" Roble (in dark glasses) and her son Bill, foreground left.

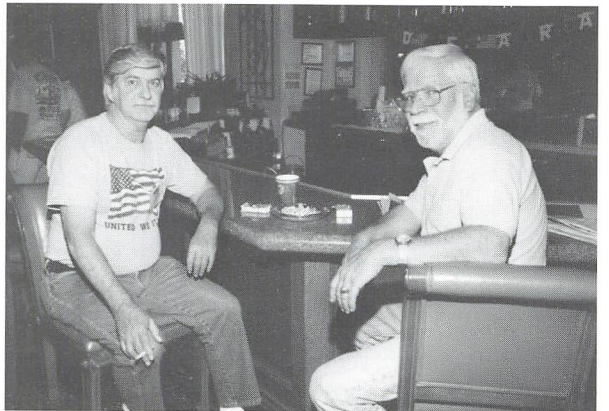
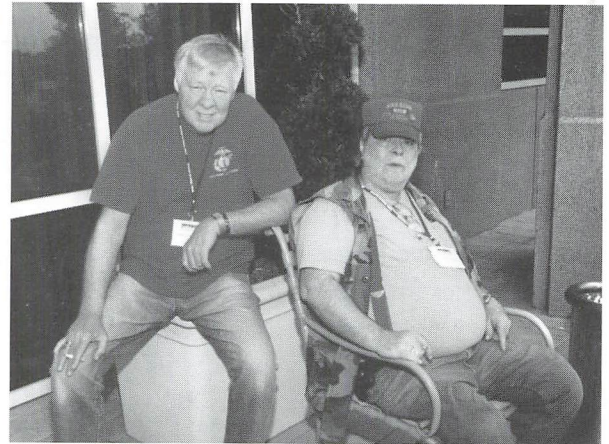


Men of Delta Company



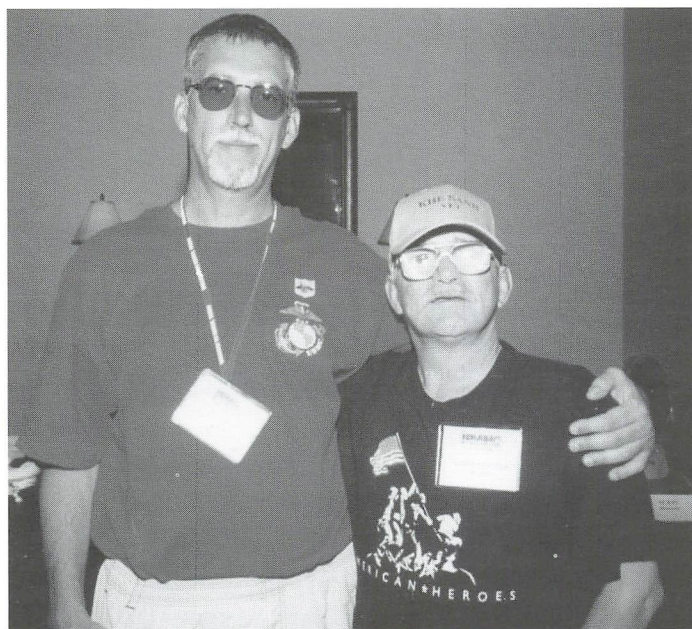
Gold Star Mothers Maylene Littlefield at far left and Lucile Payne (seated) visiting with friends.

Chillin' Texas Style





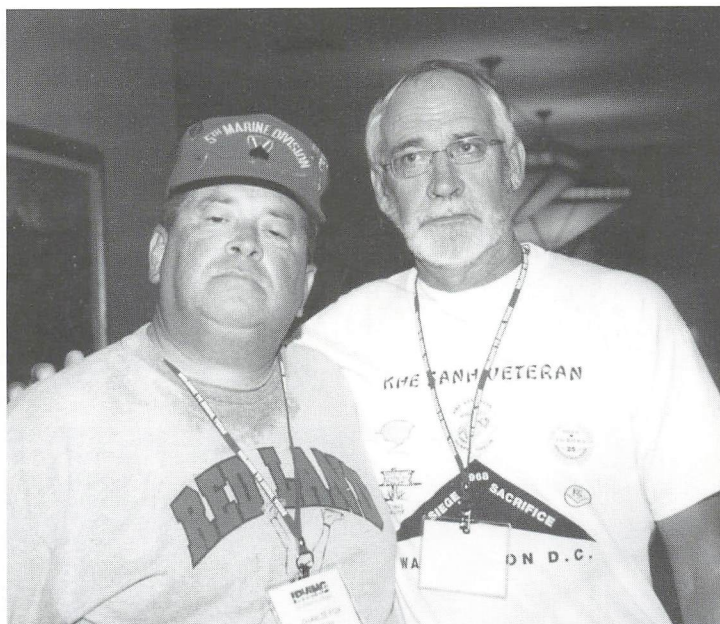
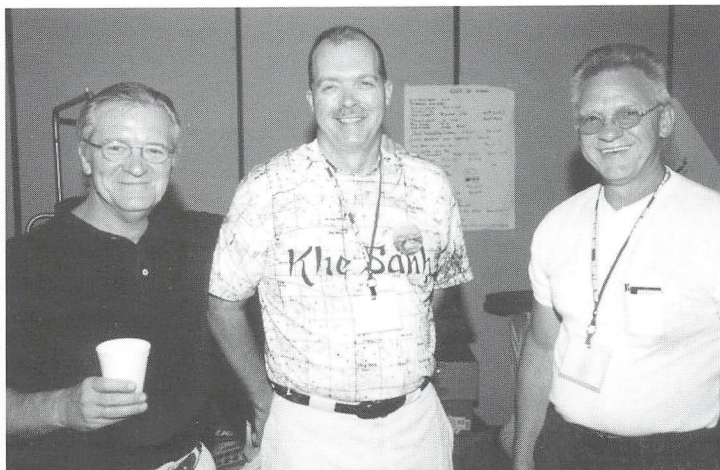
Shortround and friends



Chief giving
his blessing
to friends



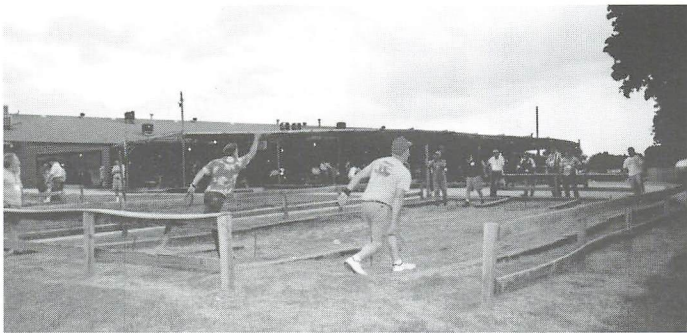
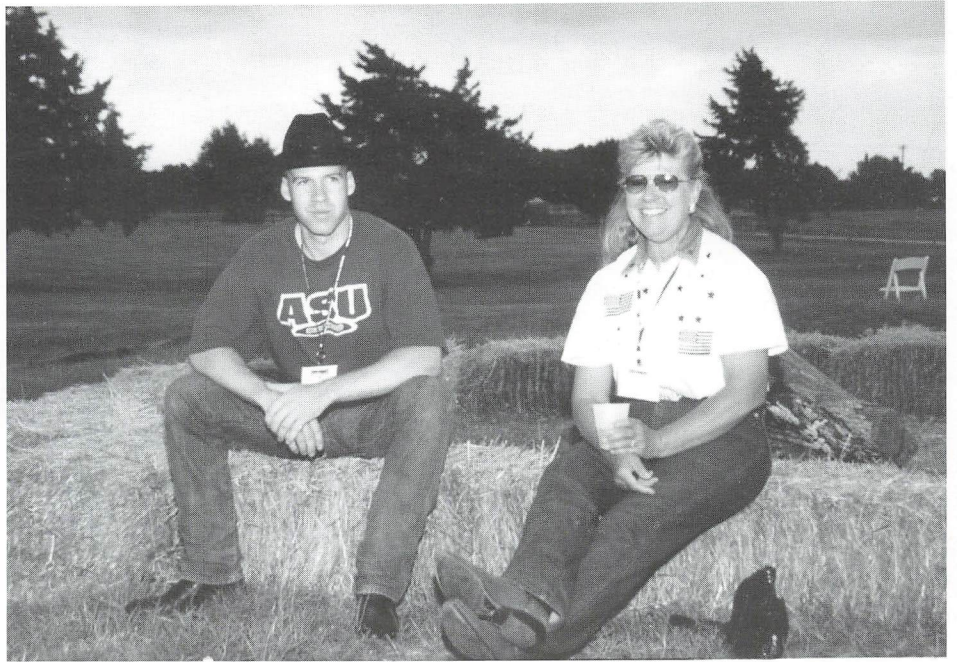
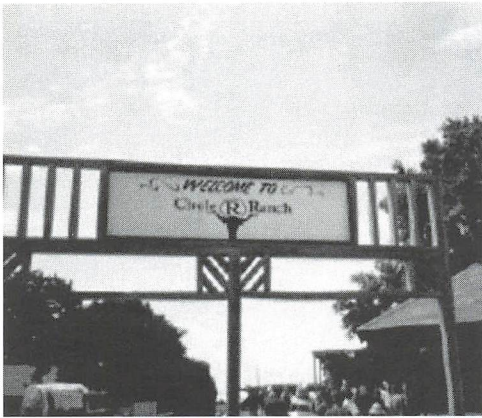
Friends meet again



All our beautiful young ladies



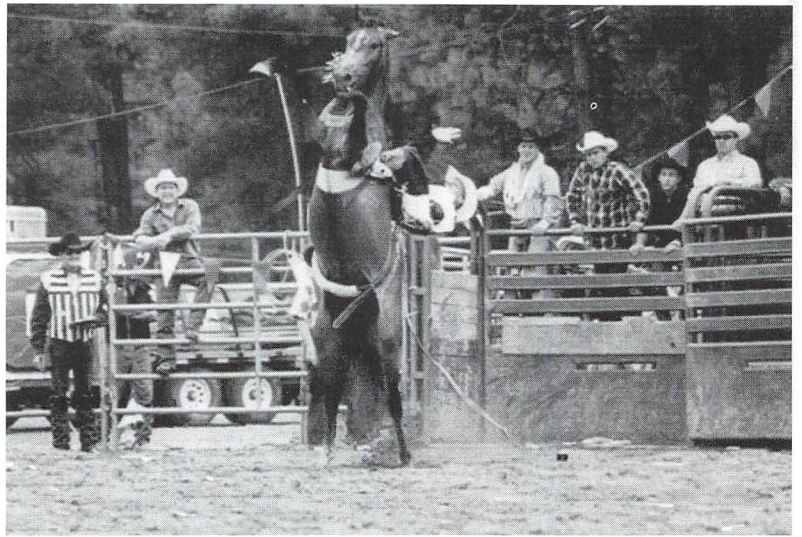
The Circle "R" Ranch



Uh-oh

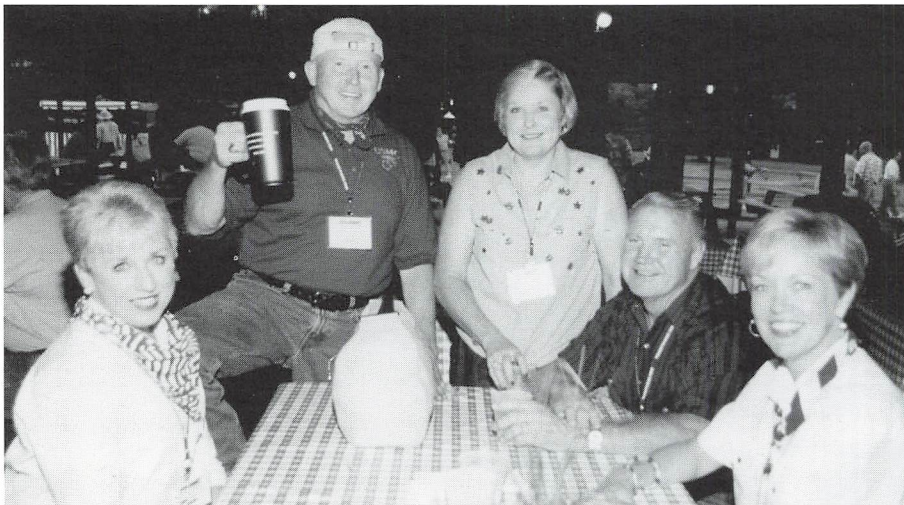


Bruce Geiger (USA) — Bruce's horse lost its feet.

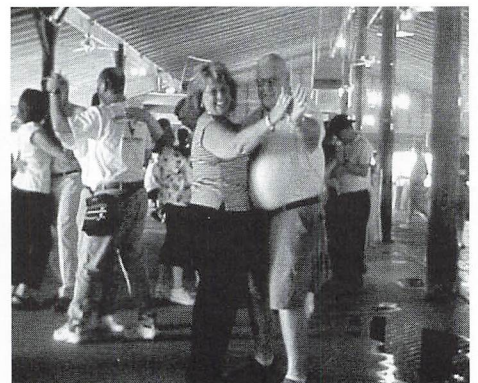
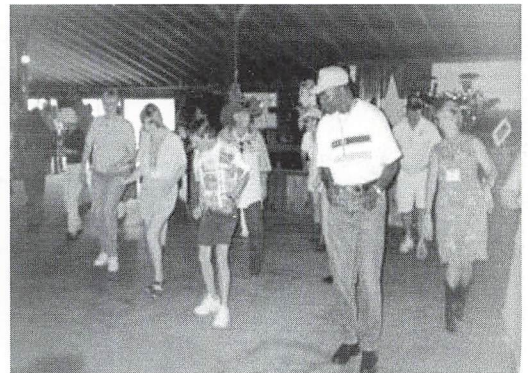


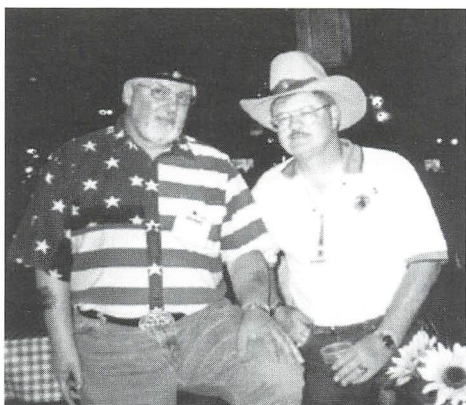
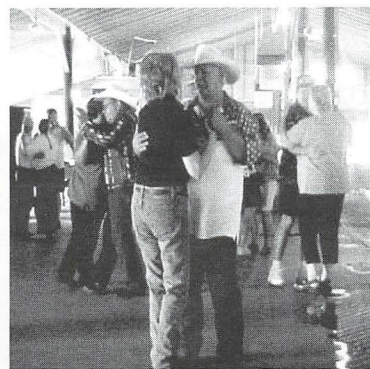
Tommy Eichler (USMC) — From the Wild West (Side of Chicago, that is.)

Ahhh, this is more like it



Texas Two-Stepping





Instant Texans



Saturday Night Ceremonies

John Alstad finally getting his Purple Heart from Medal of Honor recipient Don "Doc" Ballard.

Young Marine Megan sings the Nation's anthem.



KSV President David "Bulldog" Smith receives proclamation from the City of Irving, honoring the service of Khe Sanh Veterans.



After Doc Ballard explains the proposed new memorial for Corpsmen, Neil Kenny makes the first contribution for Doc's commemorative statue honoring those who served as Corpsmen.



Major General Mulberry delivers welcoming remarks.

Young Marine Honor Guard march in the colors.



DOCS Awards



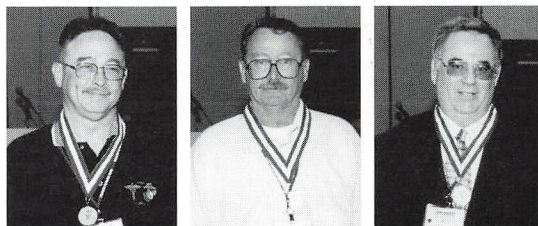
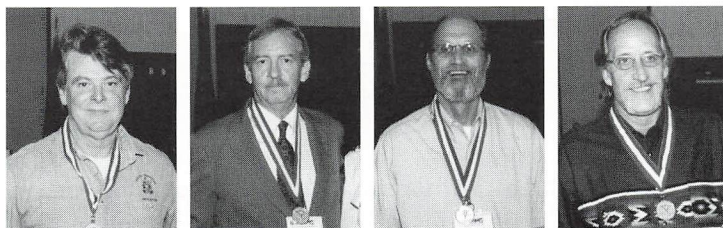
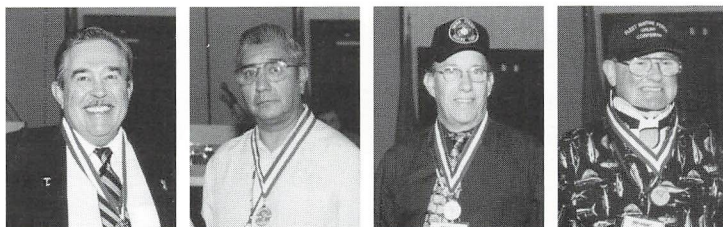
*The honored
"DOCS" march in.*



*Don "Doc" Ballard, MOH recipient, receives first "DOC"
medal from Major General Mulberry. The medal was designed
by James Wodecki.*



*Don "Doc" Ballard and Major General Mulberry award the
medal to each honoree.*



Web Briefs

Anyone out there know anyone that was part of the detail that used to fetch the supplies that were parachuted into Khe Sanh? I have old footage that I just received.

David



I got to do that.

Quiet in the DZ, but you still had to drive the deuce and a half back into the base. That sucked. Couldn't hear the incoming. I was in "C" 3rd M/T. Sure put a chill up my butt!

Semper Fi
Bill Delozer



I was in 2nd Platoon, Charlie 1/9 — we pulled drop zone security all the time. I remember our corpsman was trapped in his hole. A pallet stuck in it like a cork in a bottle. We got him out with little more than a bump on his head. I remember supplies overshooting the drop zone. If it was close enough, we went out and retrieved them. I have other stories about this, if you want to hear. I would like to see any film you have, it would bring back a lot of memories.

Don Meyer

ED NOTE: Don, let's hear the other stories. We'd love to print them.



I was on the dropping end. I would have liked to see what actually happened to the stuff.

Ray Prittie



I was with B Co, 3rd Recon. We pulled security for one drop. One parachute did not fully deploy and a pallet of peaches was scattered everywhere. Picked up a few cans and ate so many, I got sick. Never ate too many Ham and Mofos though.

Lee Upshaw



I was with HQ Btry, 1/13. I remember one time when three guys jumped out of a C-130 to set up the DZ. Two of the chutes didn't open.

Jim



I was a radio operator with Hq Co Comm. 26th Marines. We provided communications at the drop zone. I remember the incident you referred to. It involved the second and third jumpers and was the direct result of the third one jumping too soon. He landed on the just opening chute of the second one, and they both became tangled and were unable to recover due to the low altitude jump.

Pat D'Amaco



I've got shots of the planes overhead, out come the crates, and the chutes open. Then, there's footage of some that missed the drop zone — crates and chutes in a rice paddy. One of the guys in the video has a big red/black tattoo on his right arm near the shoulder. There are a few black Marines helping him. The slate shown in the credits has the title, "Khe Sanh, re-supply." The dates vary...March 7, 1968, Feb. 26-27, 1968. The credits also give a "Rodriquez" credit for making the film. Anyone know who he is? I'll be looking at more of it tonight at work...will keep you posted.

David



No, I don't know anyone, if you do reach anyone, thank them for that parachute they let me "borrow" back on about 14 Dec 67. Kilo had the western end of the lines back then (facing out to the drop zone), and in our small tent we were snug and warm, thanks to the parachute draped over it! Hope I'm not in the footage on the "borrow mission!"

Dennis



Funny story about my first flight into Khe Sanh as part of a supply mission for Lam Son 719...I was the navigator on a C-130 using radar to get us through the valley to the base in thick clouds. We were in contact with an Army CCT on the ground. They

advised us to watch out for "numerous helicopters in the area." Our AC told the co-pilot to call out locations of any helicopters when we broke out of the clouds. We broke out at probably below minimum landing conditions, and the co-pilot, a first lieutenant as I remember, blurted out... "THEY'RE EVERYWHERE!"

Al Wilson



I speak for all C-130 guys when I say we can't thank you guys enough. Very sincerely, Bro. Can't really put anything else into words. Hope nobody got hurt.

Ray Prittie



Those types of re-supply started back in Sept. of 67. At that time, they almost never hit the drop zone. We had to go out and get the stuff. I remember one time they even dropped some beer. We all got a ration card for 2 beers. Those that did not drink made out as they were able to sell their portion for a nice sum. Recall a lot of the cans were damaged and when you opened it up you had to be quick as the beer would spray out. Ahhh, warm beer in Khe Sanh. What could be better!

I had my two warm ones and I recall getting a little buzz. From what I can remember that was the one and only time we got it.

Gene



####! You have to love the AF. Never dropped any beer. Thousands of sand bags maybe, but no beer. Too much.

Ray Prittie

I salute all the vets with highest regards. I'm looking for anyone who was at Fire Base Henderson when it was overrun May 3, 4, or 6, 1970. My brother's name was Sgt. Michael Francis Brown. B Btry 2/11 Arty. 101st AB, Screaming Eagles. From what I have pieced together, in the spring of 1970, the 101st began a strong effort to prepare ARVN forces to take over operations of the 101st Airborne.

At that time their base of operation was Firebase Henderson. The headquarters had three extra howitzers of B Battery 2/11, which would be taken from Firebase Bastogne. My brother was working one of those howitzers. The occupation of Henderson (a former Marine Corps firebase) was near Khe Sanh. Does anybody remember Sgt. Michael Francis Brown or the action that went on early morning of May 6, 1970? If so, just respond:

Spiriteagle77@aol.com

Gregory Brown

Sgt. Ronald Norman Bloom

I am in contact with the family of Sgt. Ronald Norman Bloom, KIA 8/2/68, the morning of the attack on Hill 950. His family is asking for anyone who can tell what his last days were like. They need to know. Ron was on his third tour and was in E Co 2/4, 3rd Plt. He was there from May 68. They have one account of the fight from a Jack Perritt, but would like to hear from others. Thanks, brothers!

I was in-country with Ron for the first two tours.

Semper Fi

Gary

Safe S####ter

Just before the siege, Col. Lownds made every unit near the COC erect some type of decoy antenna to confuse the NVA gunners. In B Co 3rd Recon, we added a pole about 20 ft. tall with the bottom of a 55-gallon drum lid with holes poked in it to the nice 3-holer the Seabees built for us. Our entire company area was blown all to hell, but the s####ter withstood the whole time of the Siege except for a few shrapnel holes. Small wonders.

PS: The board did the censoring not me. I called it like it was.



Leland,

I am sure we crossed paths somewhere in your area! I was in Security Platoon and we lived right next to you on the right flank. I remember all the antennas but never knew some were decoys! I was in

a group at VA with a RAY SAXTON from your outfit. You remember him? Take care,

Jdel

861-A, Feb 5, 1968

This morning at 3am, 34 years ago, I became a man after being in my first combat. To All My Brothers that were killed that morning...Rest in Peace...Semper Fi



Amen, brother. We on 861 could only watch and wait. Along with 1/21, this day is one that I, too, will never forget. You guys did one hell of a job. I regret that we lost so many friends on 861 and 861A. Their memory still burns strong within. God bless them all.

Semper Fi "Shu"



It is hard to believe that 34 years have passed since that morning of 05 Feb 68 when the NVA attempted to take Hill 861A away from us. The NVA paid dearly for their efforts, but so did we. For all those brave young Marines who fought so gallantly and gave their lives, I want to say they will forever be remembered as long as the rest of us who fought alongside them remain on this earth. God Bless Them All.

Tom Eichler

E Co 2/26 Hill 861A

David "Bulldog" Smith

I do not know how to contact David Smith. I thought someone on this board might be able to get this question to him. When I first arrived at Khe Sanh, one of my first encounters was with a crazy sergeant named David Smith. After leaving Khe Sanh I stepped on a land mine and ended up at a naval hospital in Corpus Christi, Texas. While there, I ran into Sgt. Smith again. Bulldog, are you the same guy?



No, he is not. Bulldog, the President of the KSV, is a retired United States Army Colonel. He was a Major when at Khe Sanh. His picture is in a recent issue of the *American Legion* magazine.

Photos of Mike Co. 3/9

I need help finding photos for my uncle. His name is Kenny Kanengieter. He was with M CO 3/9 (67-68). I don't know which platoon. He was a L/Cpl. and is from Little Rock, Iowa. He was at Con Thien and on 881s at Khe Sanh. They were shipped to (Okinawa?) afterwards to re-man. He said a photographer did a story in *LIFE* magazine during Con Thien, but his photo was not used. Any help or info you can give would be greatly appreciated. God bless you all.

Deek



Kilo 3/9 went to Okinawa in Feb 67. Mike may have been there at the same time or later. Kilo was also at Hill 881 in April 67, at Con Thien in Spring/Summer 67, on operations in or around Khe Sanh June/early July 68 and at Con Thien for an operation on July 7, 1968. Mike, Lima, Kilo, and India worked together while in VN so they would have been nearby Kilo. These are some general dates. Kilo, Mike, Lima, H&S, and some of India 3/9 and 2/12 will be having a reunion this summer in Orlando. Go to Gomer's web page for more info or to post info. <http://www.blueridge.net/mpyle>

Ray Felle

Kilo Company 3/9/3 12/67-8/68

Kilo Company Archive Officer 2001-2002



I was with M 3/9 in 1967 until Dec. 1968. I was also wounded at Con Thien in July 1968. I have no photos but if your uncle wants to write me, tell him I will be happy to talk to him.

Semper Fi

John Bosley

FAC Picked Up Wounded Airmen While Being Mortared

To anyone out there. On or around January 68, my dad, a forward air controller, landed at Khe Sanh and picked up a wounded airman who had superficial wounds. He was mortared while taxiing in. After he parked the 02 aircraft, a mortar landed close to it and it drifted into a K loaded that was idling by the aircraft. It didn't do much damage and after Dad located the airman, he taxied out while being mortared the whole time until he got the hell out of there. Does anyone remember this incident? Please reply if you witnessed this event. Anything at all will be helpful as I'm in the final quest to get the DFC my father was promised for this incident. But due to the fog of war, he didn't get it. Please respond. Any bit of info will be helpful. Thanks.

Steve Smith SGT. USAF, 68-72
C/O Robert C. Smith, covey 150, Danang 67-68



I'm not sure if I was contacted by you before, I was evacuated on 26 Jan 68 before noon — probably not too long after fog lifted and we started getting sporadic mortar shells. The plane, a C-130, I think, was shot at coming in and out of Khe Sanh, not sure if any other wounded were on board. Seems we landed at Phu Bai or somewhere like that near the ocean. I was Army though. My wounds were not very serious, was returned to my unit a month later.

Larry



Larry,

Yes, I talked to you. It probably wasn't you he picked up, because he was flying an 02 aircraft. Thanks anyway for writing back and if you hear anything, let me know.

Steve Smith C/O covey 150.

Looking for George Lundstrum

George, I'm looking for anyone in ATC at Khe Sanh during January or February 1968, concerning a

flight by a Forward Air Controller, who was called in to medevac a wounded airman or grunt. My father, covey 150, landed during a mortar attack and picked up and flew the wounded man to Phu Bai. Let me know if anyone in the Khe Sanh organization knows of this incident. Thank you,

Steve Smith, C/O Covey 150, Fac 20th Tass.

June 15, 1968

Does anyone recall any specific battles near Khe Sanh (Quang Tri) on June 15, 1968. I'm looking for Marines from H&S CO 3/4, or any other company in the vicinity who may have known LCPL Paul V. McHenry of Camp Hill, PA. He was KIA that day. He had friends.

CHAK, HUSEMAN & TRAISSER
LCPL McHenry Memorial Page

Lam Son 719 Birddog Pilots

Seeking contact with any birddog pilots stationed at Khe Sanh during operation Lam Son 719. I am writing a novel incorporating experiences of same, seeking corroborative information, especially pertaining to my wingman, Paul Bates, M.I.A. Shot down near the Rock Pile. Also seeking links to Nam fixed-wing recon websites.

Robert



Robert,
Check out:

<http://www.2ndbattalion94thartillery.com/Chas/11th10Campaign.htm>

"11th Campaign of the 2/94th artillery during Dewey Canyon II and Lam Son 719"

One 8-inch battery and three 175mm gun batteries. Along with some of the info regarding some of the 8/4 arty involved. I have incorporated officers' daily logs, fire missions, battery displacements, battalion operational reports, LZ names and map coordinates. There are a few references also to air operations, call signs from the logs, etc.

C and D battery were the last to leave the border

during the pullout. Infantry retreated around them, and they had no choice but to dig in and stay put for three days after the pullout. Infantry unit refused to go back and help them.

1/77th tanks finally broke through, three days later, to help them run the gauntlet called "Ambush Alley" back to Khe Sanh. I also would like to agree with the KSG. I think we can safely say that operation, with all the losses in men and equipment, was less than successful. The northern area was overrun in 1972 and 1975 by the NVA. One contributing factor is the operational reports that indicate that the ARVN's had no interest in the heavy artillery the 2/94th and other heavy artillery units tried to train them in and to turn over to them. They did not even want to be schooled in tactics.

If you notice in the *History Channel* accounts of the Spring offensive, they only had 105s against the heavy Russian artillery. Once the linchpin surrendered Camp Carroll, there was no overlapping artillery support for the rest of the bases. Carroll surrendered on Easter 1972 with the exception of a ARVN Marine 105 battery and they fought to the last man after the rest of the base had surrendered — some 1,800 strong. Just for your information, the guy that surrendered his troops now owns a hotel in Hue. I also have an operational report for Lam Son 719 put out by the Directorate of Operations Analysis dated 24 March 1971. Let me know what you are looking for and it may have some helpful info. Hope info will help.

Kelley
2/94th



Kelly:

You have it right. Several South Viet units disintegrated towards end of LS-719. Lots of reasons but primarily, they were way over their heads tactically. Few of those units had ever fought against regular NVA units before. They went into Laos thinking they would be handling VC in small groups as in the Delta, but found themselves up against NVA with good communication, heavy artillery, tanks, and sophisticated AA weapons. Too much for them. Officers lost their nerve, troops sensed it, and the whole house of cards came tumbling down. They lacked of any semblance of communication security. They talked in clear in Vietnamese on radios. NVA

listened, and knew everything going on. The US conceived, planned LS-719, and asked much more of the South Vietnamese than they were capable of. They'd been fighting Charlie, were simply not capable of fighting Mr. Charles, then or later. Lot more to it, including political nature of South Vietnamese officer promotions, but the US knew all that, should not have asked something so complex and dangerous of the South Vietnamese as taking on the NVA in its own back yard.



I was at LS-719 as a Marine. Did FCA (A) duty over Laos but from an Army slick. I talked to bird dogs a lot but never met them. Not very nice over Laos, bunch of AA, generally had to stay above 1,500 ft. AGL. Supporting the South Vietnamese not easy because they were not allowed to take their American advisors into Laos for US political reasons. They had no one with them who knew much about CAS and no one who could speak good English. To top it off, they had not taken any WP ammo for their mortars or artillery, so they had no good way to mark targets for CAS birds or FAC (A). The result was that CAS was generally ineffective unless FAC could see the NVA. South Vietnamese were scattered all over hell on 11 fire support bases and did not have good communication links to each other, let alone US fire support agencies. Real mess. The whole operation was poorly planned. Vietnamese, without their US advisors on the ground with them, were simply not sophisticated enough to pull off an operation that complex. In my view, they should never have been asked to try.

They had four divisions and could have simply marched them en masse into Laos. They would have been too strong that way for the NVA to mess with and would have had the advantage of interior lines and physical contact among units, so communication failings would have been less critical. That would have made air support a lot easier for US, since we'd have been bombing around one huge blob instead of between and among 11 different positions that couldn't talk to each other, or to us. Those tactics subjected them to defeat by the NVA.

That's exactly what the NVA did. It surrounded FSBs one at a time, prevented re-supply with AA and picked them off. We did our best to evacuate South Vietnamese from FSBs they couldn't hold, but in

many cases discipline broke down. As helicopters came in to pick them up, it became every man for himself. The Slicks were single-engine E models. They became overloaded, and crew chiefs had to kick Vietnamese soldiers off skids, many at high altitude, to make it airworthy. Many Vietnamese soldiers died that way. It was ugly.

The problem was expecting South Vietnamese, with limited experience in fire support coordination (which US advisors had always done for them before), limited communication, no experience in maneuvering large units, and severe language barrier with US support elements, to pull off an operation that complicated, in real Indian country, which Laos west of Khe Sanh surely was. What a catastrophe. Worse, thereafter, most South Vietnamese and the four best divisions that went into Laos had no confidence they could beat the NVA. The long-term result was disintegration of the South Vietnamese in the face of NVA assaults during the '72 Easter offensive and the '75 final assault.

Looking for a Marine

My brother, Joe Harrigan, B Co. 3rd Tanks, 3rd Marines, is a Khe Sanh vet. He's looking for a high school buddy who was also at Khe Sanh, Stephen M. Jenkins. His last known residence was in Louisiana. Any help will be greatly appreciated.

God bless and Semper Fidelis.
Suz Harrigan



Suz,

Give my regards to Joe. Hope all is well. Sometime during the Siege, they moved a tank directly behind our position on the north perimeter. I was awoke the next morning by what I thought was the smell of fresh brewed coffee. I went to investigate (and scrounge) and found my high school buddy Joe behind the wheel. What a great feeling under the worst of circumstances. I think I've got a photo of Joe standing next to his tank. Please give me Joe's phone number, or ask him to call me in Arizona at (520) 399-2857 or (520) 370-3020. Thanks for tracking me down.



Suz,

Your brother Joe tried to reach me last night but missed me. The most recent directory I have listed the following information for Stephen M Jenkins' address: 703 Dogwood Dr., Long Beach, MS, 39560-3806, Phone 601-864-3020. Please pass on my best to Joe and his family.

Fred



Thanks, Fred! You guys are the BEST!

Suz

PFC Charles Cecil Davis

I posted a message in your guest book. I am trying to find information on my husband's best friend who was KIA on May 3, 1967. He was killed on Hill 881N. He belonged to Echo Co. 2/3 1st Platoon. He was very short, had dark brown hair and wore black glasses. He had a tattoo of his name (Cecil) on the top of his left forearm. He was from Bethany, MO. Al Lyon sent me a picture of Echo Company that was taken in Okinawa sometime in March or April, before the Company was sent back to the hill battles of Khe Sanh. If any of you have that picture; he was on the front row kneeling. He was 10th from the left or 4th from the right. He has on his glasses and is holding his cap on his knee. If any of you have any information, please get in touch with us. Thanks.

My Uncle Died on Hill 881

To all of you Hotel Company Hill 881 survivors: My uncle was a member of Hotel Company, and he died in the battle for Hill 881. I am very interested in getting in contact with anyone who knew him or remembers him. My uncle's name was Frank Roth from Philadelphia, PA. Anyone with info on him can contact me at pjpatvir@prodigy.net

Thank you,
Joseph



I was a Marine Sgt. Squad Leader and saw action several times around the Khe Sanh area including

Hill 881. You will have to be more specific on your uncle's name, month and year when he was there. I was in the Khe Sanh area from Jan thru June 67 with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion 9th Marines. We were known as the "Walking Dead." You name a hot spot in the Nam and we were there. Hope to hear from you.

(Apache for "until we meet again")

Eddie Bradford

My brother died on June 8th, 1968. He was a LCPL who died in Quang Nam, (Danang) South Viet Nam. Please, if any one has any information on him, please let me know.

Khe Sanh KIA List

Sandy Shull was KIA 16 Feb 1968 while serving as a radio operator with 1/9. He was assigned to an 81 Mortar FO team, and I do not know which line company. He was assigned from H&S Co. His serial # was 2327104. His company was near the rock quarry at Khe Sanh when he was killed. Can some one tell me how to get his name listed with other 1/9 Marines killed at Khe Sanh, and does anyone remember Sandy?

Larry Deason Sgt USMC 3/12, 1/4 Khe Sanh Vet

Final Formation

Thirty-four years ago today, just about this time. Some of the finest and bravest men I have ever had the pleasure to know met their Maker just a few clicks outside of the base. Lt. Donald Jacques and most of the Bravo 3rd Platoon were ambushed and killed that fateful day. Please take a moment, and reflect on these Fine Marines, who gave their all that day. God Bless them!!

Semper Fi!



Hi Doc,

I don't know you personally because I was in C-130s. My deepest respects go out to all you Jarheads

who went into harm's way big time and did the impossible in a way that people today can't even begin to comprehend, let alone appreciate. Like there was ever really any doubt? Only in the hearts and minds of the media, I guess. I flew into and over and around that god awful place so many times and thanked the powers that be so much, because I knew that if I got back to Danang, my day was over and I had a hot shower, hot chow, as much beer as I wanted to drink, and, a clean rack to sleep in. I am really in awe of you folks. You will forever live in my heart as the greatest heroes ever. In my mind, you even beat out the Trojans at the pass. Even though I had been flying in-country since Feb '66 and had already gotten messed up big time, the 1st battle of Khe Sanh and Dong Ha and the Siege marked a stark turning point in my life. I cannot believe it was that long ago.

Semper Fi



Doc,

Jan 21st and Feb 25th are two dates that stay in my mind and will be there forever. God Bless You.

Semper-Fi

Big John



We all thank God you made it back that day Doc. I hope I'll see you in Texas for the reunion. All the best!!! Love to you and the family.

Jim Hebron

No Subject

There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about B Company 1/26, and Third platoon. I was on in-country R&R seeing my brother when the ambush happened. I feel I should have been there. I knew a few from boot camp. I miss you guys so much. I went to the Traveling Wall and read your names. I laid my arm and my head upon your names and told you I was so sorry for not being there. And then, for an instance, I thought I heard you say do a chicken dance. You know what? I did do that chicken dance. I smiled but that was for an instant. I will always love you guys and you will always be part of me.

May God be with you.

Semper Fi
Shortround



Don't beat yourself up about it, Shortround, you did what you could. God had other plans for you that day. We all wish things turned out differently.

God Bless
Gene



Shortround and others,
I, too, was one of those who God took from harm's way when better men fell. On 21 Jan 68, I was married to my dear wife and companion of 34 years, Ann. On that day, a fellow Marine and hometown boy LCPL Kendel Randel Jones of Kilo 3/26 fell. Others that I knew — some well, some briefly, some as only a glance in passing — fell. I have no idea why the Lord, My God saw fit to spare this clown when better men fell. I will always remember them and tell of their sacrifice.

Semper Fi, Brothers
Jim



My apology on a mistype. Randal's first name was Clifton not Kendal. I do not know what name he was called by those that knew him as a Marine. This came to mind as I was thinking about him as I drove to town this morning. I remember that there was some discussion of him being called Clifton either in person or by a letter written by a Marine around the time of his funeral and an enquiry. I believe it was a member of the family asking if I had seen Randel while I was at Khe Sanh. To my knowledge, I did not see him while there. He was one of Ann's students the first year she taught school. She mentioned that he was a charmer and that almost every day when he came to class he would be chewing gum and she would ask him to deposit it in the trashcan. Fond, silly memories maybe. Randal's daddy or granddaddy, maybe both knew him as Clifton at home, thus Randel was called Randel there.



Looking For...

I feel very intrusive about my request, especially after reading Doc's last post re: "34 years ago..." However, my brother was there, he was in 1/3 and 1/9, and, as he told me once, any other platoon that needed him. He was strictly involved in the Hill battles. He was on 861, 881S and 881N. He was there from '67 to '68. I do not know what companies, nor do I know the exact months he was there. He finished his basic training at Parris Island in 1966, and then went to Camp Lejeune and shortly after to Vietnam. He was trained to be a machinist — AMTRACs? But he always referred to himself as a Grunt — with pride, I might say! He was called Bob or Bobby and I remember writing to one of his buddies called "The Greek!" Anyone remember him? He's not doing so well, he won't talk about his tour, nor will he give me much more info than this. Any connection to anyone who either knew him or was with his unit would be so helpful. I know this is a random search for the history of a living vet, but I want to know, for my own peace of mind, his story. Thanks in advance for any info or suggestions.

Sincerely,
Patty (his "Li'l Sis")



Patty, he is one of us. I, too, was there for some of the fighting during that time with 1/26. I have found it helpful to return to this page often and realize that I am not alone in my thoughts about that time. If you want to learn more about that period in time, a good place to start is this website, scroll down on the home page and click on the "Hill Battles 67." There is a lot of good information there. He is truly blessed to have you as a "Li'l Sis." You'll find a bunch of great guys who post here.

Tell him Semper Fi for me.

Gene



Gene,

Thank you. I took your advice and spent most of last night and into the wee hours of this morning reading "The Hill Battles 67." It took a box of Kleenex just to get through it, but I am very glad that I did. I feel so different now. I see why my

brother doesn't want to "share" with me. I think I understand now...why would he want to re-live his worst living nightmare! He said he really doesn't want to see or talk to guys in his company. When I asked him why, he said, "because I can't look at them without seeing my brother's that didn't make it." After reading last night, I can now understand. I've been so invasive in his personal life re: the war. I know now that I have no right. You know my intentions were good, but it's probably time to back off. I will find out his company and his rank, this I can do through records. The rest...is his.

Thanks so much for referring me to that site, and I recommend it to everyone who has unanswered questions about a loved one who served in Vietnam to read it! Gene, I thank God for finding this website...it really does give me peace of mind and comfort. Because all of you are my family...my "big brother" is here in you all!

Thank you, eternally...

Patty



Patty,

So glad I was able to help with your quest for information. I, too, re-live some of those moments on a daily basis. We truly are a band of brothers — only those who served together in combat can truly understand. Marines, I think, are especially bonded. Sometimes when we face our feelings head on, only then can we truly begin to live with it. I would not give up on him. Just continue to understand, it may be good for him to seek some help, so that he can come to grips with the horrors we all saw and experienced. If there is any way I can help, send an e-mail. Maybe if he talks to one of us, it will help. Who else would understand better? Thanks for your kind words, and I am truly happy I was able to help you get a better understanding. I, for one, will pray that he finds peace. I think that in understanding your brother's feelings you understand all Vietnam combat veterans. I thank you for that as well.

God Bless, Gene

ED NOTE: Gene, why not share some of your daily "moments" in an article for our "other" publication...i.e., this magazine.



Patty:

Bobby is lucky to have a "Lil Sis" like you. I had four of them to help me fight to keep my sanity, although some will argue that I lost the battle. :-) :-) :-) Hang in there with him. Tell him we all said, WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN. SEMPER FIDELIS!!!



Hello Anonymous,

Just when I was about to give up hope...your short but very encouraging message gets me fueled again. Thanks. I doubt very much that your sisters lost any battle with you! And I will pass on the message to my brother.

Patty

Info for 3/26 Marines, Kilo Co. Hill 861

Hey brothers, I'm trying to put some pieces together and need info on personnel rosters, names of the operations for our outfit H&S Co. and 3/26 Kilo Co. Also need info on all of the citations we received for the battles at Khe Sanh including the hill battles. If anyone can help with info or direct me to the source, please e-mail me. Thanks.

Fast Eddie

3/26 KILO CO.

106'S & Front Grunt.

EEKJR10148@AOL.COM



I sure would like to see your roster when it's done. I went through BIS with a guy that wound up in 106s, on 881 South. I graduated first in class, and got stuck in 60mm, while he was riding around on a mule with a 106. Go figure. I can't remember names, but I'm sure I'd remember him if I saw it!

Semper Fi

Glenn A. Valentine

K CO. 3/26

1/5 Cav, Khe Sanh, 1968

Looking for anyone with HHC, 1/5 Cav, B Co, 1/5 or other companies of 1/5 and/or 1/77 Artillery who

were in Khe Sanh in 1968.

A Weekend of Brotherhood

Hey Bro's,

Once again the feisty redhead and I were on the road. This time it was to attend the 10th annual Vietnam Vets Motorcycle Club's party and campout in Reed's Gap, PA. During the 3 days of the event, approximately 3,000 Nam Vets, their families and just plain old civilians lived in a state of brotherhood very similar to our reunions. I met many old Grunts and we were accepted as if I was a member of their organization, which I am not. I was made to feel right at home. One in particular was an old Lima/3/3 grunt named "Hatchet." Yeah, we all had those silly nicknames. We hit it off right away. He was in Khe Sanh during the hill fights and was there to take Hill 861, where I spent my time during the Tet offensive. So, we had something really in common. I turned him on to our "Club," and I'm hoping he will benefit from our brotherhood. He had one too many beers on Friday night and his brothers, most of them Airborne, said that he was done for the night as he sat sort of semi-conscious at the table. They bet me a beer that I couldn't get him up, which I promptly accepted. I moved over beside "Hatchet" and very softly began to sing the Marine Hymn in his ear. Well, by the time I made it to Tripoli, we were both standing at full attention and singing our guts out.

Needless to say, I won the beer and in the process made a very close friend, or I should say, friends. Kind of like old Joe Amodeo at the reunion. Anyway, it was a great time had by all. Met a bunch of good people and felt all warm and tingly inside — as well as perfectly safe inside their wire.

Wayne Shumaker

PTSD— Post Television Supreme Disappointment

by Joseph Olszewski

Having been introduced to the KSV in 1999, I still feel like a "rookie" in this organization. I attended the 2000 San Diego Reunion and a few days of the

2001 Chicago Reunion. Since 1999, I have also met several members of the organization via the Internet who I only had a brief relationship with in '67/'68. Some I remember vividly, while others remember me while I have no recollection of them whatsoever.

One common denominator, however, is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). I saw it at both reunions, I read it between the lines in many e-mails and I read it on the KSV message board every day. What bothers me the most about it is that we were given no warning or training about it in our pre-Vietnam training programs. To be honest, I never heard of it until the 1980s.

During the 50s I remember seeing World War II veterans on Chicago streets selling newspapers while shaking like a tree in a windstorm. My father, who did not serve in WWII, would tell me it was "shell shock." I assumed from that description and various newspaper articles of the era that it meant a condition a veteran had due to being exposed to constant shelling or experiencing heavy casualties such as on D-Day. Most of my uncles served in WWII and they did not have shell shock, so I assumed it was restricted to those who suffered terrible combat experiences. I did have a next door neighbor in Chicago named Barney who was a WWI Dough Boy. He lived alone his whole life, had a dog as his only friend and drank every night. He worked hard every day, but I noticed that nobody ever visited him. The rest of the neighborhood had a casual relationship with him, even in an era before air conditioning when everybody sat outside after supper to escape the heat. I remember him telling stories about WWI and how he thought the military was good for a young man. I always liked Barney, but he hated me because I was always bouncing rubber balls off his roof or bouncing a basketball on my parent's backyard patio. His dog even hated me.

What I have a problem understanding is why is PTSD so common amongst three million or so Vietnam Veterans when most of us just humped patrols all day and sat on ambushes all night? Certainly, being thrust into a dark jungle after spending seventeen or eighteen years on the lighted streets of New York, Pittsburgh, Chicago and Los Angeles was a shock, but enough to cause PTSD? Certainly, being surrounded by snakes, tigers, tarantulas and water buffaloes after raising Skippy or Butkus for ten years was a shock, but enough to cause PTSD?

Lastly, the occasional VC and/or NVA certainly was more exciting than facing the Taylor Street Dukes or the Blackstone Rangers, but enough to cause PTSD? Certainly, thirteen months of service was nothing compared to three, four or five years that WWII veterans served without any understanding of when they were going home.

So why all this PTSD amongst us? In my opinion, the answer is TELEVISION. We were the first American generation to experience television when it was introduced in the early 50s. When TV first arrived, what was the biggest show? **World War II**. Every night it was either "Victory at Sea," "The Knights of The Hudson," "Annapolis," "The Long Gray Line," "12 O'Clock High" or "The Big Picture." By the late 50s all the WWII movies began to hit the tube. The John Wayne movies began to materialize and who can ever forget Little John, Frenchy and Sarge in the Friday night Combat TV series? All those shows had one common theme: War was glamorous and those who fought were heroes. As young ten-, eleven- and twelve-year-olds, we watched every show and swallowed it like it was lemonade.

Even grade school in the 50s had a lot to do with PTSD in the 70s, 80s and 90s. I vividly remember Catholic nuns telling us how good we were going to live compared to our parents, since the Depression and all the wars were behind us. Thus, our lives would be carefree and prosperous.

By the early 60s, the shocks started to hit us. First, it was the Kennedy assassination when everybody said "Hey, that's not suppose to happen here." Second, it was the overcrowding of high schools and colleges. We said "Hey, how come I'm not rich yet like Sister Anne promised?" Third, the mid-60s arrived, LBJ tapped us on the shoulder and said, "Son, I got a job for you in a filthy place full of disease, poverty like you've never seen, corruption and a whole bunch of folks who won't like you bad guys." Somewhere deep down inside all of us, something erupted. Even worse, once we arrived at that "filthy place" we were shocked to learn that the AK47 was superior to the M16. The VC/NVA walked around at night when we couldn't see our hands at arm's length. Sleep deprivation was the national pastime. And, nobody in any country liked us. We also saw what a dead body looked like for the first time and our response was: "John Wayne

didn't look like that on TV." Then we came home, and I don't need to elaborate on that experience.

So there you have it...my theory...simply, an amateur opinion. Certainly, not required reading by VA shrinks. All I hope to accomplish is to introduce something new and hopefully 200, 300 years from now, the archivists of that era will find this article on a computer disk someplace. Hopefully, they'll say: "Hey, this is different and it fits the puzzle of what happened to three million Americans."

Many people will disagree with me, but my answer is why do so many Vietnam Veterans have this condition when so many of them never saw combat? It's simple. We were overly impressed by war via television and when the "real deal" materialized it was very, very different. I have a cousin who was an Army Private who did nothing at Long Binh for thirteen months except sort mail. He has PTSD so bad you could cut it with a chain saw. His wife died at the age of 40 from cancer. He drove a car through a neighbor's living room window and he's been in and out of drug and alcohol clinics. He never saw combat. I've often wondered how much combat Barney witnessed?

Remember, you read it here first:

Joseph Olszewski

Morro Bay, California

Nicholas Romanetz wrote:

Ernie:

I am contacting you on the subject to bounce this off of you. The Marine Corps is currently having the Heritage Foundation raise \$25 million to build a Marine Corps Museum at Quantico. The purpose is to preserve the history of the Corps through the museum. My idea, and you are the first to hear it along with Kaheny who gets a CC on this, is to have representatives from the KSV — possibly John Kaheny, myself, Larry McCartney — contact the Foundation and suggest that working through the KSV, we could provide items, pictures, etc. about Khe Sanh. The idea is somewhat self-serving in that we make sure we and Khe Sanh are well represented in the museum. Perhaps the museum directors would welcome input but not give us any more space than other outfits, campaigns, battles, etc. In contacting you, I thought that the newsletter would be a great

place to communicate this information with the membership as well as providing an address if anyone wants to make a financial donation to the fundraising for the museum.

It would be appropriate for me to contact the officers of KSV to explain this proposal and seek permission to use the newsletter/website to solicit money and personal items for donation to the museum and to get involved on our behalf. Before I pursue this idea, I await input from yourself and Kaheny. By the way, the Director of the museum is retired Colonel John Ripley, author and key player in the book "The Bridge at Dong Ha." He is an RVN-era grunt and may see some merit in this endeavor. Since this project will take several years to complete, we have the luxury of time to contact the officers/membership and consider this proposal. I personally would donate my 1:50,000 laminated map with embedded red dust and thrust points on it. Also, the aerial photo of KSCB that was on the back page of one of the newsletters is at the Navy Museum. Ray sent it there, but Kaheny has a pretty good copy as does a retired Lt. Col. I know at Lejeune. I would appreciate it if you and John would provide input to this proposal so I can decide if I should move forward with it.

Nick Romanetz

C/1/26



Bro's

**Names appear out of the past,
For hours my heart beats fast.
First comes the joy I've found,
some one who was once lost!
Then memories flood my mind,
again I see the flash and feel the blast.**

**Depression and pain I feel,
an emptiness in my chest.
What happened to the rest?
Where is Frenchy, Coffey, Crow, and Cann?
Marines from Recon and 1-26 move
through my mind, double time.**

**Rockets, mortars, artillery blast,
sand bags seep red, blood mixed with red
clay. Holes in the runway, must replace,
sections ripped to shreds.**

**I'm caught in the past,
nowhere to run, can't hide.
See the flash?
Feel the blast?**

**Who's in that bag, zipped foot to head?
Is it me, or one of my Bro?**

**My dream is over, my eyes were never shut.
It's over, it's done,
I'm home at last!**

**Sam L. Messer
CBMU-301
DET-B SEABEES**

Marine Corps Heritage Foundation

"The mission of the Marine Corps Heritage Center is to create a place where all Marines — past, present and future — and especially the American people, can come to view the history of our great Nation through the eyes of Marines."

I share with my fellow Khe Sanh Veterans information about an exciting undertaking of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation. In the opening sentence, I quote the mission statement concerning a new and exciting project. The foundation is in the process of raising \$25 million to build a state-of-the-art Marine Corps Museum. Members of "The Board" include nearly every former Commandant and Sergeants Major of the Marine Corps as well as notable former Marines of every rank. Some of these men are successful businessmen, politicians, etc., but many are "regular guys" like many of us. Interestingly enough, several members are Khe Sanh vets. Also, a number of notable businessmen — not former Marines — have joined in the effort to build the museum.

The status of the project is as follows: Land has been secured where the museum will be built; a world-class architectural firm has been hired to design a museum that will rival the greatest museums of the world; an official design concept has already been approved by the Commandant of the Marine Corps and ground-breaking for the museum is tentatively scheduled for April 29, 2003.

An excerpt from a letter written by Charles C. Krulak, 31st Commandant of the United States Marine Corps and Co-Chairman, Heritage Center Group, states: "...we have selected...our exhibit designer, and we are working diligently with them to ensure that we will have three Main Exhibits — covering World War II, Korea, and Vietnam — displayed on opening day. Using the newest techniques to help museum visitors better understand the subject matter, each exhibit will include an immersion experience. The World War II exhibit will feature Iwo Jima...the Korean War exhibit will feature the Chosin Reservoir...and the Vietnam era exhibit will feature Khe Sanh."

I have been in touch with the foundation and am in the process of talking to a museum curator to discuss the need for memorabilia/artifacts for display in the Khe Sanh exhibit. Once information is available, you would have the opportunity to donate items to the museum that they may be interested in using. As of this writing, the curator is overseas for several weeks but I am told that he has an idea of the types of items he is interested in using in the display. My main concern is that if you send something and they do not use it, that it be returned to you. What a great opportunity to contribute to such a worthwhile endeavor! Since the completion of the museum is several years away, I plan to communicate with the membership through this newsletter, and possibly, the web site home page concerning my proposal.

Lastly, if you would like to make a tax-exempt donation towards the building of the museum, you may send your donation to: The Marine Corps Heritage Center, PO Box 998, Quantico, VA 22134-0998. Note that the contribution is for the museum. Large contributions such as \$28,000 from the 9th Special Basic Class (donated at their 50th reunion) and \$25,000 from Edson's Raiders Association, veterans of the First Marine Raider Battalion, have been received as well as countless individual contributions. I am personally excited about the Marine Corps' selection of Khe Sanh to be highlighted in the museum. I will keep the membership informed of the progress of this endeavor in future writings.

Semper Fi....

Nick Romanetz

2ndPlt/C/1/26

Khe Sanh Members, We Need Your Help

We need you help ASAP! A "thank you" book is being put together by people such as you who were either treated by a medical personnel or served as a medical personnel and want to share your experiences. Women and men such as Don "Doc" Ballard (MOH) and our corpsman in Vietnam deserve to be recognized in a book dedicated to them for their selflessness while doing their jobs. They made it possible

for so many of us to return home to our families. Please read the following two-page brochure, make copies to pass it on to others. Send us your testimonials ASAP.

We thank you in advance for helping to make this appreciation book a reality!

Semper Fi
Chuck Wright, Founder
www.medicalwarmemorial.org



National Medical War Memorial and Youth Education Center

Chuck Wright, Founder, 452-0606
www.medicalwarmemorial.org

Dear Veteran and American Citizen,

Are you here today because a military medical person took the time to treat you in your moment of need?

Millions of people were born and are alive today because the military medical corps took care of their parents, grandparents, and other relations. From the Revolutionary War of 1775 to the present time, there have been 1,541,452 men and women who were wounded in action (WIA). Those who were treated by the medical corps were able to return home to their families and friends. Some begat 4, 5, or even more children! If you consider that these children had children — there are most certainly 7 to 10 million offspring conceived by someone who was WIA. Without the noble work of the military medical corps, they would never have been born! They, too, owe their lives to the military medical corps.

Your chance to make a timeless tribute has arrived! We want you to share your story of survival by honoring the selfless deeds of medical personnel during wartime. Your account will be compiled in a Military Medical Appreciation Book. The profits from this book will be used to fund the National

Medical Memorial and Youth Education Center, Inc. but as a contributor, you will receive your copy of this commendable hardback book free! As a student of William Jewell College, an intern for the memorial project, and the granddaughter of two veterans, I encourage YOU to share your appreciation without delay.

Today is your time to thank the medical personnel who saved your life and the lives of many others. Today you can contribute to the extraordinary appreciation book that will educate and inspire many generations to come. The brochure [not attached] will explain the details of the Military Medical Appreciation Book and the mission of the National Combat Medical Memorial and Youth Education Center. For more information regarding the Military Medical Appreciation Book log onto our website, www.medicalwarmemorial.org. Please do not hesitate to contact Christy Kleinbeck or the founder, Chuck Wright, at (816) 452-0606 with additional questions or comments. We need your help! Please send in your stories A.S.A.P.!

Sincerely,
Christy Keinbeck
Public Relations Intern
kleinbeckc@william.jewell.edu

Copy and fill out questionnaire on next page

Copy and fill out this questionnaire:

National Medical War Memorial and Youth Education Center

Name: _____
(Last) (First) (MI)

Address:

(City) (State) (Zip Code)

Phone: (.....)..... Email Address:.....

I am a (check one):

- ☐ Veteran (WIA) ☐ Relative of a veteran (WIA)
- ☐ Veteran of Medical Corps ☐ Relative of veteran who served in the
- ☐ Medical Corps

Name of Veteran (if a relative is contributing the story):.....

Military Serial Number:.....

Military Branch/ Years Served/ Rank: _____

Example: Cpl. Jerry T. Jolly
U.S.M.C. 1950-1951
1st Marines, 1st Division
H Co., 1st Platoon

Veteran's Family Information: (Please list number)

Children: _____ Grandchildren: _____ Great-Grandchildren: _____

Did a military medical person save your life or one of your blood relatives? Were you born because your father, mother, or grandparents were helped and able to return to the US to have a family. If you are thankful for your life, or that of a relation, you are encouraged to write an appreciation story.

Please share your appreciation here: (Space is provided on back or simply attach typed story.)

Refer to brochure for information! Remember:

Should be 300-500 words. Please send A.S.A.P.

- Receive your free Military, Medical Appreciation book when your story is accepted and the book is published!
- Please attach photographs if possible. (Pictures will be returned if you provide a self-addressed stamped envelope!)

Confessions of a Tree Hugger

by Bob McLane

In front of me, a huge oak leaned over like a old woman pulling on a stubborn weed. I was happy to see that the huge tree was still healthy and strong. High among the sprawling limbs lay the ruins of an old tree house. The rotting boards nailed there years ago are warped and splintered, but they hold firm as I climb up into the remains of what once was a mighty fortress. From the lofty shelter of this natural hideout my young cousins and I had held off many a determined posse of fearless lawmen. We never surrendered. We never ran. We kept fighting until they were all dead, or it was time for supper.

The sight of a young man sitting up in an old tree house must have looked strange to the long distance truck drivers passing by, but I didn't care. This time the fight was for real. I had received orders from the United States Marine Corps to report to Camp Pendelton to begin the final training that I would get before leaving for Vietnam. I wanted to go on sitting in the big old tree forever, at least until the ##### war was over. I decided that I wasn't going to come down until I had a plan that I was absolutely, one hundred per cent certain would bring me back alive.

I went over every lesson my cousins and I had learned from our many summers as desperadoes. Keep your head down. Listen up. I heard my cousins warn me once more to keep my eyes open for the subtle signs of another attack. No matter what, we all had to be brave. No one wanted to be remembered as a coward. I would rather not be remembered at all. The ones who were remembered were the ones who didn't come back. There were a lot of different ways to say someone had been killed. "He didn't make it" was the most common way Marines in Vietnam told each other about a new casualty. During the Civil War, Mama would tell her neighbors about the dreaded letter from the War Department by saying her son had "fallen." She tried to make it look like getting killed in a war was no worse than taking a header down a flight of stairs.

It made no difference to the undertaker. I had no interest in needing his services anytime soon. Most of my thoughts that morning were not making sense, but neither did a lot of lessons I learned in the Marines. They didn't have to make sense. They just had to work. Finally, I concluded that God really did

like me and wanted to keep me around for a long time. With any luck I was going to be good. I was a member in good standing of one of the finest fighting outfits in the world, next to my cousins. I decided it was safe to come down. I picked up an acorn from underneath the big oak tree and slipped it into my pocket. I walked back to the white frame house my grandfather had built, filled with the confidence of my newfound faith. I felt good about the plan I had chosen.

I sat down to an old-fashioned country meal. My grandmother avoided looking at me as we started to eat. I could see the worry in her eyes. I told a joke to break the tension. No one laughed. "Don't worry, I'm coming back from this thing. I guarantee it. She put down a pitcher of tea and looked at me. "Of course you are," she said.

Gunner, I hope this letter finds you and your family in good health. As I look on top of my television set, there sits one single object — a copy of **Red Clay**. As I read the simple words, I remember days long gone. Some of those memories are etched deep in my soul, some make me think and some make me grin. It affects me every day, good and bad.

I still sleep with the lights on in my house. I still dream of those past moments and run from my bed to the living room, hands covering my head, waiting for the loud burst. There are some nights when I cannot remember the dream. Thanks for small favors. So many memories of men whose names I cannot recall, and most, just by their nicknames. I really try to remember, but do I really dare?

I am sitting here drinking a cup of coffee contemplating whether I should go to the reunion in Dallas, Texas, which is only four hours from my house. If I do, I may have to confront people and memories of the past. How will I feel?

I live by myself, but I am not alone. I wait until sunrise before I read **Red Clay**, so there will be no interference. I feel the magazine demands that of me. When I look at the magazine on the television, I wonder, "Why would a man I hardly remember send me such a wonderful gift?" It simply reads, "MERRY CHRISTMAS, Larry McCartney (MGYS-GT)"

PS — I have a small pile of sand sitting in my

backyard with a shovel standing in it. People ask. I just look. Those who know will understand.

L/CPL Bill Hubbard
E Co 2/26 2nd PLT
Hill 861A
Semper Fi

Dear Tom,

Thank you for the "Life Member Certificate" and the membership card. Very impressive.

Khe Sanh was a defining time and place in my life. I spent over five months recovering from wounds sustained on 30 Mar 68 from incoming mortar rounds. I am grateful to be alive, very proud and humbled when the Marine Corps awarded me the Navy Cross.

I still have physical limitations but have learned to live with the pain. I have also learned to cope with PTSD in the last year. I am also grateful to have found God's grace, which has become more evident. I sadly had to watch my friend, Billy Lake, B Co 1/26, Weapons Platoon, succumb to cancer about four months ago. The friendships from Khe Sanh can be joyful, lasting, and painful. If you have a directory, I would love to have a copy to find old friends. I do not know much about the Khe Sanh Veterans association, so I would appreciate any help.

Ken Korkow
B Co 1/26 Wpns Plt

Hi Tom,

I served with SOG as a team leader of a spike team. The team consisted of six Montagnards (Bru), and Sgt. Ambrose, the staff radio operator. I just recently learned he suffered a fatal heart attack. I am also a former Marine, 1956-1957, who served in the artillery (105s) at 29 Palms California.

I do not like to repeat "Old War Stories," but I am still bothered by decisions made by a few of our former leaders at Khe Sanh. The vast majority of our leaders were outstanding individuals, but there were still mistakes made that I felt caused unnecessary casualties.

As early as April 1967, I trained my team on Hill 881N and 881S. Prior to my team operating in Laos, we had to verify the team's readiness. Prior to the

arrival of the 26th Marines, I had a mission on 881N to locate enemy emplacements and strength. During four days of surveillance, numerous enemy emplacements were observed. They had heavy weapons in each of their concealed bunkers, and there was extremely heavy enemy troop movement. At one point, we were nearly trapped due to the large amount of ground troops.

A few days later, Captain Wiloughby, who later became a hero during the battle at Lang Vei, asked me to join him at a briefing with Marine intelligence officers. At the briefing, I informed the Marines of what we had encountered on Hill 881N. When I suggested that an attack on 881N should begin with large air strikes and a battalion-sized ground assault, they scoffed at my suggestion of the amount of troops required to take Hill 881N.

Captain Wiloughby, offended by their total lack of concern for the information we had provided, left the meeting. We returned to our little corner on the west side of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, located just outside of the Marines' wire. Over the next couple of weeks, we watched as the Marines took a horrible pounding attempting to take Hill 881N without total air support and sufficient manpower. What really hurt was that we could do nothing to help them.

We did lose a lot of our teams while operating in Laos and the areas around Khe Sanh village, but it was never because we failed to heed the advice of others who had been there before and who knew what lay ahead for us. Keep up the good work and may God bless and keep you.

Herb Marshall
MACV – SOG Khe Sanh

About 90 years before the Marines arrived at Khe Sanh, a French explorer went through the area while travelling from Laos to Cam Lo, along a route that was made into Route 9 around 1910. The following is a translation from French of a portion of a diary by Dr. Jules Harmand, who in 1877 travelled from Tchepone to Cam Lo, passing through what was Lao Bao and then through the Bru area. Some of his comments:

"July 25th: I have taken a large dose of quinine because of the poisoned mountains, the 'red earth' as the natives term it.

"July 29th: After about a two hour march, we came to an immense ravine, where I discovered a torrential river, the Rao Quan. Evening: I have encountered a group of savages who were seized with terror upon seeing me, throwing down their arms and kneeling before me. Their charming little village is Mois. The poor souls, who speak a little Annamite, received me best they could. The ancient chief put his immense house at my disposal. They brought me dry fish and rice. They also roasted a squirrel I had killed along the way. After spending the evening with my host, I slept peacefully among them, on a dreadfully soiled mat.

"The next morning I went hunting in the ravines, which yielded a good harvest of plants. It is a beautiful country — if I had provisions, I might be tempted to remain a few days longer. The Rao Quan is a true river, hundreds of meters wide, with smoothly flowing waters. Unfortunately, we soon encountered numerous rapids. The natives regarded me curiously, kneeling around me in a circle. They were dressed in sleeveless vests, singular in that they were made from sheets of bark from the Antiaris Toxicaria tree. As soon as my baggage arrived, I distributed knives and mirrors among the Mois, who in turn gave me slips of paper with symbols to which they attributed magical properties."

Reverend Ray W. Stubbe
Chaplain 26th Marines

Early August, Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton California

On August 9th at approximately 1300, a mini-1/26 reunion was held at the world famous San Onofre Beach. The site has been known as a gathering place and watering hole for Marines heading to, or recovering from, war tours in the Far and Near East; WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm and most recently, Trash Canistan.

Sergeant Major Morris put out the call for the gathering in mid-July with orders to all hands to be present and accounted for. "You will have a good time!" he bellowed. When the Sergeant Major

speaks, the troops comply. We subsequently disobeyed orders and had a great, not good time. There were a few moments of silence as names and past deeds of those who are no longer with us were mentioned with sadness, reverence and respect.

Colonel Snyder, on his first tour, spent a few short months in RVN before being wounded and evacuated to MCRD, San Diego for treatment and rehabilitation. He graduated from the Naval Academy in the early 60's. Ray joined 1/26 for his 2nd tour and assumed command of Alpha Company prior to the Siege — a command he held during and after that long dance was over.

Jim Morris joined 1/26 as the 81 MM Platoon Sergeant and later served as the 81's Platoon Commander. During the Siege, he was meritoriously promoted to Gunnery Sgt. and became the Battalion Operation Chief. He held that billet as his 13-month tour was completed. In the early 70s, Jim returned to Vietnam for his 2nd complete tour as an advisor with the RVN Marine Corps, initially at the battalion level and later, in the capacity as the senior Operation NCO advisor attached to an RVN Marine Brigade.

Former Captain Jeff Stack served at Khe Sanh in Alpha Company as a Platoon Commander and later as acting Company Commander. Jeff was wounded in action. He completed his 1/26 tour and extended for an additional 6 months as a Division Aerial Observer. Since his separation, he has owned and operated a growing and very successful land development company.

Ken Pipes retired from the Marine Corps in 1982. For the next 12 years, he worked for Southern California Edison in the Nuclear Security Field, retiring from that position in 1994.

Captain Steve Longo spent his last 6 months in RVN as the 1/26 Air Liaison officer. Steve had us in tears as he discussed the highlights of a Marine Corps Fighter Pilot. While assigned to 1/26, he got many a wounded Marine evacuated to field hospitals. Steve also controlled air strikes for the Battalion along Route One, Liberty Bridge, the Go Noi Islands, Hill 55, and in the An Hoa Basin. He carried his weight and was one of us then, and now!

You all know John Kaheny, a past president of our organization. He was a Platoon Commander and acting Company Commander on a couple of separate occasions. He also served as the Operation watch

officer, and later extended his combat tour with the unit. John is a two war Vet. His Marine Reserve Unit was activated for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He has a way with the telling of a story — and had a bunch of them to tell.

With the concurrence of the Sgt. Major, there may be another call to gather at the same, well-known site for further discussions and to once again smell the cordite and gun smoke of those good — and not so good — experiences from so long ago.

The circle grows smaller but remains unbroken.

Postscript:

It should be noted that two additional members who received orders to attend, were absent; one authorized, and one unauthorized. The Sgt. Major

excused former Captain Chuck Patterson after he submitted an “out of town on lawyer business” explanation. Chuck is a lawyer and published poet/author. On the other hand, our famous Medical Doctor, Ed “Fast Eddie” Feldman, was placed in an “unauthorized absence” status by the Sgt Major. His physical description was given to the Base Military Police, who immediately broadcast a BOL for the Doctor. No sightings have yet been reported. Request that Chicago Police Sergeant and our current VP, Tom Eichler, be immediately contacted if anyone in the Regiment observes Fast Eddie moving quickly through their area.

Ken Pipes



Retired Col. Ray Snyder, retired SMajor Jim Morris, Capt. Jeff Stack, retired LCol. Ken Pipes, Capt. Steve Longo and retired Col. John Kaheny

Welcome Home

A tattered but proud symbol comes home at last

by Tom Eichler

On a hot, foggy day at the Khe Sanh Combat Base in 1968, a large element of NVA attacked the position held by Golf Company 2/26. During the battle that followed, the position was threatened with being overrun. The Golf Company Unit Flag (Colors) were entrusted to a young, badly wounded Marine who was being evacuated. Members of Golf Company, during the fierce battle, defeated the enemy and drove them from their position. However, they assumed their colors would be lost forever.

At about the same time, the wounded Marine arrived in the United States and was transferred to a reserve unit. During his recuperation at the unit, a young surgeon helped the wounded Marine with a personal family problem. The Marine in turn, gave the doctor the flag he had carried with him, knowing the deep affection he (the doctor) held for the Marine Corps from his own service during the Korean War. The doctor did not have the slightest idea what to do with the flag. He did, however, know he would treasure it and keep it safe. He wrote down the name of the young Marine, but later lost it and all physical contact with him, and he did not recall his (the young Marine's) name.

After many years had passed, the doctor, Michael Healy, was packing his personal items for a move to a new residence. He told the story to a former Marine friend who had served in Vietnam with 1st Force Recon. That friend, Robert Schaefer, called a few more Khe Sanh Veterans and learned that they

were having their reunion in Irving, Texas in early July 2002. Both Dr. Healy and Robert Schaefer, who reside in Texas, vowed they would return it to the rightful owners.

As the BOD convened their regular board meeting at the 2002 reunion, Robert Schaefer arrived with the tattered, old Colors of Golf Company. After relating the story of how he had come into its possession, the BOD voted to have Robert present the flag to surviving members of Golf Company 2/26 at



Eric Smith, G/2/26; Robert Schaefer, 1st Force Recon; James Everley, G/2/26 with Golf Co.'s Colors.

the reunion awards ceremony.

In a very short but moving ceremony, Robert Schaefer presented the flag to Golf Company veterans Eric Smith and James Everley. After the ceremony, Robert stated that it was one of the proudest moments of his life to return the long lost symbol to its rightful owners.

PUBLISHERS NOTE: The members of the BOD voted to award Life Memberships to both Dr. Michael Healy and Robert Schaefer.

Hi Tom,

Hope all is well. Just a short update on our first reunion in 36 years —

The Northern I Corps Artillery Units had their first reunion in 36 years. Represented were the following units: 2/94th 175mm Guns, 1/82 175mm Guns, 5/4 155mm Howitzers, 6/33 and 1/40th 105mm Howitzers. Most of these units were attached to the 3rd Division at one time.

The reunion was held in Branson, Missouri on Memorial Day weekend. While the Marine Artillery was invited, no representatives showed. We did have some sign up to attend. They were missed. It was obvious from the amount of hearing aids in my battalion that the large 175s had done their damage to the line officers and gunners. Slides and videos along with some audiotapes were shown and played all weekend. Former C Battery Officer Roy Deloach, who is now a chaplain, remembered the 2/94th KIAs at our banquet dinner. Those that knew the fallen were asked to stand in remembrance.

The audiotapes were of a Marine Recon Patrol during a fire mission and a tape that the 12th Marines have been looking to find for years. Unfortunately, ours was the same one that others have, not the original. Audible, but Marine LTC Rice is not in his description of the massive attack on Gio Linh. We marveled at the counter-fire put out by C/1/12 against just overwhelming incoming. What a valorous episode in the Marine Corps history for those Marine artillerymen and their unit. Those fellows showed what the Corps is about. As I understand, they suffered 75% casualties and had one gun working when they were withdrawn and replaced by one of the other 12th Marine Batteries, believed to be W/2/12. Just an awesome performance by some brave artillerymen.

It was also discussed (as it was early in our struggle) that it may have been the only massed battery to massed battery scenario against the NVA enemy. After Gio Linh, the NVA realized they could not stand toe-to-toe and slug it out with American artillery. One of our former FO's brought about 600 slides of the first opening of QL9. He and his RTO were members of the first convoy out to Khe Sanh and the border.

Among the slides were pictures of the 11th Engineers rebuilding the bridges on the way out, some of the Ontos crews. Also, I thought I saw some

105mm being towed along. I would guess that would be a 12th Battery or Platoon. The 13th would not have been there at that time and the 11th was down south. This would have been late '66 or early '67.

Marine Officer Philip Saur was shown in several pictures as our 2/94th FO. Our RTO's became close friends with Phillip Saur. Phil was later killed on 861A. Phillip Saur would detail an Ontos crew to run the roads with the FO and the RTO. Our FO was wounded on April 9th 1967 while on Marine patrol and medevac'd.

Some of those pictures are available online at http://www.willpete.com/2nd_battalion_94th_artillery.htm Scroll down to number 87, Barry DeVita, and you can view those "First Road to Khe Sanh" pictures.

It was decided to try and have a reunion every two years with an effort put forth to find other members of the artillery units that served up north, along the DMZ.

2004 Reunion site has not been selected yet.

Hopefully, some of the Marine Artillerymen will join us in two years.

Semper Fi Marines

Kelley

2/94th 67-68

<http://www.2ndbattalion94thartillery.com/>

ED NOTE: Why not use the Khe Sanh reunions? It will accomplish two things. A bigger reunion gets better deals, and it saves you guys from the hassles of planning. The Delta Company Association has found this to be an effective way to save time, effort and money. Delta now has the largest attendance by any unit at the reunions.

Dinosaurs in the Air

by Ray Prittie

Thank you so much for the sentiments, bro. Really appreciate that. We really tried to make those bolts as secure as we could, but we were working with stuff that really needed a lot of help. It is the Marine Corps' way though, and why the Corps will be in business for a long time. The Air Force inhabited a totally different universe that we could not identify with at all. We stole one of their trucks from in front of the main PX near the main gate on the AF side at

Danang, immediately painted it Marine Corps green and stenciled in some phony numbers. Hey, we really needed it. We figured they could get whatever they wanted. It was still serving our line shack when I left.

The first line aircraft I crewed was a basket case. (H&MS 11, MAG 11, 1st MAW. The squadron had not been in-country that long. Had only one plane that was now a basket case.) It had been involved in a midair with an ARNV C-47; both trying to occupy the same space at the same time going into Hue/Phu Bai. The ARVN plane became a dilapidated wreck east of the Phu Bai runway. It was still there when I left. Our guys made it back to Danang though, because they were lucky and also knew that Uncle Sam, even though he would probably give the ARVNs a whole bunch of planes, would probably not replace the 834 until the duration.

I had been in-country two days. My first day reporting in to the line shack at the SE corner of the field was a memorable one. We had one plane. When I first viewed it, it had no engines, was on blocks, covered with dust, and had only one wing. The most sorry sight I have ever seen. This was my first real

duty station and I was supposed to be flying on that thing. They had just received a new wing in a large wooden crate off a C-130. Over the next couple of weeks we rebuilt that plane. Here I am, a 6725, doing the most bizarre of stuff to get this plane flying again.

The big day came in March 1966. It was like a ceremony around a new prototype taking to the skies for the first time. That plane, even though we were eventually built up with 3 others over time, became the work horse of the unit. It was that plane that brought us back through a dark and stormy night. C-117D (R4-D8) BuNo 50834. I loved that plane. I have beacoup pictures of it. Never was able to find out what happened to it. Its brother, the 835, which I also crewed, now stands in a place of honor on a pedestal at Mirimar. I have a great picture of me taken in July of 1966 with the 834, 835, and the 211 in the background behind me. Little did I know that within a few days the 211 and all the crew except me would be history.

Ray Prittie

In Loving Tribute

by Bill Person

They gave their youth and all they had,
To a war whose price has made us sad.
In a steamy land of fear and strife,
The Reaper stole a loved one's life.
Now we endure in solemn grace,
For no one can ever take his place.
How precious, this freedom, we all share
When we give tribute, we prove we care.
For those who risk it all, their mortal lives,
So we may know that our nation survives.
Please, Dear God, soothe these grieving pains,
Our resolve is tested, but our love remains.
Help us to live as Thy will be done,
And our spirits join, so we are one.
Through time, bereavements slowly dim,
And it comforts us that Your arms hold him.

Han Lee

by Ernie Spencer

I first met Han on 881 South. Delta was in its second or third rotation on that hill. It was October, maybe November. I honestly can't remember. I'd had Delta since Johnson split in mid-July sometime. I started with Delta on 861. The record says I got Delta August 1. Records had to match. Short timers often were given a huss off the line. Johnson had Delta for six months. That's long for a company commander. He spent his last weeks in the BOQ tent down at battalion.

Han Lee, an arty FO, came to see me right from the re-supply UH-34 that dropped him off. He was like me, one of the first Asian officers to serve in the Marine Corps in combat. His credentials impressed me. He had graduated with a degree in civil engineering from Texas. We were both reservists via the PLC program. Han, like me, wasn't a lifer. I do not mean to be disrespectful of career Marines. My five rifle battalion commanders were all great men (three with the Second Marines and two in Vietnam). I've known great Marine officers who I willingly followed because I admired and respected them. Men like Gentleman Jim and Freddy J. Staff officers like Charlie. Fellow junior officers like Pipes, Snyder, Feral, Fitzgerald and Brown. These guys showed me who they were in a time when Marines are really Marines. I got a belly full of lifers before I got to Vietnam.

We reserve officers hated the kiss-ass lifers. They made us sick. We were one-tour guys that were hanging it all out, one time, for whatever reason. After that, we just wanted to go home and get on with our lives. I'll tell one other truth about Marine junior infantry officers. As far as the Corps is concerned, the smart ones fly, shoot big shit, drive or build. The ones like me who can't count past ten without taking our shoes off go grunt. I joined the Corps because I could. I wanted to be a Marine from the time I was a child. Han wanted to serve his adopted country. Han was a first generation Chinese immigrant. He had the misfortune to be educated in Texas. He had a Texas accent with a Chinese-sounding drawl. "You know, I figured that if I'm going to serve our country, I must go with the best." That was Han's motivation for going Marine. He also knew his family would admire and respect him for his choice. Face is very important to Asians.

When I could, I would always request Han for my long-range company patrols. Delta did a 360 around Khe Sanh while I was with it, from the base of Tiger Tooth, to the river that divides at Laos. As far north, and south and west as the regiment would allow. We went out as far as our 155s could reach. This was a time when the regiment at Khe Sanh consisted of just one badly undermanned rifle battalion. At any time, one rifle company would have both sides of the airstrip. One would be on 861, another on 881 South. That left one company to do long range patrols.

I remember Jim telling me with that grin of concern before I'd go out. "Now Ernie, make sure you can handle whatever happens for at least a day." If we stepped into it, we'd have to be prepared to deal with it with only arty to back us. Weather was mostly socked in or pouring. Luckily, things were quiet around Khe Sanh at that time.

I believe Colonel Lownds foresaw what was coming and wanted continuing information about the surroundings. Delta would register artillery on the NVA harbor sites we found. The NVA used the network of trails that ran around and by Khe Sanh. The trails never grew over. There was constant enemy traffic during these quiet times. They followed a recurring pattern when selecting their harbor sites. They were always near water and on a reverse slope from Khe Sanh. Because of the thickness of the jungle we often found these places in, we had to register them with airbursts. Han would shoot the azimuths to the burst. He also did the more accurate type.

I remember Han working one of those surveying things on a three-legged transom when we were on 881 South. He relayed exact angles and stuff back to the battery. They were popping 105s high up on the Laos side from us. Han buddied up to me because we like the same type of staple. Rice. I had a connection through my Bru scouts, who got me the packets from their Bru bloods who worked with the SOG guys. Besides its great taste, the rice came in small, light, individual packets. Just add water. Five minutes if it's hot water, and thirty if cold. That's all I ate out on patrol. Ham fried and rice, with cookies, coffee, sugar and cigarettes rounding out the provisions. Fruit and fancy stuff weighed too much for me. We went out for five days without re-supply. "Take all you want to eat," I told my guys. "But you carry your full load of ammo, water and sleeping gear."

We didn't wear flacks and stopped using helmets. The guys went too far, and Jim made me knock it off. With the camo paint and wild head coverings some of them looked more like pirates than Marines. Their missing teeth added too subtle a touch for Jim's tastes, I guess. Some guys would hang stockings full of cans on the backs and sides of their packs. They looked like dread locks on a green head.

While on the subject of we Asians who served at Khe Sanh, I have to clear the record concerning the fine article that was done on a brother Asian genius, Harry Baig. Harry was a lot of great things, but he was no Mongol. I'm a Mongol. I trace my lineage back to the guys who rode through some of your ancestral homelands. It was my ancestors that burned those towns and rode off with the booty. At the '98 reunion in D.C., Ernest Jones, who was Delta's weapons platoon sergeant, told me what I did before we went out on a long-range patrol. Delta was getting a lot of new guys at the time. I lined the men up in front of me, then said, "Look at me, Marines." Then, pointing off to Laos say, "I'm not like them. I'm taller."

I did what I had to do to fulfill my dream, but I don't remember doing that. I'm at the point in my Khe Sanh journey where what I cannot remember is more important than what I can.

One Incoming Round

by James Carmichael

I remember intensely real fragments of raised voices rattling about in that moment of time, space and past history. Those memorable sounds have long since settled like the dust on the furniture, despite their momentary indelible imprinting and my own shifting fragility. Nothing and everything true penetrated in an instant. I attended to it as one gropes in the dark for the seam of a thick, translucent curtain. A disconnect at the words, "Corpsman! Corpsman up! Get a..." Meaning ebbed.

That enemy mortar round landed within the context of men coming stoically to grips with gnawing hunger. We ate one meal a day for ages. Re-supply, or the lack thereof, stayed on our minds hunting us, haunting us, digging with us, cleaning our weapons ...and dying with us. It waited in earnest for night, sleeping in all the hollow recesses of our stomachs,

returning to the corners of our bunkers as morning roused our communal outpost. When we did eat, we did so with the emotional stagnation one possesses fueling his car with unleaded. We worked if only to keep the hunger gremlins at bay, which elicited more of the same. Somebody had to keep an eye on all that banal food we stored frugally on top of the CP bunker.

That "somebody" fell mostly to the mortars section. We stood watch, in shifts, all night. At that hour, the moonlight played wearily on the tops of the tufted clouds. Its brightness fanned out to enwrap and monitor the peaks of the surrounding hills as well as to our own. I could see and hear them in their one's and two's with less difficulty moving toward the treasure I guarded from those hungry men. A few elevated words and the tall elephant grasses growing out of the top of the hill blowing monotonously like unkempt hair reabsorbed them, still hungry. I feared the CO counting cases every morning for the mercy I would show those hungry young men. Occasionally, I turned away intentionally to watch a bombing run, or, to cover myself from the never still air.

Ten minutes. I moved or walked or sat filtering ten minutes worth of ruffled sky through my lungs before that round landed. Eleven minutes earlier, perhaps a few less bites of rice or moments of idle digestion among the NVA mortar crew out there beyond my view, when someone would be yelling "Corpsmen up!" for me. Instead, my early morning replacement sat where I sat and the round landed where he now sat, between his legs — severed and ripped, his limbs now disassembled from his body.

I stood not 60 feet from him when the sharp blur of the slicing object invaded our hilltop and slipped down onto him. I saw the white, instant light and then the smoke. The dirty, three-dimensional acrid smoke and red dirt turned to seedier bits of gray, screening him from me. The tiresome wind released the veneer of dense haze soon after posting it, and his life, now a limp existence, changed. Something erased the deafening explosion as it pressed into the parts of my mind where sound is stored and examined. For one more day, I saw this great event in the context of all the larger ripping and tearing and deprivation.

I stood and looked. I knew another round would soon follow, but I just stood. I could do nothing else, so I wallowed in my deafness. I saw the Corpsmen,

with bags in hand, run to begin his terrible work. Other men rushed about yelling, moving through the whirling air made of paste. Perhaps I imagined sitting myself down to silhouette his body, covering him with my own, protecting him. All of this movement blurred with greater complexity around me and on the stage to my front. I stood where I stood almost as ripped and torn within as he without.

Everything else appeared a dead shade of gray — the grass, even the sky with its streaking bits of golden morning clouds. I propped my exhausted body upright and I bled incrementally during those brief moments. Inches ago, I assumed I was *mostly* bled out. I stood frozen in my mad fascination despite the danger of that next round landing somewhere, addressed “to whom it may concern.” I refused to hear. To listen. To realign. Everything — men, grasses and clouds — meandered in melting acoustic waves. And despite my mental equilibrium now blasted off its kilter, this tantalizing scene moved naturally. Rhythmically. But I, I could not hear it in order to absorb it, so I became absorbed by the sum of the whole. I controlled nothing and all the lies lay shattered in the firm, red clay upon which I stood so uselessly.

The second round landed; in masterful alignment with the first but twelve odd feet short, harmlessly short. It maimed by intent only. In warped fragments of time. I moved as an old man who has seen his ancient self, years before he reaches that stage when it presses its spiny fingers into his mind, body and renders him another object to disassemble and bury. The next moments I lived in abject purposelessness. I could do nothing for him. Him the target. Someone resembling me moved to my bunker and became mired and then subsequently lost in cleaning his always dirty weapon. The now full day would continue to blow its calloused soul unopposed relentlessly across the brow of the hill, shifting and bending the watching grasses.

Vietnam: Fictions Distort America's Role

by Bing West

Last Christmas, I went back to a village where I had fought 35 years ago. It is 400 miles north of Saigon, which is now called Ho Chi Minh City. The North Vietnamese also have changed the name of the

village to show who won the war. A solitary Marine squad had fought in that village, living among 6,000 Vietnamese. In 1966, 15 Americans walked in; 485 days later, eight walked out. More Americans died in the rice paddies around a forgotten place called Chu Lai than in all of Desert Storm. And, for what?

In the village, I visited our old fort — now a kindergarten — and prowled around the moss-covered stone foundations while kicking up old memories. When I walked back out to the paddy dike, I was surrounded by smiling villagers. An old farmer (my age) peered at me and said: “Welcome back, Dai Uy.” A third of a century later, they remembered me, a young captain from decades earlier. They asked by name about the other Marines who had gone home those many years ago and led me through the trails to a palm tree overlooking a bright green paddy. There they showed me a rough marble marker — their memorial to the seven Marines who had lived in that village for a year-and-a-half and who had not walked out.

In the larger geopolitical scheme of things, does the fondness of those villagers for Americans known long ago mean anything? Possibly. It's fashionable now to say Vietnam was a bad war, where even children threw grenades. Forcing American soldiers to do terrible things. It was supposedly a country unworthy of our sacrifice. Those who avoided or protested service argued that it was better not to serve. While poll after poll shows that the Vietnam veterans are proud they served, their collective judgment has been ignored by a media that has labeled the war as unworthy.

Aesop's Fox

“The Greatest Generation” by Tom Brokaw of NBC News became a best-selling book by depicting how ordinary and famous Americans united to fight World War II. As the success of Brokaw's book attests, winning casts a long shadow; we justly praised ourselves for our efforts in the 1940s. Losing has the opposite effect. No such book will emerge about Vietnam. The Greatest Generation were the leaders who sent the next generation into Vietnam. Those same leaders eventually lost heart, abandoned the South Vietnamese people, and transferred to them the blame for failure. Aesop wrote about the fox who, failing to snatch the grapes from the vine, declared them sour. We acted the same way. As a nation, we declared we would help the South

Vietnamese defend themselves against the communists directed from North Vietnam and aided by China and the Soviet Union. When the price became too high, many of the same leaders from the Greatest Generation declared the South Vietnamese no longer deserving of our sacrifices. Sometimes we're not the greatest.

Three Myths

Today, three myths distort the American role in the war in Vietnam:

The first myth is that we were defeated on the battlefield.

Actually, all American combat forces had withdrawn years before Saigon fell. After the U.S. withdrawal, North Vietnam invaded in 1972 and was driven back by South Vietnamese ground forces and U.S. air power. In recent movies such as "We Were Soldiers," North Vietnamese willpower is portrayed as implacable and unstoppable. This is rubbish. As the tragedy of World War I demonstrated, every nation has a breaking point. Three times we had the North Vietnamese on the ropes, and each time it was policy fickleness in Washington that persuaded them not to continue. In the second invasion after Americans left, in 1975, North Vietnam employed Chinese artillery pieces and Soviet-built tanks. We refused to bomb those targets and instead slashed our aid. At the end, some South Vietnamese soldiers were down to one grenade a day.

The second myth is that of moral equivalency — depicting war protesters defying American authorities as being as courageous as the American soldiers fighting the North Vietnamese.

After all, the protesters had Woodstock, where it was difficult singing and making love in the rain; the soldiers had the jungles, slogging through the heat and mud, losing more than 50,000 dead. Some who avoided fighting claimed they were protesting for the sake of those who were fighting. Yet those who fought are proud they did so and in the main saw the protesters as a reason why the North Vietnamese continued to fight. Thanks to the press, we remember the protesters more fondly than we do those who fought. As a nation, we ignored — and often scorned — our servicemen on their return from Vietnam.

Vietnam is depicted as more brutal than World War II. The actions of a few who killed civilians, such as former Sen. Bob Kerrey, have received front-page coverage, with the spin angle being that "the

war made me do it." The war, it is argued, corrupted American values and decency. The opposite was actually the case. We inflicted less damage on the civilian population in Vietnam than we did in France and Germany. Our soldiers in Vietnam fought as valiantly and as humanely as did the Greatest Generation in World War II.

The third myth is that losing makes little difference.

But losing did affect our self-confidence, and to this day some countries are wrongly emboldened, believing we can be beaten on the battlefield. After the fall of Saigon in 1975, American foreign policy manifested serious dyspepsia. In supplicant fashion, we courted detente — "can't we all just get along?" — with a supposedly stronger Soviet Union, and we permitted a rabble to seize our embassy in Iran. Only gradually did we recover, electing President Reagan, rebuilding our military, challenging the Soviet Union, and abetting in its demise. The historian Stephen Ambrose has observed that of all the European nations, American GIs in World War II liked the Germans, against whom they had fought, best. Similarly, South Vietnamese widely welcome and genuinely like Americans, though they have nothing to thank us for. The septuagenarians in Hanoi control the economic, religious, social, travel, educational, professional, and personal freedoms of every Vietnamese. One of the few remaining Bolshevik communist regimes, the dictators in Hanoi memorialize long-ago battles, yet they cannot chart a course into the future.

A Tragedy

So Vietnam is mired in a bleak past, while America is the beacon for a shining future. We recovered our geopolitical self-confidence and our martial prowess; for millions of people in Southeast Asia, there was no recovery. That is a tragedy. The South Vietnamese have grace, culture, and ambition. Given the freedom to pursue their own opportunities, they would prosper. Someday the yoke will be lifted from the Vietnamese people. But we should have no illusions about the repressive nature of the current regime. Freedom did not flourish when the North Vietnamese took control. In 1953 when we were fighting a limited war in South Korea, that country was not a model of enlightened democracy. Today, South Korea is a thriving democracy, where we still have 25,000 American soldiers stationed to deter an impoverished, hostile North Korea. To our credit, we

have stayed the course there. In contrast, we tired of the limited war in South Vietnam; the war simply went on too long. That we stopped fighting and withdrew most of our aid is understandable if not laudable. In Korea and in Vietnam, we chose two different courses. Today, South Korea's future is bright and South Vietnam's future is bleak. That cannot be changed. But we should not let myths turn us into Aesop's fox and blame the grapes. The day Saigon fell, the secretary of defense, James Schlesinger, sent a message to our armed forces.

It read in part: "Our involvement was intended to assist a small nation to preserve its independence. You have done all that was asked of you. You are entitled to the Nation's respect, admiration, and gratitude."

That is the proper, elliptical epitaph to the Vietnam War.

"Semper Fidelis" Saves a Life

Decades after his heroics in Vietnam, relatives and servicemen mobilize to help a dying Vet (a Khe Sanh Member)

by Ellen Gamerman

Sun National Staff

Originally published August 16, 2002

WASHINGTON — John Ripley's worthless liver had left his skin a sickly yellow. Toxic fluids were collecting in his system, causing his lean frame to bloat: once 175 pounds, he now weighed 425. His kidneys were failing. An incision glared from his abdomen, closed with staples in case surgeons had to rip it open fast. Eighteen IV lines fed into his unconscious body. One of the Marine Corps' greatest living heroes was dying. In the intensive care unit at Georgetown University Medical Center, a son of the retired colonel, Tom Ripley, sat vigil.

It was 7am when the phone rang: A donor liver had been found. But his father might not live long enough to get it. That's when the Ripleys understood that the delivery of the liver, from a 16-year-old gunshot victim in Philadelphia to the dying veteran in Washington, would take too long if left in the hospital's hands. Their only thought: Call in the Marines. Over the next hours on that day last month, saving John Ripley's life became a military mission. It would involve the leader of the Marine Corps and helicop-

ters from the President's fleet. Support teams would come from police in two cities, a platoon of current and former Marines, the president of Georgetown University and even a crew of construction workers.

"Sir, this is my dad's last chance," Tom Ripley said in a call to the Marine commandant's office. "I'm measuring my father's life in hours, not days." The extraordinary efforts to save the 63-year-old Ripley, recovering from transplant surgery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, shows how far the Corps will go to protect one of its own. Marines will say they'd do this for any fallen comrade. But Ripley is no ordinary Marine. In a messy war with few widely recognized heroes, he is a legend. And at his moment of need, the Corps treated him like one. "Colonel Ripley's story is part of our folklore — everybody is moved by it," said Lt. Col. Ward Scott, who helped organize the organ delivery from his post at the Marine Corps Historical Center in Washington, which Ripley has directed for the past three years. "It mattered that it was Colonel Ripley who was in trouble."

A heroic effort

On Easter Sunday 1972, Col. John Walter Ripley — swinging arm over arm to attach explosives to the span while dangling beneath it — almost single-handedly destroyed a bridge near the South Vietnamese city of Dong Ha. The action, which took place under heavy fire over several hours as he ran back and forth to shore for materials, is thought to have thwarted the onslaught of 20,000 enemy troops. His tale is required reading for every Naval Academy plebe. In Memorial Hall, Ripley, a 1962 academy graduate, is the only Marine featured from the Vietnam War: A diorama shows him clinging to the grid work of the bridge at Dong Ha. Ripley received the Navy Cross, the second-highest award a Marine can receive for combat. That decoration is surpassed only by the Congressional Medal of Honor, which, many in the Marine Corps vigorously argue, Ripley deserves.

But on this July morning, three decades after surviving combat wounds, Ripley was facing death from a transportation problem. His doctors tried four civilian organ transportation agencies and could not immediately be guaranteed a helicopter by any of them. The Ripleys say they were told that a civilian helicopter would not be available for at least six hours. Driving to Philadelphia was not an option

because doctors worried that any traffic delays would ruin the organ.

Helicopter mission

Tom Ripley saw only one solution. From his father's hospital room, he called the office of the Marine Corps commandant, James L. Jones, and secured the use of a CH-46 helicopter, which is part of the Presidential Marine One fleet.

The plan: The chopper would ferry the transplant team to the University of Pennsylvania hospital to remove the donor liver and then transport the doctors back to Washington. Marine lawyers instantly approved the use of military materiel for Ripley, including nearly three hours on a helicopter that costs up to \$6,000 an hour to operate. The commandant considered this an official lifesaving mission for a retired Marine still valuable to the Corps as a living symbol of pride. Action was swift. The doctors rushed to Anacostia Naval Air Station, where the helicopter was waiting, rotors spinning. The chopper took off before the surgeons were even strapped in. By about 10 a.m., just three hours after learning that a new liver would be available in Philadelphia, the transplant team was swooping into that city. On the landing pad, an ambulance and a Philadelphia Highway Patrol car, both summoned by the Marines, were waiting.

The motorcade took off, sirens blaring. "When you're in a situation like this, and an organ becomes available, you use the fastest resource to get it," said Dr. Cal Matsumodo, a transplant surgeon from Walter Reed who flew on the helicopter to retrieve the new liver. "This turned out to be the swiftest and best-organized effort that I've ever seen."

Ripley's original liver had been ruined by a rare genetic disease as well as by a case of Hepatitis B that he believes he contracted in Vietnam. After a year-and-a-half of hospitalizations and infections, Ripley had received a new liver from a D.C. area donor July 22. But within hours of the surgery, that donor liver began to fail.

Medical professionals say the organ donation process is safeguarded to keep powerful people from skipping to the top of the waiting list. It was Ripley's critical condition — caused by the failure of the first donor liver, his doctors say — not his personal story, that put him first in line for another liver July 24. Still, most new organs are never granted military escorts. "It was clearly extraordinary, what they

did," said Roger Brown, manager of the Organ Center at the United Network for Organ Sharing, a clearinghouse for organ procurement and allocation. Sometimes, Brown said, patients will die because available organs cannot be transported to them in time. "There's a lot of work that goes into matching a donor with a patient," he said. "If you can't find that one piece of the puzzle, it's just devastating."

In Ripley's mind, the mission that day reflects the strength of the Marine Corps fraternity. As he convalesces at Walter Reed, where he went after his operation and is listed in stable condition, he summons his booming voice long enough to insist that Marines would do the same for even an unknown grunt. "Does it surprise me that the Marine Corps would do this?" Ripley said from his hospital bed, his dog tags still hanging around his neck. "The answer is absolutely flat no! If any Marine is out there, no matter who he is, and he's in trouble, then the Marines will say, 'We've got to do what it takes to help him.'"

In Philadelphia, though, the Marine pilots knew exactly whom they were helping and they called it an honor. On the helipad, the flight crew stood ready as the transplant team rushed back with a box marked, "HUMAN ORGAN: FRAGILE."

Moments later, Tom Ripley, traveling with the doctors, got an update from his oldest brother, Stephen, at his father's bedside. Their dad's condition was worsening. The organ had to get to Washington — fast. Tom and Stephen, both former Marine captains, debated the quickest "RTB" — return to base, which in this case meant the Georgetown hospital. In pager messages fired off like battlefield dispatches, the chopper became "the bird" and the doctors the "pax," slang for passengers. As the day wore on, the brothers drew from their military roots, comforting each other with the Marine motto, *Semper Fidelis*.

Their father, meanwhile, lay still. His dog tags, fastened with the same tape he'd used to keep them from clanking on secret missions in Vietnam, had been removed. Twice, the family had summoned a Catholic priest to deliver last rites. Now, the Ripley's wondered whether a third might be needed. The hours ticked away, and the family learned that the Marine helicopter was too big to land on the Georgetown hospital helipad. But the doctors feared getting stuck in traffic on the drive from the Anacostia helipad to the hospital.

The delivery

A well-connected Marine buddy of Ripley's called the president of Georgetown University and got permission to land on the school's football field. A construction crew standing nearby was soon ripping down fencing to make room. But the Marines rejected that makeshift helipad after sending another helicopter to survey it. The area was deemed too crowded for a landing. At one point, the Ripley's suggested landing at the Marine Corps War Memorial, across the river from Georgetown, by the statue that depicts Marines raising the flag at Iwo Jima. But that fanciful notion went nowhere. The answer finally came in the form of a D.C. police helicopter pilot — Sgt. Thomas Hardy, a former Marine. A Corps official found him and asked whether he would take the team from Anacostia to Georgetown on his smaller chopper. "This was a Marine Corps mission," said Hardy, a Vietnam veteran who agreed to fly without hesitation. "Once a Marine," he explained, "always a Marine."

The organ delivered, the surgery could finally start. The next day, Ripley's recovery began. Slowly, he is gaining strength and returning to a normal weight. Despite the surgery's success, risks of infection or other problems remain. His family expects him to be in the hospital for up to three more weeks. Ripley rests quietly, unable to accept visitors. His wife of 37 years, Moline, sits with him amid pictures of their four children and their grandkids.

Repaying an old debt

The sons who orchestrated this rescue operation call it a culminating moment in their father's military life. John Ripley was shot in the side by a North Vietnamese soldier and during two tours of duty was pierced with so much shrapnel that doctors found metal fragments in his body as recently as last year. After Vietnam, Ripley continued to serve, losing most of the pigment in his face from severe sunburns while stationed above the Arctic Circle. The Marines, his family believes, repaid a longtime debt. "Dad gave 32 years of his life to the Marine Corps," said Stephen Ripley.

"When he really, really needed the Marine Corps, they were there for him." Even from the quiet of his hospital room, the Marine Corps still defines Ripley. His family has packed a cabinet by his bed with copies of a book that John Grider Miller wrote about Ripley's heroics; Ripley says he will give com-

plimentary copies of "The Bridge at Dong Ha" to the medical staff. Not long ago, a military color guard held a bedside ceremony for him, placing in the room the Marine Corps colors that normally hang in Commandant Jones' office. Ripley was urged to keep the flags in his room until he leaves the hospital. On a recent afternoon, Ripley looked past his IV machine, past the uneaten hospital lunch, past the plastic cup of pills, to the flags. He was, at that moment, John Ripley, grateful warrior, awed by what his sons, and the Marines, had done. "They reached over the side," he said, "and they pulled me back in the boat."

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A Culture of Victory

Lessons of the Old Corps

by Richard Botkin

Camp Pendleton is not quite hallowed or sacred ground. No real battles have been waged there, no blood other than in training accidents has been shed for freedom within its confines. Home to the First Marine Division and supporting elements, its 200,000 or so acres of coastal real estate allows for most facets of training which have become Marine Corps hallmarks: amphibious assaults, helicopter-borne raids, and good old-fashioned infantry combat.

Constrained on its northern, eastern and southern boundaries by urban sprawl, the regular civilian driving Interstate 5 between San Clemente and Oceanside is treated to a view of what much of California's coastline must have looked like prior to the state's meteoric growth after World War II. For those Marines who have served there or processed through on the way to more serious destinations, Camp Pendleton will always conjure unique memories of training performed: forced marches in the coastal hills, rifle-range details on cool, fog-shrouded mornings, amphibious landings on those miles and miles of unspoiled beaches. More important than the real estate though, are the Marines who constitute the Division. This is the unit that gave America its first ground combat victory in the Pacific at Guadalcanal in late 1942, followed by similar heroics in equally brutal battles on islands like Peleliu and Okinawa.

In 1950, it was the First Marine Division that

landed at Inchon, recaptured Seoul, chased the North Koreans all the way to the Yalu River and then — outnumbered at least six-to-one — defeated Chinese Red Army units in its masterful retrograde from the Chosin Reservoir. In Vietnam, the Division's three infantry regiments were engaged in almost every major battle fought by Marines and the thousands of other skirmishes without names. In Desert Storm and into Afghanistan, the men and women of the First Marine Division have played key roles in every success and victory. Old Corps, every Marine knows about the mythical Old Corps. In the Old Corps, things were just a little bit tougher, the drill instructors more demanding, and the Marines somehow a bit more magnificent. During World War II, Old Corps meant service with Chesty Puller chasing bandits in Nicaragua in the 1930s. To those new Leathernecks in June of 1950, Old Corps was service at Iwo Jima, Tarawa, Guam. In my time, the early 1980s, Old Corps were those guys who slugged it out with the NVA during the siege at Khe Sanh and those who retook the Citadel in the bloody street fighting in Hue in 1968. And on and on.

The lessons of the Old Corps

Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants, in their pre-9/11 planning, committed errors similar to those made by the Japanese militarists before their attack on Pearl Harbor. In both 2001 and 1941, the plotters incorrectly focused on the notion of an America flabby and effete, a culture interested only in the pursuit of pleasure and ease. Who can fault ObL for such an assessment today? During their pre-attack reconnaissance, the terrorists had only to turn on the television, visit the shopping malls and theaters, drive the freeways in major cities to observe the things we value. How can a culture that produces an abundance of dimwitted Hollywood heroes with celluloid spines fight the good fight? How can a nation so full of those content to experience life vicariously on the couch or behind a computer screen rise up and crush the beckoning evil? The raw physical beauty that is Camp Pendleton grows more contrasting each year as its borders become increasingly concreted and the bustle of California quickens. For those who revere the Corps, as most former Marines do, trips there are always rich with nostalgia, as comforting as sitting with aging parents and life-long friends.

Returning recently to visit a brother Marine just back from Afghanistan, it finally hit me. It was not

the fondness of happy memories that was so reassuring — it was looking into the future and seeing its promise that was so invigorating. There before me on a very crisp and early Friday morning as I drove through the various regimental camps, the sky already abuzz with helicopters, I could feel the throbbing pulse of this future Old Corps. There they all were, these young Marines: lean, tough, smart, hungry for action, certain of their cause, grounded in a culture that has only delivered victory. These are the warriors ready to write the new chapters in the history of the Old Corps. Back at home and in my own life, away from things military, listening to news, reading the paper, I sometimes get discouraged and easily see why OBL and his ilk never learned the lesson of the Old Corps.

In World War II, Jimmy Stewart joined the Air Force, went to England, and bombed the Germans. This year we sent Woody Harrelson over to destroy British taxis. In World War II — and again in Korea — Ted Williams quit baseball to fly fighters. This year, a sissified Tom Cruise pines for living in the relative safety of Australia. In the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives are grown men and women whose commitment to victory is, at best, a distant second to their drive to gain personal power and advance their socialist agendas. Made safe and kept free by far better men, these actors and politicians intuitively know the lessons of the Old Corps. They just hope that we do not remember. So I say “Go ahead, Maverick — eject, eject, eject! Punch out!” We'll give you a call and let you know when it is safe to come back. It is with humble respect that I stretch and paraphrase the Bible in saying that the fools, the cynics, the voluptuaries ... they will always be with us. It bothers me, but I can live with it so long as I know there are just a bit more than a few young men who think they are tough enough to be Rangers, young men who think they are smart enough to drive nuclear submarines, young men whose testosterone bubbles at the notion of landing high-performance aircraft during dark nights on the heaving decks of aircraft carriers.

The spirit of the Old Corps and the essence of American manhood, as described by Teddy Roosevelt, courses through the vitals of these young warriors destined to pay the bittersweet price that comes with — and is demanded by — freedom. They are best honored by TR's own words, penned nearly a century

ago but never more true than today: "There is little use for the being whose tepid soul knows nothing of the great and generous emotion, of the high pride, the stern belief, the lofty enthusiasm, of the men who quell the storm and ride the thunder..."

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MEMOIRS

Light of His Life

Long-lost link to fallen comrades finds its way home

by Joe Hurley

The News-Times, 08/15/2002

"It was just a cigarette lighter. Just a lighter passed from hand to hand among soldiers who would die in the jungle. Just a lighter that brought tears to Jim Marden's eyes when he remembered those boys: their young faces and their feet sticking out of body bags. Just a lighter that disappeared from a Massachusetts washroom in 1968 and took with it Jim's last link to his platoon. Just a lighter that mysteriously turned up in New Jersey years later and sat forgotten in a drawer for decades. It was spotted by chance last week and four men worked to find the owner. Just a lighter that, after 34 years, was returned to Jim Marden this week. "I've got my boys back," Jim said Tuesday in the parlor of his New Milford home. He spoke carefully, trying to hold back his emotions, like a good Marine. It was a losing battle. His voice cracked. He halted for a moment. "At some point everybody in my company lit a cigarette off that lighter or touched it." That's the way it was when you were huddled in a foxhole. The lighter would be passed along from its owner to someone who needed it. Jim has a picture of the 47 men in his platoon when they arrived in Vietnam in 1967. And he has a picture of the ones who survived when his tour ended a year later. There were just five. The others were dead or wounded. When Jim holds the metal lighter it all comes back to him. "On how many night ambushes, on how many firefights was that lighter with us," he said, his voice trailing off as the memories returned. "Some people call them flash-



The News-Times/Wendy Carlson

backs. I call it a slide show. The faces come up. But they come up every night anyhow."

When Jim left Vietnam, the Marine Corps confiscated his souvenirs. They let him keep the lighter and an expensive watch. "They were the only things I had left," he said. Back home, he took a job as a mechanic at a

Natick, Mass., gas station, where he lost the watch and lighter. His wife, Marsha, said Jim still talked about losing the lighter decades later. Just a few weeks ago, he was at a Marine reunion when someone pulled out a similar lighter. "I used to have a lighter like that," he said. "I miss my Zippo."

That's the way Marsha tells the story. She's the young nurse who waited patiently while Jim was overseas, even though they had dated just twice. She's seen him live with the demons of war memories and raise a family in Kent before they moved to New Milford two years ago. And she said he's earned everything he has. "He's the greatest guy going. He works very hard and he'd do anything for anybody. But he's very serious — everything has to be upright and honest," she said. Over the years, Jim worked day after day of overtime as an SNET cable splicer, partly as therapy to cope with the demons. "There's not a day that we don't talk about the war. It was an important part of his life," Marsha said. Their son James is a Marine and their daughter Heather lives just down the road. It was Marsha who prodded Jim to respond to a message on their answering machine Sunday. It said the caller had something from Vietnam that would interest Jim. Jim was hesitant. He feared unpleasant memories. And both of them wondered if it was a scam. Finally, Marsha said she would call if Jim didn't. He never expected to hear that someone found the lighter.

"I couldn't believe it. Holy cow! How do you thank someone for something like this. Four strangers cared enough to find me — God bless them." At the other end of the phone line, Terry Kucenski of Clayton, N.J., was telling Jim that he

came across the lighter about 25 years ago when he was living with his parents in Bayonne. He doesn't remember how or where he found it, although it might have turned up in a bar, he said. The lighter had Jim's name, his company and the words Khe Sanh 861-881 on it above the motto: "You've never really lived until you've nearly died."

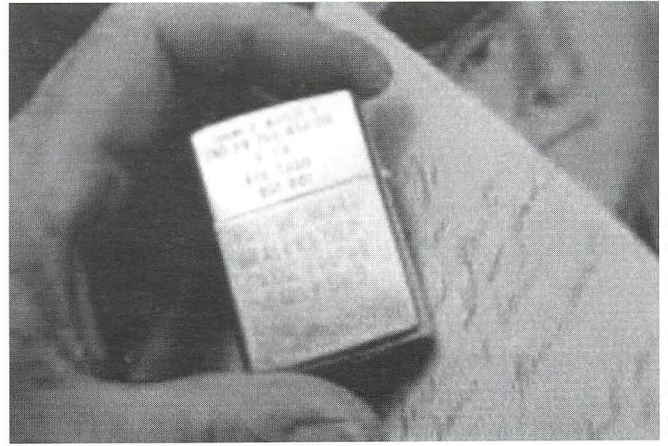
He put the lighter in a drawer, intending to find the owner, but forgot about it until he returned home last week. "I happened to be looking for a pencil, and bingo, there was the lighter," he said. He called his friend Mike Fahy, a Philadelphia police detective, who contacted Joe DeLocqua, a Marine Vietnam veteran. DeLocqua immediately knew Khe Sanh 861-881 meant the owner had been through one of the most important and bloodiest battles of the war. 861-881 were hills at Khe Sanh.

They contacted Doc Hoppy, a former medic in Vietnam who keeps track of veterans through the Internet. Hoppy located Jim Marden, whose picture was recently posted on the Web by a veteran searching for information about the platoon. The next day, Fahy called Kucenski. "He was ecstatic," Kucenski said. "We were all ecstatic that we were able to find the owner. "When Kucenski called, he found out just how much the lighter meant to Jim. He felt like it was a part of his life that was missing," Kucenski said. "I was just glad to be part of it. I haven't been that happy since my Little League team went undefeated."

"When the lighter arrived by courier Tuesday, Marsha couldn't contain her excitement. "I was overjoyed for Jimmy. I ran out of the house and hugged the driver. He must have thought I was a nut," she said. Jim was calmer on the outside. But his tears gave him away. "It was like getting an old friend back," Marsha said. Later, he bought some lighter fluid and tried the lighter. It worked on the first try.

But Jim doesn't plan on using it very often. It's on the mantle in their Old Stone Road home and it will be handed down to his son.

Joe Hurley
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The News-Times/Wendy Carlson

Our Flag

By Bill Person

Only those who paid the price seem to truly understand
The way we feel about the proud emblem of our great land
The brave lads who faced up to that grim and mortal fear,
And now view 'Old Glory' and shed a salty tear.
Remembering things beyond our paltry words to explain
While forgetting not the fallen by we who still remain.
How many lives were paid to make our banner free
And gave their blood for all of us, it stirs most deep in me.
Their ghostly souls are wending down life's dimming eternal hall
To venture on honorably past their final deathly fall.
How beautiful the colors soar, stripes and stars so bright,
That now means so very much to us who had to go and fight.
Wave on, oh symbol of freedom, fill the azure sky
And reach to heaven in our hearts, so proudly we see you fly,
We feel the phantom presence of those who've gone beyond
And watch with us, our flag, that we are so rightly fond.
"Oh, say can you see," in song our voices start to raise.
In joyful anthem to America's flag we reverently praise.
We know what awesome price men have dutifully paid.
Just view the countless crosses where they are quietly laid.
I fear for future times should no one wish to cry
For those of us who gladly fought in days now gone by.
Do not forget us, I strongly urge and pray
We did our part so all our lives can honorably be this way.
I feel no shame as tears run down my proud American cheek.

Do You Know Me?

(Bill Person)

Do you know me?
That I went to war for freedom's sake
And in a far **Off** hostile place,
I served my Uncle Sam.
Lean down close on bended knees
So you can better hear,
While I whisper you my name
So you know who I am.

Do you know me?
When people in a far **Off** land
Braved our enemy all alone.
We sought to give them freedom
From that awesome hostile threat.
But some at home refused to fight
In that frightful worthy strife,
These acts, we'll not condone.

Do you know me?
When American blood was shed,
And dying men lay all about
The horrors there to see.
Each one stood tall and did his part.
Some gave it all, the last full count,
Of that there is no doubt.

Do you know me?
The death angel has come and vanquished me.
Oh, I have felt his fatal sting
To send me where the living fear to go,
I could not tarry long
Yet, when the borrowed days do pass,
Those who survive us still,
To the fallens' presence, he shall surely bring.

Do you know me?
Although my scant numbered days are past,
Still I suffered deeply
And felt the wounded shame
When misguided ones in numbers,
Behaved so dishonorably,
They joined in lofty masses,
Our flag and draft cards burned
They betrayed all departed souls
In tarnished ways to lay the blame.

Do you know me?
I truly hope now you do
For this nation's greatest might
Is forged from spilled precious blood
And those who live must carry on,
To keep the power and bear the torch of right.

Do you know me?
That now I lie among the valiant fallen
Wherein countless graves we rest.
Like them, asked not the reason
Men my country gave the call
But went ever proudly onward
To bravely do my best.

Do you know me?
Tho' my shape is faint for you to see.
Can you feel the suffering,
My lot is to bear?
Do you know the deepest low
My soul it did endure?
Can you feel the anguish?
Or do you really care?

Do you know me?
Tho' I am gone from human eyes
My soul is close to thee
Would that I could
Mend that aching heart,
Take from you all emptiness
And fill that hollow part.

Do you know me?
That I suffered pain in monsoon rain,
The lifeline was sorely stretched
Come you close and look here on,
This blackened, shiny wall
And read my name among the rest,
Where the fallen names are etched.

Inspired by the painting "REFLECTIONS of the Vietnam Memorial," "THE WALL" and a tribute to all veterans.

KHE SANH VETERANS ASSOCIATION

Membership Application

COPY, print & fill out form. Submit completed form to the address below.

Check: ☐ New Member

☐ Renewal

☐ Change

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____ MI _____

Nickname: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip + 4: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

FAX: _____ Email Address: _____

Are you a Khe Sanh Vet? Check one: ☐ YES ☐ NO

If YES, when were you at Khe Sanh? (Please be as specific & complete as possible):

Service Branch at Khe Sanh, Check applicable:

☐ Air Force ☐ Army ☐ Navy ☐ USMC ☐ Civilian

Your Unit: _____

If NO, tell us your association with Khe Sanh Vets:

Membership Type (check one & write in amount enclosed):

☐ Life (\$150) ☐ Regular (\$20) ☐ Associate (\$20) \$ _____

Please make check(s) payable to: Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. If New Member Application or Renewal*, mail completed form with dues payment to:

Tom Eichler

3221 N. Opal

Chicago, IL. 60634

Phone: 773/625-2101 Fax: 773-625-8021

Email TEIC1448@AOL.COM

On renewals, circle any items to be changed. If a Request for change to current directory information, please complete the form, circle the items to be changed, and mail or fax a copy of your completed form.

Never forgotten – Faces from 26th Marines



Sgt. James N. Tycz [KIA 10 May 67]
Recipient of Navy Cross



Cpl. James M. Trimble [KIA 6 Apr 68]
G Co. 2/26



2nd Lt. William R. Ammon [KIA 16 Apr 68]
Mike Co. 3/26, 2nd Pl.



Pfc. Robert G. Piazza [KIA 6 Apr 68] G Co. 2/26



Cpl. Edward McGrath [KIA 6 Apr 68] G Co. 2/26