

ISSUE 64

The Khe Sanh Veterans'

SPRING
2006

RED CLAY

WHO, WHEN, AND WHERE?

READ RAY W. STUBBE'S CHRONOLOGY OF ACTIONS AT KHE SANH,
AND AWARDS ELIGIBILITY. THE YEARS 1962-1972 (FEATURED STORY)



SECRETARY REPORT

It's that time of year again, start saving your pennies, and get ready for the party to begin. June is coming fast and before you know it the reunion will be here. Be prepared to be busy. There are a lot of things to do this year in Mobile. The PX has a lot of new items to enjoy. The PX helps support our magazine. The membership was very supportive at the reunion in Chicago last year. As an added pleasure I get to meet all you guys and your families. Register before the reunion so you can save a couple of bucks and buy more gear from me. The reunion should be one of our best. The hotel and accommodations look great. Jimbo, PJ, Russ and Tommy did a great job of getting us what we want for Hospitality and PX rooms. We have so much more than last year. We are allowed to drink in the hospitality room. The hotel is even supplying free Kegs of beer. It is always good seeing all of you and knowing that I am in a safe place. Just like at **KHE SANH**.

Semper Fi

Big John

A CO 3rd Combat Engineers

PUBLISHER NOTES

I want to remind our members that our magazine is totally financed from the dues paid by our members. The magazine is published three times a year. For each issue, the turn around time for the writing, editing, printing and mailing, is two months. When one issue is shipped the next is already started.

We have a quality printing company that does outstanding work. In order to have an affirmed completion date I must inform them of the quantity of magazines we will be ordering. Our low price is also based on the quantity ordered.

Since the spring issue has to be completed and ready to roll by the end of February, I must have the dues in by March 01. I order the quantity based on paid members. In the future, if your dues are not paid by that date you will not receive that issue of the magazine. I cannot keep ordering extra magazines and hope members will eventually pay their dues.

**Tom Eichler VP, Chairman,
Publishing & Membership Committees**

TREASURERS REPORT**Reunion 2006 Mobile Alabama**

Registration for our Reunion 2006 is off to a great start. Many have chosen to pay their registration fees via credit card, which we now have in place. One small request, when calling, please call between 1 pm and 6 pm Central time for registrations, PX items and membership. We prefer everyone use the forms sent to you and mailed to us. It sometimes gets overwhelming when we get calls at 8 am or 9 pm in the evening. Make sure to make your hotel reservations before May 26, 2006, midnight. Rooms may not be available after that. Room rates are \$85.00 per night, doubles. Rates are good for 3 days before and 3 days after reunion.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS CALL-(866)749-6069 or **FOR ONLINE RESERVATIONS** use the **Khe Sanh Veterans group code # 25747**. Pets are accepted at hotel with a non-refundable pet deposit of \$50.00 Many have made suggestions regarding future reunions sites. Here are a few things that have to be in place before that is possible. We began the selection process 2 years ahead for the selected location. Next year is DC that was voted on by the membership to coincide with the opening of the new Marine Corps Museum. The following years are open. If you are really interested, get in touch with your local convention center, ask them for hotels in your town that have done Military reunions. We prefer central locations but are open to west coast places like California, Nevada (Las Vegas), New Mexico, Arizona, etc. The selected city has to have hotels large enough to accommodate everyone from the membership who attends, (300-500). Have your convention centers send us the list of hotels in that city and we will contact them and negotiate. We usually select three places and have the membership select their choice. The last several years voting was limited to certain cities due to the delay in the opening of the new Marine Corps Museum. Last year there were only three other suggestions made besides Mobile Alabama.

PX NEWS

Our PX is doing well, members are increasingly supporting our organization by purchasing items from our PX. Our magazine, **RED CLAY** is solely sup-

ported by dues and sales from our PX. The more items bought, the better the magazine. Good participation from the membership will also allow us to purchase a larger variety of items for our PX. Our items are also designed to attract new members. Someone sees you wearing a hat, shirt, pin, etc with our KSV Logo, and often we get a new member. Every dime we collect goes back to the organization. The entire staff and their families are volunteers and dedicate their own time to the organization.

Please be nice to us on the phone. This is your organization support it.

Election to Board of Directors;

There are several board members up for re-election. If you want to run and be on the board of directors, send your name in to Russ Turner, President, and election committee chairman. You must send in your name or the name of someone you think would like

to be on the board, prior to our reunion. A candidate must have attended at least three reunions and be a paid member. Names of candidates will also be accepted at the reunion but will have to wait till the following years' election to run for the board, in accordance with our by-laws. Two members have sent in their names in so far: Dennis Mannion and Neil Kenny. No associate member is eligible for the BOD seats. If you want to change any by-laws or have your own ideas for operating the organization, run for a board seat.

James "Jimbo" Wodecki

**Treasurer & Co- Chairman Reunion Committee
KSV Web Page Master**

MEMORIALS

Those Remembered

Cpl Gregory F. Popwitz 3rd Recon
L/Cpl Thomas J. Sweeney 3rd Recon
Cpl Reuben C McMakins Jr L CO 2/26
L/Cpl Paul F. Stedman A Co 3rd SP
L/Cpl Jay Books
Sgt Major James Gaynor H&S 1/26
Capt Daniel Coonon VMF-15
Dennis Herb 3rd Recon
Lt/Col Richard R. Blair C/O 3/26

USMC KIA 27 Jan 68
USMC KIA 26 Feb 68
USMC KIA 14 Apr 68
USMC KIA 26 Feb 68
USMC KIA 08 Sep 68
USMC KIA 15 Feb 68
USMC KIA 16 Nov 66
USMC Passed Away
USMC Passed Away

Remembered By

John Hernandez F Co 2/3
John Hernandez F Co 2/3
Thomas A. Pierce L 3/26
Thomas Green A Co 3rd SP
Charles H. Fetter VMF-14
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Dan Fisher..... Member At Large

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Members of 3RD Platoon, Hotel Co, 2/3, Reunion

By Lt/Col C.S. Gaede USMCR (Ret)

The Marines of 3rd Platoon, Hotel, Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment (H/2/3) held a reunion commemorating the 38th year since their service in the Republic of Vietnam from 29 September to 2 October 2005, in Austin Texas. Most of the Marines joined the Battalion in late 1967 after it was assigned a Tactical Area of Responsibility south of Da Nang. In March 1968, the Battalion moved to Phu Bai, and from there to Ca Lu for Operation Pegasus that reopened National Route 9 to Khe Sanh and officially ended the siege of Khe Sanh. On about 10 April 1968, the Battalion moved to a position on Route 9 approximately 6 kilometers east of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The Battalion and the Marines of the 3rd Platoon operated in the hills east and southwest of the Khe Sanh Combat Base until the Base was evacuated in June 1968. Although the North Vietnamese Army was withdrawing, they had many units remaining in the area. The Marines of the 3rd Platoon engaged in many battles. Several of them were killed in action, and more were wounded.

On September 30, 2005 some of the 3rd Platoon Marines and their wives viewed the sand table model of Khe Sanh that President Lyndon B. Johnson used in his Situation Room for briefings during the siege of Khe Sanh. It was a remarkable experience. In 1968 we Marines knew only the trail we were on, the next hill ahead, and the ground around our fighting holes and to the immediate front. That the President of the United States would have a model of the whole terrain where we were living and fighting, or that he would be spending time pondering it would never have occurred to us.

More memories and emotions were experienced the morning of October 1, when the staff at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas campus arranged a special exhibit of photographer David Douglas Duncan's Vietnam photographs. Duncan, a retired Marine and Life magazine combat photographer is known for the 1967 photo on the front page of Life magazine of the Marine at Con Thien. The Harry Ransom Center staff have prepared a multimedia presentation that combines tape recordings of interviews of Khe Sanh Marines during the siege

with his still photographs. Watching and listening to the presentation is to take a step back in time. For those who would like to see and hear the presentation, it is titled *David Douglas Duncan: A Vietnam Tribute*.

The video is available at <http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/online/ddd/multimedia/> Most likely Khe Sanh siege veterans will recognize someone Duncan is interviewing, but veterans who are sensitive to memories of actual sights and sounds from then should be aware that they might encounter some heavy memories. The most memorable event of the Duncan exhibit occurred when L/CPL Patrick J. Hodgkins realized that he was the man in a photograph in Duncan's *War Without Heros* (p.47). It had appeared to some of us that the photo was "Boot camp," but only he could confirm it. Needless to say, it was an emotional moment for Patrick to see himself in the photo. We are glad his wife was there to experience the moment with him.

Another unique experience occurred on the afternoon of October 01, when Gary Lavergne, author of *Sniper in the Tower: The Charles Whitman Story*, led the men and women on a personal tour of the University of Texas Tower. Gary's book has been featured on the History Channel as part of the True Crime series, and he is considered the leading historian on Charles Whitman shootings. While the Marines of Vietnam brought honor to the Corps, Charles Whitman, a former Marine, brought dishonor to us on August 6, 1966, by randomly shooting innocent civilians from the top of the Tower. The University of Texas does not promote or permit tours that talk about Charles Whitman, but the Administration was kind enough to grant permission for an exclusive tour for us. SWAT teams were created after the Tower shootings as a way to deal with such events in the future. Watch for a made-for-TV movie based on Gary's book to arrive soon.

We Marines and our wives of the 3rd Platoon, H/2/3 are all grateful to Michael MacDonald, Registrar, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library & Museum, Mary Alice Harper, Photographic Archivist, Harry Ransom Center, and Gary Lavergne, personal friend, for taking their personal time and making special arrangement for us.

We Marines spent much time talking, bonding, with

each other, and left the reunion knowing that we brothers had been reunited. It was an opportunity for the us and our wives to share positive memories and emotions, as fresh as they were in 1967 and 1968.

TX; L/CPL Joe Whittington, Rifleman (Awarded Silver Star Medal), Montgomery AL; Cricket Whittington .

The following poem was written by Doc Roy Moon, who served as our corpsman for 3rd Platoon, from



L-R Front row kneeling: L/CPL Robert Guzman, Radio Operator, San Antonio, TX; L/CPL Stephen A. White, Radio Operator, Las Vegas, NV **2ND** row standing: S/SGT John B. McDonald, Platoon Sergeant, (M/SGT, USMC (Ret.)), Laramie WY; Hospital Corpsman Roy Moon (USN), 3RD Platoon corpsman, Fort Gay, WV; L/CPL Abraham Piedra, M-60 Machine Gun Team Leader, (Command Sergeant Major, New Mexico National , Guard (Ret.)), Alamogordo, NM **3RD** row standing: PFC Robert W. Griffin, Rifleman, Baytown, TX; L/CPL Patrick J. Hodgkins, Markesan, WI; CAPT Donald J. Myers (COL USMC (Ret.)), Hotel Company Commander, 2/3, late 1968, Spring Hill, Florida; Solomon Johnson, Company Gunnery Sergeant, (GY/SGT, USMC (Ret.)), Hesperia, CA. **Back row standing:** 1ST LT. Charles S. Gaede (LT/COL, USMCR, (Ret.)), Platoon Commander, Austin TX (Awarded two Purple Heart Medals); L/CPL Joe , Richardson, (PO1, USN (Ret.)) M-60 Machine Gun team, (Awarded Purple Heart Medal), Belleville IL

Not in photo: Erma Guzman, Pat Piedra, and Linda Hodgkins. L/CPL Billy M. Martin, Rifleman (Awarded Purple Heart Medal), Plano, TX; CPL Ralph S. Rodriguez, Squad Leader, San Antonio

September 1967 to September 1968. And at Khe Sanh from April-June 1968. He tended many wounded Marines, including myself, and has remained a friend and comrade to us all of us.

MARINE POEM

Grunts on the Ground

Mountains upward, They would go, Into the clouds, The young and bold.
 Heavy loads upon their backs, Life's preservatives in their packs.
 Step by step each would climb, from an eagle view the snake would wind.
 Slow and silent each step they took, ears and eyes at max alert.
 Silence broken, A whistling sound, Tubes popping, Incoming rounds.
 Tasting dirt, Voices sound, Corpsman up, Point man down.
 Drop the pack, Plot a course, Direct line to the crying voice.
 Smoking rifles, Along the crest, In the middle, Gunners nest.
 Bullets singing in the air, Sting of dirt, One so near.
 Heart racing, Adrenalin flowing, Feet so slow, Keep on going.
 Near the crest, Frag a flying, Grunts a fighting, Some a dying.
 In the dirt, Limb part, Hope still, Beating heart.
 Crimp an artery, Stop the flow, Talk to God in silent woe.
 Call for help, MEDAVAC, Blood soaking, Through the wrap.
 Whispering plea. Ease the pain, Holding tears, Can't explain.
 Popping smoke, Pilot sees, Door gunner firing, Hot LZ
 Dust flying, Chopper lands, Poncho passed to out-stretched hands.
 Rotors roaring, Off the ground, Gave it all, Homeward bound.
 On line, Near the top, Pass the word, Hold what you got.
 Maps open, Coordinates marked, Radioman's speaks, Here's your mark.
 In the rear, Miles away, Big guns blast, Arty away.
 Lying low, Voices sound, Friendly fire, Arty rounds
 In the valley, Beyond the crest, Enemy mortars, Put to rest.
 Above the trees, Buzzing sound, Bird dog circling, Snooping around.
 Diving low, Above the ridge, Bunkers spotted, Charley hid.
 Another circle, Coming down, Popping smoke, Target found
 High above, Out of the blue, Phantoms roar, Sky hawks too.
 Dipping wings, Slowly turn, Lining up, Making run,
 Drop the load, Pull the stick, Up they climb, Burners lit.

On the ridge, Flaming blast, Burning napalm, Blazing grass.
 Bombers gone, Arty quiet, Grunts moving, Finish the fight.
 Inch by Inch, Up the hill, Weapons blasting, Fighting still.
 Reach the top, Wall of lead, Spider pits, Straight ahead.
 Hit the deck, Belly drop, Machinegun blasting, Rounds nonstop.
 Grunts up, Grenades in hand, Pins pulled, Steady hands.
 See the pits, Toss the frag, Second later, Charley sags.
 On top, Hill secure, Frag the bunkers, Making sure.
 Dead and wounded, Many seen, Mostly Charley, Some Marines.
 Bandage wounds, Rifle splints, Marines carry Rear sent.
 Popping smoke, L.Z. clear, Help on the way, MEDA-VAC here.
 MEDAVAC out, Re-supply in, Drop the gate, Off new Men.
 Gather the dead, Remove tags, Pits of HELL, Zip the bag.
 Silent walk, Not a sound, Bags on Chopper, Homeward bound.
 On the hill, All that's left, Scorched earth, Freedom's best.
 Pass the word, Moving out, Single file, Different route.
 Down the hill, In the flat, Compass checked, Fold the map..
 Hump for hours, Sun has set, Getting dark, Here we rest.
 Perimeter formed, Claymores set, Dig a hole, In I get.
 C-Rats open, Heat tab lit, Beans and franks, It's the pits.
 Next hole, New man in, Whispering voices, Chat begins.
 Where you from, Quick reply, Alabama, Bama guy.
 Make a trade, What he says, Beans and Franks for Potatoes and Bread.
 Potatoes warmed, Break the bread, Chow down, Field fed.
 Boil water, Coffee mixed, Calm the nerves, Caffeine fix.
 Stretch the legs, Head in hands, Talk to God, Understands.
 Not a scratch, Still alive, Feeling awful, Tell me why.
 Little voice, DO NOT FEAR, Give ME the load, Shed the tears.
 Fall asleep, restful night, sun coming up, gone the night.
 Another day, Snake unwinds, Moving out, Marking time.

Doc Moon

3rd Platoon

H 2/3 1967-68

INCOMING

CHORUS HONORS ALL VIETNAM VETERANS AT WAR MEMORIAL**By Tom Eichler**

The Arlington Good times Chorus paid tribute to all Vietnam Veterans by singing the "Armed Forces/America Medley" at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial immediately following the Southwest District chorus contest in San Antonio on October 22, 2005. Approximately 100 people listened as 30 barber-shoppers under the direction of Dick Kneeland sang the patriotic songs at the "Hill 881 South" statue located at Veterans Memorial Plaza.

The bronze statue, which was designed by former Marine combat artist Austin Deuel, based on an eyewitness event, is the largest of its kind in the country, weighing more than 10 tons. It is approximately 10 feet high at its highest point, 23 feet long, and 12 feet wide. Two young Marines are depicted, a radio-man looking skyward for an evacuation helicopter while rendering aid to a dying comrade lying on the ground.

Hill 881 South, located in the northwestern part of then South Vietnam, was the site of intense combat during the Vietnam War. On April 30, 1967 a bitter battle took place between U. S. Marines and North Vietnamese Army regulars. The ensuing heavy loss of life was the inspiration of the poem "Death At My Door," inscribed on the base of the memorial. The poem was written by then 1st Lt. David G. Rogers the following day, and dedicated to those who were killed in action. Rogers is a 10 year barber-shopper with the Good times Chorus, and resides with his wife in Arlington, TX.



Photos Courtesy of Connie Rogers

MEMOIRS

The Last Stand of Khe Sanh Area United States Army Mike Fishbaugh

Date : August 1971

Company: Recon Team Kansas, Studies and Observations Group (SOG) Group leader: 1st Lt. Hagen)

Action: Republic of Vietnam, 7 Aug 1971, Khe Sanh, behind enemy lines Mission: reconnaissance "prisoner-snatch" Awarded Medals: Army Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, three Silver Stars

RECON

The once bustling Khe Sanh Marine Base in South Vietnam's extreme northwest had been a ghost town for more than three years by the summer of 1971. It was, however, used briefly that February to support the South Vietnamese invasion of Laos. After that bloody debacle, they abandoned not just Khe Sanh, but the entire region, yielding immense areas to the NVA. Almost overnight, the North began extending the Ho Chi Minh Trail highways into South Vietnam.

In late July 1971, U.S. intelligence began tracking a large enemy force moving across the DMZ a dozen miles east of Khe Sanh, threatening the coastal cities of Hue, Danang and Phu Bai, where the last sizeable American ground units were based.

It was essential to learn what was happening near Khe Sanh. The mission was assigned to a shadowy organization called "SOG". Created to conduct covert missions deep behind enemy lines in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam. This top-secret Studies and Observations Group had shifted most of its operations in-country in 1971, to cover the continuing U.S. withdrawal.

From among its clandestine assembly of Army Green Berets, Navy SEALs, and USAF Air Commandos, the Khe Sanh mission became a prisoner-snatch assigned to Recon Team Kansas, an 11-man Special Forces-led element that included eight Montagnard tribesmen.

MISSION

How do you grab a prisoner in the midst of 10,000 or more NVA? Headed by an easy going, lanky Midwesterner, 1st Lt. Loren Hagen, along with Sergeants Tony Andersen and Bruce Berg, the RT Kansas men had brainstormed through several scenarios until settling upon the best option. They would land conspicuously on an abandoned firebase which obviously would draw some sort of NVA reaction, put up a short fight, then extract by helicopter.

But half of Hagen's men would stay hidden on the hill. When the NVA sent a squad up to see if the Americans had left behind sensors or bombing beacons, as SOG teams often did, the hidden men would ambush the NVA, seize a prisoner and come out.

In case a serious fight developed, Lt. Hagen reinforced his team with three more Green Beret volunteers, Staff Sgt. Oran Bingham and Sergeants Bill Queen and William Rimondi, eight Montagnard tribesmen and six U.S. Special Forces troops, a total of 14 men.

DEPLOYMENT

Landing at last light on Aug. 6, 1971, Lt. Hagen surveyed the scrub brush and bomb craters below them. He split his defense into three elements to cover three slopes. Immediately they went to work restoring the old firebase's two dilapidated bunkers and shallow trenches. The enemy must have seen them land. Hagen planned to be ready.

It was well after dark when the SOG men noticed campfires on two facing ridgelines. Unusual the NVA normally masked itself. By midnight, enemy probes were at the base of the hill, firing provocatively from the north, south, east, and west.

At 1 a.m., a USAF AC-130 Spectre gunship arrived, walking 40mm and 20mm fire around the hill nearly all night. Never once did the team fire their weapons, staying blanketed in darkness. At 3 a.m., the SOG men heard trucks and tailgates dropping. This was odd, very odd. Beneath the hill, dismounting NVA soldiers formed up into platoons and companies, which their leaders marched through the darkness to their assigned attack positions, to wait for dawn. Just before sunrise it became forebodingly

very quiet. Then, Lt. Hagen heard more trucks arriving.

Fifty miles away at a coastal airbase, a USAF forward air controller (FAC) and a flight of helicopters was lifting away for the false extraction. They would be at RT Kansas in 30 minutes.

Encircled by the NVA as darkness gave way to light, Lt. Hagen detected glimpses of NVA on one slope. On another slope pith helmets appeared, bobbing in the fog. When his men reported NVA on the third slope, too, Hagen realized his hill was completely encircled by NVA. That would require a whole regiment, at least a thousand men.

The NVA regimental commander understood he had to kill the Americans quickly. They'd inadvertently landed almost within sight of the Hanoi High Command's critical new venture, the first six-inch fuel pipeline laid across the DMZ.

The fuel line would be absolutely essential in a few months when entire tank battalions rolled through there for the war's largest offensive. Already the 304th NVA Division was massing there. A regiment of the 308th Division was preparing for the 1972 Easter Offensive.

At LZ Kansas a fourth battalion moved into place. Then, concealed in the ground fog, a fifth battalion arrived. Later, SOG's commander, Col. John Sadler, would learn an entire regiment had stormed the hill, supported by a second regiment. It was a mass assault by approximately 2,000 enemy infantrymen.

As the clearing ground fog revealed the terrible truth, Lt. Hagen had no time for inspiring words, just serious soldier work. In those final moments he repositioned weapons while his men readied grenades and stacked magazines. The Catholic Montagnards made the sign of the cross.

The NVA attacked. Hagen suffered four KIA in four minutes. A well-aimed RPG rocket smashed into Bruce Berg's bunker, collapsing it starting the attack. Fire went from nothing to 10,000 rounds per second. Andersen could see dozens of NVA rushing in lines up his slope. He shot them with his M-60 machine gun. Hagen hollered that he was going to check Berg. He ran directly into a ferocious maelstrom,

bullets ricocheting and slamming the earth in front of, behind, and beneath him. He only made it a dozen yards when fire from the other slope cut him down, killing him.

Then Klaus Bingham left a bunker to reposition a claymore and a bullet struck him in the head, apparently killing him. One Montagnard in a trench below Andersen, fired several bursts then jumped up to pull back and fell into Andersen's lap, dead. Four men had died in less than four minutes. Andersen was now the senior man.

Small arms fire hit closer on all sides and grenades lobbed up from below the hillcrest as waves of NVA were scurrying behind small rises and rolling from bomb crater to bomb crater. Andersen dashed over the hill to look for Hagen, but couldn't see him anywhere, just 100 khaki-clad NVA almost at the top.

He fired one M-60 belt at NVA advancing up his own slope, then sped to the other approach and fired belt after belt on the 100 assaulting enemy. By then, grenades started coming from behind him as NVA closed in from his rear. Just a dozen yards away, beyond the curvature of the hill, enemy heads popped up, cracked a few shots, then dropped back down.

Still a dozen minutes away, the approaching Cobra gunships went to full throttle, leaving the slower Hueys behind. Meanwhile, RT Kansas had just run out of hand grenades when a North Vietnamese grenade exploded beside Andersen's M-60, rendering it useless. He spun his CAR-15 off his back and kept shooting. He tossed back another grenade, but it went off in front of him, nearly blinding him. He kept shooting. More shrapnel tore into him. An AK round slammed through his web gear and lodged in his elbow, knocking him down. He stumbled back to his knees and kept firing.

The perimeter was pinched almost in half when Andersen grabbed his last two living Montagnards, circled below the nearest NVA and somehow managed to reach the survivors on the opposite side. He found Bingham, started to lift him, but saw that he was dead from a head wound. All around him he heard, "zzssss, zzssss, zzssss," as bullets flashed past his ears.

LAST STAND

He dragged Bingham back to where Bill Queen lay, wounded. Only Rimondi wasn't yet hit and still firing furiously. Andersen put them in a back-to-back circle just off the hilltop where they would make their last stand. AK bullets had destroyed their team radio, another slug had shot Andersen's little survival radio out of his hand, so Rimondi tossed him another survival radio, their last.

Now the NVA were streaming, rolling over the crest like a tidal wave, their rattling AKs blending together into one never-ending burst. Andersen's men were firing not at NVA, but at hands wielding AKs over parapets and around bunkers. There was no place left to fall back. Andersen was shooting NVA no farther away than the length of his CAR-15 muzzle. The time it took to speed-change a magazine meant life or death. From the air it looked like an ant mound, with moving figures everywhere. Cobra lead rolled in and sprinkled 20mm cannon shells around the surviving SOG men, and at last fighters arrived, adding napalm and Vulcan cannons to the melee. Then at last the assault ebbed, turned, and the NVA fled for cover, just as the Hueys arrived.

Though wounded repeatedly, Andersen crawled out to fire his CAR-15 to cover the landing Hueys. With Rimondi's help, Andersen dragged as many teammates' bodies as he could to the first Huey, then helped the wounded Queen and others aboard the second.

Allied KIA Count: 64%

In one hellacious half-hour, nine of Recon Team Kansas' 14 men had been lost. Lt. Hagen had died, along with Bingham; Berg was presumed dead. Six Montagnards had died. Rimondi and Queen both suffered multiple frag wounds, Andersen had been struck by both small arms fire and shrapnel, and their other Montagnards, too, all had been wounded. "It's amazing that any of us came through it with the amount of incoming that we were getting," Tony Andersen says today, 25 years later. He attributes their survival to his deceased team leader, Lt. Loren Hagen. "He epitomized what a Special Forces officer should be, attentive to detail, a lot of rehearsals, followed through on things," he explains. "We were ready. I think that was probably the only thing that

kept us from being totally overrun. Everybody was alert and knew what was happening and was waiting."

As for Hagen's bravery, dashing into a wall of AK fire to try to save Bruce Berg, that didn't surprise Andersen, either. "Lt. Hagen was that kind of officer. He was a good man."

Against the loss of most of his teammates, Andersen learned, the USAF counted 185 NVA dead on that hill, little RT Kansas had killed half a battalion and probably wounded twice that many NVA. But that gives Andersen little satisfaction compared to the loss of most of his team.

Perhaps Andersen's most difficult duty was carrying the bodies of his six Montagnard teammates, his "family" he called them, to their home village. "As soon as they saw us driving up in the truck, they knew. Wailing and moaning started, and all the grieving." The villagers gathered in a circle around the headman's stilted longhouse. "Through one of the interpreters I tried to explain how proud we were of them, what good fighters they were, that they had died for a good cause."

That would be borne out a few months later when the intelligence generated by RT Kansas' spirited defense helped U.S. analysts read enemy intentions, enabling American airpower to counter the NVA's Easter Offensive.

And though details of this incredible fight would remain classified for decades, enough was disclosed that 1st Lt. Loren Hagen's family was presented the U.S. Army's final Vietnam War Medal of Honor. Tony Andersen, who held together what remained of RT Kansas through those final mass assaults, received the Distinguished Service Cross. Queen, Rimondi, Berg and Bingham were awarded Silver Stars. And now, today, with full disclosure, we can appreciate the significance of their noble stand.

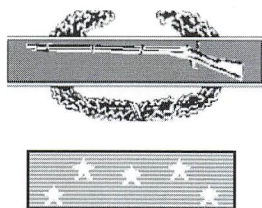
Medal of Honor

HAGEN, LOREN D. - 1Lt, US Army, Inf, US Army Training Advisory Group.

Action: Republic of Vietnam, 7 Aug 1971.

Inducted: Fargo, N. Dakota.

DOB 25 Feb 1946, Fargo, N. Dakota



Citation: 1st Lt. Hagen distinguished himself in action while serving as the team leader of a small reconnaissance team operating deep within enemy-held territory.

At approximately 0630 hours on the morning of 7 Aug 1971 the small team came under a fierce assault by a superior-sized enemy force using heavy small arms, automatic weapons, mortar, and rocket fire. 1st Lt. Hagen immediately began returning small-arms fire upon the attackers and successfully led this team in repelling the first enemy onslaught. He then quickly deployed his men into more strategic defense locations before the enemy struck again in an attempt to overrun and annihilate the beleaguered team's members. 1st Lt. Hagen repeatedly exposed himself to the enemy fire directed at him as he constantly moved about the team's perimeter, directing fire, rallying the members, and re-supplying the team with ammunition, while courageously returning small arms and hand grenade fire in a valorous attempt to repel the advancing enemy force.

The courageous actions and expert leadership abilities of 1st Lt. Hagen were a great source of inspiration and instilled confidence in the team members. After observing an enemy rocket make a direct hit on and destroying 1 of the team's bunkers, 1st Lt. Hagen moved toward the wrecked bunker in search for team members despite the fact that the enemy force now controlled the bunker area. With total disregard for his own personal safety, he crawled through the enemy fire while returning small-arms fire upon the enemy force. Undaunted by the enemy rockets and grenades impacting all around him, 1st Lt. Hagen desperately advanced upon the destroyed bunker until he was fatally wounded by enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire. With complete disregard for his personal safety, 1st Lt. Hagen's courageous gallantry, extraordinary heroism, and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty, at the cost of his own life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon him and the US Army.

SHORT ROUNDS

**Huong Tan Community Library Dedication
Khe Sanh, 27 October 2005
Charles S. Gaede, Lt/Col, USMCR (Ret.)**

In the foothills of Hill 881S on the grounds of a school that serves the people of the Montagnard villages, the first educational project donated by a non-governmental organization to ethnic minorities in Quang Tri Province was dedicated on 27 October 2005. Named the "Huong Tan Community Library" and constructed in cooperation with the Quang Tri Province Women's Union and PeaceTrees Vietnam, Inc. (PTVN) the funds were donated by the friends and family of Chuck Gaede. The funding included the staff, training, and operational expenses for one year.

The library has a reading room equipped with books, tables, and chairs. A separate room serves as the office for the librarian and her assistant. The library office is also a place for the local women to gather to socialize and to share information. It is a "no men allowed" room. The PTVN explosive ordnance disposal team cleared the grounds of unexploded ordnance, and the grounds are landscaped with trees.

Madame Sam, the Chairwoman of the Quang Tri Province Women's Union, conducted the dedication ceremony. District and local women officials, local residents, and the librarian, Miss Xuong, and her assistant, Miss Khong, attended. Quang Le, the PTVN in-country coordinator, represented PTVN, and Chuck Gaede represented all of the donors. Local news reporters attended too.

At the conclusion of the dedication ceremony, Madame Sam presented Chuck with a generous supply of Ca Phe Khe Sanh, the best gift they could have chosen. Madame Sam also used the occasion to award and distribute ten small family business loans to local families from funds provided by the Quang Tri Women's Union.

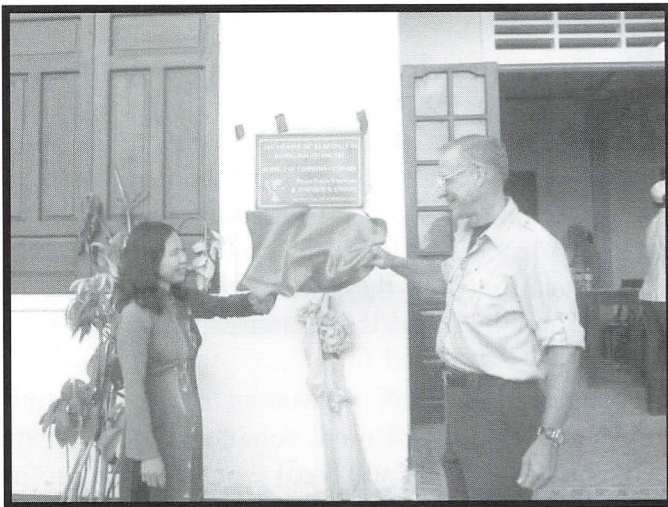
After the ceremony at the library, Madame Sam hosted a reception at a restaurant in Khe Sanh. Following the reception Madame Toan, the Vice Chairwoman of the Women's Union of the Huong Hoa District, took Quang Le and Chuck to view the proposed site for a second library in Lao Bao Town,

near the border of Laos. Chuck is making plans to begin the fund raising for it. The Huong Tan Community Library will benefit the women and children of the Huong Tan Commune for many generations, and it was especially gratifying to see it operational in an area so heavily fought over and destroyed in the Khe Sanh battles. Thanks to all of those who gave funds for the library.

In the photos:

Photo #1: Madame Sam and Chuck Gaede, unveiling the Huong Tan Community Library plaque.

Photo #2: Madame Toan, Madame Sam, Miss Xuong, and Chuck Gaede planting the trees.



MEMOIRS

"A Patch of Ground"

Craig W. Tourte

It's funny about this Khe Sanh stuff. So much time has passed and I had not really thought about it much until these last several years. I was not really interested in talking about my experience with anyone else until I had a conversation one afternoon on the telephone with Tom Horchler, a fellow Marine who I had met at Khe Sanh and had not seen nor heard from for some 35 years. I attended a reunion with Tom and had the opportunity to talk to others who went through the Siege and found that many had the same thoughts and (perhaps lack) of feeling's about that event that I had. It seems that many are still trying to deal and understand what it was all about. The last few years have been equally as strange, having grown close to so many who were there.

I just finished reading a book written by Michael Archer titled "A Patch of Ground." I think Michael might have been at the reunion in Chicago this year, but I don't remember. Michael's experience was pretty much what all of us went through during the Siege. It was well written, a fast read and his memory of events and descriptions of the base and horrors of the artillery poundings and loss of those he knew, were excellent and evoked emotion. I had particular emotional memories of my friends Chuck Chamberlin (C/1/26), and Steve Wiese (B/1/26), when Michael described those events that forever changed the lives of both of these fine men.

So what is it about this Khe Sanh THING that sets us apart from so many others? For me Michael said it best in the last paragraph of his book. "...there were times during those years when I could close my eyes and see the insolent young faces of my buddies, the fine red dust of Khe Sanh etched into their every pore. The ease, humor, and courage with which they endured such relentless peril would sometimes seem to me like a dream. In those moments, it did not matter how I felt about the war, the nation that I wished to forget, or myself. It mattered only that I was proud to have stood with them and defended a little patch of ground."

I have always held a very large space in my heart for those who stood with me at Khe Sanh and for those who enabled and supported us. Michael notes that after the base was abandoned the next day a plane flew over and an NVA (Michael describes it as a Viet Cong flag) was flying over the base. It doesn't matter I guess what happened to Khe Sanh after I left, after my war was over. What does matter to me now, is that I am proud to have stood with so many, those who in my later years I have had the privilege of meeting and knowing.

MEMOIRS

"I still miss him as if it was yesterday"

From Richard Rash:

I have spent the last 37 years at Christmas, without Don, and I still miss him as if it was yesterday.

We grew up in Pageton West Virginia, a small coal mining town. Since all the coal mines have since shut down it is almost a ghost town. Don and his twin brother Ron were born Sept. 14, 1948. I had just started the 3rd grade. On that day, I was walking home from school, and saw my Dad walking to meet me. As he got closer I could see that he had been crying. That struck me because he never cried. As we walked home he told me that I had a new baby brother, and we should be happy about it.

What he did not tell me is that he thought the second twin Don, was stillborn, because when he had left the house the Doctor had already given up trying to get him to breathe, and had pronounced him dead. My Mom's sister Anna was there to help in the delivery and she would not give up. She grabbed my brother and held him under the faucet with the cold water running. As we got closer to the house we could tell there was more than one baby crying. Dad threw me on his shoulder and broke into a run toward the house, laughing and crying at the same time. To his surprise he had 2 sons instead of one.

The following year my Mom had another baby, and now had 3 sons all still in diapers, and on the bottle. I, being the oldest, had to learn to change diapers and feed the bottles to my brothers, so my Mom could take a break once in a while. That task brought me closer to the twins and the bond between us grew stronger. At the age of ten I became the world's

youngest baby sitter. There were 5 boys. Mom and Dad could not take all of us when she shopped or took care of her household chores. I was the helper.

I remember when the twins were about ten years old; I started to teach them how to use a gun. I had joined the Navy, and when I came home on leave I would take them in the woods with the old single shot 22 dad had bought me on my 12th birthday. We would shoot at pennies stuck in the top of old fence posts. Don became a better shot than me and his brother.

The last time I saw Don was in the late fall of 1967 after he had graduated from boot camp. I was working in Chicago. I asked for time off to see him before he went to Camp Pendleton Ca. I woke him up about 6 o'clock one morning and asked him if he wanted to go Rabbit hunting one more time before he left. He got dressed and we went off over the mountain rabbit hunting. To get to where we were going we had to walk over the hill where the old town water tank was and down the other side to the valley.

As we reached the top of the hill near the water tank we could see that it was so foggy that you could hardly see the road. Snow had fallen the night before. It had warmed up quite a bit causing the fog. We sat near the water tank and chewed the fat while we waited for the sun to come out and burn some of the fog off. I told him about my wife expecting our first baby in December. He talked about his upcoming trip to Pendleton and eventually Nam.

I never knew much about the battle at Khe Sanh on 30 March 68, when Don was KIA. One day, I was browsing through a book store at the mall here in town in 1990. I picked up the book titled, **SIEGE OF KHE SANH**. I thumbed through the book and on page 200 Don's name jumped out at me. It had a short story of that battle and a copy of His **NAVY CROSS** Citation. I bought the book and took it home to read. In the book, several of the Marines described the weather on 30 Mar 68, as being so foggy that they had to delay the patrol until they could see well enough. I immediately I thought about the hunting trip Don and I had been on that day. I wonder if he was thinking about it the morning he died...

Publisher Note:

Donald Rash was awarded the Navy Cross for his heroic actions against a large enemy force on 30 March 1968, while serving with Bravo Company 1/26, at the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

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MEMOIRS**The Proud Tree**

By Craig W. Tourte

The plateau that was the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh was my home for approximately 8 months. It was pretty much my world and I didn't really know what was beyond that very small place, it just seemed so far from anywhere. In a way, "Being at Khe Sanh was like being nowhere." *

When I arrived on at Khe Sanh sometime in August 1967 there were minimal defenses and those who had suffered so much during the hill fights were the left over few tasked with defending it. There were a smattering of tents, some hard sided buildings by the airstrip and a too few defensive trenches and fighting holes. A couple of strands of concertina wire were the only obstacles that separated the base from the jungle, enemy and the uncertainty beyond.

Without much thought or planning we started digging, not really sure how deep, wide, long or how to construct a defensive position or build bunkers. We began our digging on the base side of the concertina wire in what we thought was a zigzag configuration where the hard dirt allowed us to sink our small folding entrenching tools. We filled thousands of sandbags, which at first we stacked on top of the trench in front of us, then gradually constructed various covered fighting and firing positions. The clay ground was hard and had that deep red volcanic color I had been so familiar with while living in Northern California in the shadows of Mount Shasta and Lassen.

Our defensive area located on the south side of the base and east of the main gate, was flat and offered relative clear fields of fire. After several months, I became fairly familiar with the area to my front, having spent an abundant amount of time staring out onto the gentle slope of cleared jungle now covered with various grasses and vegetation, before the ground disappeared into the dark green jungle be-

yond. At night I was often selected to man a Listening Post in front of that position. I was handed a spool with a hand held landline phone and wire wrapped around the spool. I was told to walk out until the wire played out and to lay down and listen and observe. Those were the only orders my two comrades and I were given. I guess if we observed any response or actions of the enemy that we wished to make it was up to us privates. I didn't particularly like this assignment, but I did as I was ordered.

As darkness fell we would maneuver ourselves around the concertina wire and tangle foot being careful not to disturb the Claymore mines as we walked away from the protection of the base and our fellow Marines. I don't really know how many feet of wire was on that spool but it sure seemed like it went out for a long distance. We walked on without a word between the three of us, being careful where we stepped and looking for something resembling a depression or rock or any other feature that would afford some type of covering protection, but most often found none and just laying down on the damp vegetation. As I turned my head and looked back at the base it seemed so far away. Although I don't now have any recall of lights emitting from the base, I have a sense that the base had a certain glow about it.

During one such foray, a distinct tink, tink, tink of metal on metal was heard. All three of us puckered up and searched for the source of the sound. We heard it again, as we looked around unable to determine in what direction the sound was coming from. I happened to be looking over my right shoulder when I heard the sound one more time and realized it was coming from the helmet chin strap hinge of the Marine at my three o'clock. I whispered to him that he was an idiot and that he was making the sound. We all breathed a sigh of relief and that was the end of it. I can clearly hear that sound to this day.

Directly in front of my position and 100 to 200 meters south of the concertina wire, stood the stump of an old dead tree. This stump stood about six feet high, it's odd shape gave it an appearance of having a shoulder. The stump was clearly identifiable in the daylight and we who observed it so often became quite familiar with it's shape, but when day light turned to that Vietnam jungle blackness, it was a different story. During certain moonless nights, in the

fog and rain or sometimes just sitting all alone looking forward, the stump seemed to slowly move back and forth and take on other shapes and sizes. If one concentrated on that stump it would on occasion, take the shape of a human form, and all sorts of objects similar to an AK and RPG could be seen hanging from it. More than once the stump gave the appearance of wearing a pith helmet.

One day I walked out to that old stump and noticed several thousand small holes in it, similar to those made by a rifle round. The tree had been dead for some time, was burned and quite battered. As I got closer to the tree, I could see that it didn't resemble a human form at all, it was just an old dried out dead tree whose limbs and other useful wood product had been harvested long ago. I had heard that while others had been out on LP they had mistaken that old tree stump for the enemy and tried to kill it, shooting at it numerous times before realizing that the old stump was not an enemy stocking the perimeter positions. I was told that one team got up and fired at it as they ran back to the base.

It would be interesting if I could tell you that we who were familiar with that old dead tree played tricks on the new guys, but Vietnam and in particular those of us who were at Khe Sanh had no time or patience for such games. Going out into the jungle all night with just a hand held landline phone, laying down and waiting for the enemy to come to us or sitting in the trench line staring and concentrating on the few hundred meters of open area in front of our position while totally exhausted, was serious business and we all knew it.

When SOG moved into the area in the later part of 1967 or early 1968 they took that old dead tree stump out, using the area to land helicopters. I don't know why my memory is drawn to that old dead tree stump. Vietnam had seen numerous battles in and around that area for a thousand years and that tree must have lived several hundred of those years judging by the size of the trunk.

As I look at the photograph I took of the old dead tree stump, I think back to the many hours I spent laying around and near it, scared and wide awake in the dark, rain and often moonless nights. I can still smell the damp earth, hear the sounds of the bugs and night creatures and remember how alert I became

when I could not hear any night or jungle sounds at all. I think of my friend Donald Saunders (KIA 3/4/68) who so often accompanied me, and who had the same doubts, fears and hope for the future I had. I think about what must have been at one time a large proud tree on top of a plateau, which through hundreds of years must have survived thousands of battles, in a place that was nowhere. A place called Khe Sanh.

* "If you were at Khe Sanh you were nowhere," is attributed to words spoken by an unknown officer.



NEWS YOU CAN USE

HIGHER LIMITS EXTENDED IN VA HOME LOAN PROGRAM

By Charlie Taliaferro

WASHINGTON 29 December 2005, America's veterans and their families now have a greater chance to make their dreams of home ownership a reality, thanks to an increase in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) home loan guaranty limit. Effective January 1, 2006, changes in the loan guaranty limits will mean veterans are able to get no-down payment loans up to \$417,000. The previous ceiling was \$359,650.

The Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004 tied increases in the VA guaranty to increases in the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation conforming loan limit. When this limit increases, VA guaranty limits also go up, allowing VA to keep pace with rising home values.

VA-guaranteed home loans are made by banks and mortgage companies to veterans, service members and reservists. With VA guaranteeing a portion of the loan, Veterans can receive a competitive interest rate without making a down payment, making it easier to buy a home. More information about VA home loan benefits is available on the Web at <http://www.homeloans.va.gov> or by calling 1-800-827-1000.

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POETRY

THE FACE OF WAR

War is the bitter fruit of man's failure to reason and the arena for old men to wield the weapon of their country's youth.

The old men lay down the gauntlet; the young men bleed and die for it Shouting, "long live the king".

What of the young warrior's who survive, who come home ?Certainly not the men who left,

What is wrong with my son? What is wrong with my brother, my lover, my daddy, my friend?

He is here, but he is not,
He is in PTSD hell until he dies.

Mike "Animal" Preston

INCOMING

A Surprise At the Black Granite Wall

By Doc Pershing

Yesterday I sat and read the entire magazine, it was outstanding. I was grateful for the articles on PTSD, but the entire magazine held my attention. The article on the wall was especially interesting to me. I went to the wall with two other vets from here in

town (Springfield, Illinois) back in 1995. We went at the end of April and there was a lot of ceremonies going on, it was the 25th anniversary of the fall of South Vietnam.

We got there late on Friday afternoon. And after checking into the hotel we walked directly to the wall. It was evening by then and just about twilight. I had on my sunglasses that I always wear. As I was walking down the wall there were a lot of people and buses parked. A young woman approached me and asked if I was a Vietnam Vet. I told her I was and she asked me if I would do her a favor. To which I replied of course.

It turned out the woman was from the Pocono Mountain area of Pa. She had brought her girl scout troop by bus to see the wall. She had all the girls lined up and everyone of them shook my hand, and thanked me. I was speechless, and just nodded to them all. That was the very first time since I returned home that anyone had ever thanked me for serving in Vietnam. I was glad that I had those shades on, for I was in tears. I didn't want those little girls to think they were upsetting me. Each and everyone of them was so sweet and polite. I was glad I had the support of my two friends at that time.

So you see when I read the article about not going alone to the wall, I had good reason to agree with that statement. That black granite wall means a lot to we Vietnam Vet's. But it also means a lot to others, especially those little girls that traveled to see it first hand. Semper Fi Brothers.

*

INCOMING

By Bob Greenwood

I questioned myself whether to write this message or not. It seems the word Tet, always puts me in a down mode especially during the months of January and February. Of course it could be the Vietnamese Buddhist Temple just down the road from where I live causing the funk I find myself in most of the time. January 22nd, Delta 1/9 was conducting an operation just north of Dong Ha. At noon everything came to a halt. We got word that choppers would be coming in to take us back to Camp Evans. The peon grunt like me had no idea what was going on or where we were going, just follow orders.

We arrived at Camp Evans and we thought we would be able to go back to the company area and grab some extra smokes or pogeys. The orders were that nobody break formation because we were waiting to be airlifted to someplace called Khe Sanh. Then word started to filter down that Khe Sanh was some surrounded village, jumping off in some rice paddy, hit the ground blazing away...etc. The rumors. Choppers finally picked us up about four hours later and off we went. When we landed at the base in the late afternoon, I walked out on the airstrip and said to myself, "hey this is not so bad" LOL!!

As we were milling around the platoon leader said "don't bunch up, spread out." While I was standing on the airstrip, several of us noticed some Phantoms making a bombing run off in the distance. Suddenly anti-aircraft shot down one of the Phantoms and the Corporal next to me said "Oh \$@#%, we're in for some deep, deep \$!@# if they can take down a Phantom". The next day Delta Co 1/9, left the base and headed for the rock quarry, along the way we passed Hill 64 and saw those French bunkers; man we thought that would be "decent" if we could use them. A couple of weeks later, fate showed us why Hill 64 was not a good choice to make a stand. The platoon from Alpha Company was almost over-run.

I was medevaced on February 22, out of Khe Sanh, and I still cry out for help. So many years ago but it seems like just last week. I can't wait to see my Brothers, at this year's reunion. There aren't many 1/9ers at the reunion but I still feel that sense of Brotherhood from Khe Sanh Vets, and nobody can take that away from me. Sorry. I'm just feeling kind of down.

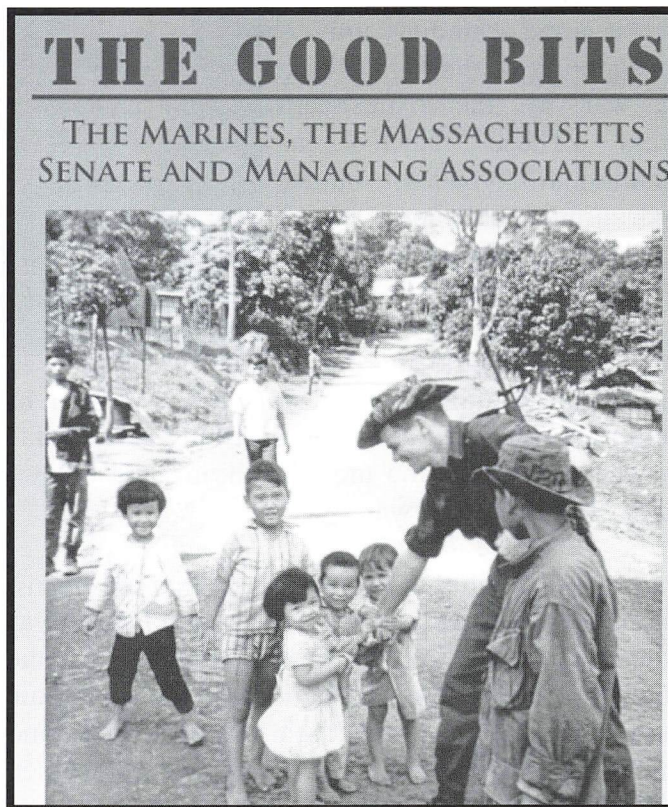
Semper Fi,
Bob

*

BOOK REVIEW

Life Member/former S/Sgt. Robert A. Hall of Madison, Wisconsin has published a collection of anecdotes from his four years on active duty, including Vietnam where he served with Radio Relay, Headquarters, 26th Marines at Khe Sanh, and his month with CAC-O in Khe Sanh Village in 1967. Also are his five terms as a Massachusetts state senator (and six additional years as an active Marine Reservist while

in the senate), and his 23 years as a non-profit association executive. The book, entitled "The Good Bits," is available from Author House for \$14.99, plus shipping. The stories range from the everyday life of an enlisted Marine to his interactions with well-known Massachusetts politicians like John Kerry and Mike Dukakis. Included are stories that will delight and amuse you, as well as lessons learned about leadership, integrity and human rela-



tions. For more information and to read a sample from the book, log on to www.thegoodbits.com.

OBIT

FRANCIS E. VINING JR.
Retired Gunnery Sergeant
August 23 1940-October 08 2005

Francis E. Vining Jr. died Oct. 8, 2005, at Tobey Hospital. He was the husband of Priscilla J. (Cook) Vining, for 23 years. Mr. Vining retired from the Marine Corps as a gunnery sergeant after 20 years, and was a veteran of the Vietnam War, serving at Khe Sanh with B Co 3RD Tanks. He also served 10 years in the Marine Corps Reserve. His awards include the Bronze Star Medal with V for valor, and three Purple Hearts.

VETERANS TAKING CARE OF VETERANS, LEST WE FORGET

Barry Fixler E Co 2/26 Hill 861A

Just Caring For Eddie *By Thomas D. Segel*

If there is any area of news coverage where media bias exists, it is the seemingly universal ignoring of the human face of war by the mainstream press. Those labeled as "traditional" broadcast outlets and print publications have consistently offered the public a laundry list of bombs, bodies and devastation, but have seldom reported little more than the numbers. It is rare indeed when a person or group are examined as living, breathing participants in what is perhaps the most horrifying and uncivilized of endeavors.... war.

To bring the reality of the conflict in Iraq into focus, one must turn to what is rapidly being referred to as "the new media". In more precise language it is the combined efforts of talk radio and the electronic publications of the Internet that reach the heart and the hurt of what is happening to the men and women of our armed forces.

A prime example of this would be when reporting about those who have been wounded in action. Traditional publications seldom report on wounded Americans. If they do, the items are short and usually limited to numbers or totals. Those wishing to learn more must search out websites on the Internet or tune in the commentators of talk radio. A Google or Yahoo search will give you more than 1,400,000 hits on information about Americans wounded in Iraq.

The topic can best be examined using the heart-wrenching story of Marine Sergeant Eddie Ryan. On April 13, 2005, this young Marine was manning a rooftop position along with other members of his sniper platoon. Not much was happening until that first shot and a bullet pierced his brain. It was quickly followed by a second shot that smashed into his jaw. The enemy had not even pulled the trigger

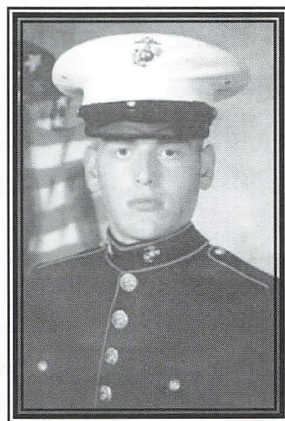
that day. Ryan had been the mistaken target of friendly fire. But, this is not really a story of a devastating wound, but instead it is one of faith and prayer.

Eddie Ryan died that day. There was not a breath of life in him when teammate Sergeant Karl Schaeffer started CPR. He continued forcing air into Ryan and applying the life saving technique until the young Marine was again breathing on his own. When Eddie was in condition to be moved, he was flown to Germany. He was sustained by a variety of life support systems and given little chance of survival. His parents were flown in to be by his side. Doctors told them that even if he did remain alive there was no way he would ever remember his family or anything about himself. All his father, Chris could do was remain by his side for hours on end and pray to God for his life.

Eddie never left them. When he was stable enough, he was air evacuated to Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland. At the time doctors said it was so he could be close to family and friends at the end. Everyone's prayers continued. WABC's Mark Levin who asked all his listeners to pray for Eddie heard the family had asked for a network of prayer and informed his audience. Sean Hannity reported the story on his radio program. The hometown community and the church offered prayers. They were all answered far beyond anyone's expectations.

Ryan's friend and team leader is "CJ" Quinlan who was still in Iraq, but asked his wife to keep checking on the wounded Marine and report back. It was difficult for Lisa to walk into that hospital room and see a close family friend lying in such a state, but she continued coming and reporting on those visits to those still fighting the war.

One day another Marine returned from Iraq and Lisa Quinlan took him to see Eddie. "I brought Sergeant Taylor White to the room that day and when Eddie saw him he smiled." He recognized Taylor White... his first reaction to seeing a friend. Progress continued and six weeks after being shot Eddie started to move his head. Next he was transferred from Bethesda to a military rehabilitation hospital in Richmond, Virginia. Shortly after arriving he looked at his mother and uttered his first word..."Mom". The very next day His father Chris was bending down



and saying, "I love you", when the Marine responded, "I love you too, Dad." At that moment they knew he was aware of his family.

The Marine's recall was proven again when CJ Quinlan returned from Iraq and walked into the room. Eddie looked at him and said "Papa Bear" which was CJ's nickname. Today, Eddie Ryan has gained weight, can talk haltingly, and has full use of his left arm and limited use of the right arm. He can sit up in his wheelchair and has managed to stand with assistance, but is still unable to walk. Eddie has full memory and recalls the events of his childhood and later years. He has a sense of humor and his sister makes him laugh frequently. He is starting to speak in complete sentences.

Eddie's father took months off from work to be by his side. Angie, his mother, quit her job to remain near the wounded Marine, and his sister, Felicia, took time off from college to be with her brother.

This is a story that has been told and retold by website, and email. Few mentions of Sergeant Eddie Ryan appear in the mainstream media. One such mention, however, must be credited to a caring publication. On January 23, 2006 there was a story in The Times Herald-Record, which serves New York's Hudson Valley and the Catskills. It tells of Eddie Ryan's battle to recover from his wounds. It reports on how the family's main concern is that Eddie's release from the hospital is only weeks away, and he will be unable to function in their small home.

According to the Times Herald-Record, "...the hallway to Eddie's bedroom is too narrow for him and the wheelchair. The main bathroom in his family's 1,300 square foot ranch-style home can't accommodate him, either. The living room can't hold Eddie, his mother Angela, his dad and sister Felicia at the same time, Chris Ryan says."

Handicapped assessable renovations, including an addition to the home will carry a price tag of almost \$100,000. It is a cost far beyond the family's reach. Eddie is only eligible for \$10,000 in government assistance. But, the faith of the entire family remains strong. Their prayers for help are being answered too. People are coming to the aid of Eddie and his family in a variety of ways.

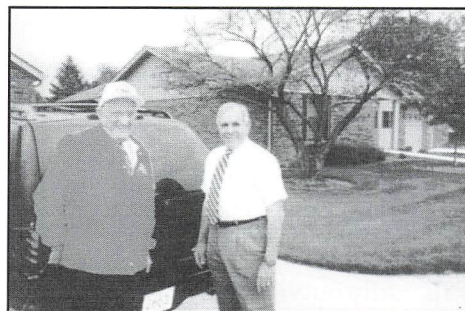
Americans are reaching out. Barry Fixler, a jewelry storeowner, and former Marine ran a special event. All proceeds from his jewelry sales were donated to the wounded serviceman's rehabilitation. Fixler learned about Eddie's condition from his wife, Linda, who is one of the Marine's nurses. Barry is a member of the Khe Sanh Veterans, and a consistent contributor to all veterans causes.

Eddie Ryan's story is being carried on a website donated by A&E Advertising and Web Design. The company has also made arrangements for people to donate to Eddie Ryan's rehabilitation at www.helpeddie.com Marine sniper buddies have joined together and are offering a special rifle in a fund raising drawing that is dedicated to Eddie. Those wishing to purchase a ticket can write to Sniper's Hide at fgalli@intelextltd.com. Chris Ryan is looking into every possible option to assist his son. He is comforted by the public response the family has already received. But, he also noted there are almost 10,000 wounded service personnel who can never return to active duty. "Things have got to change", he says, "not just for Eddie, but also for all these kids giving their lives and their blood for their country. They are not getting taken care of."

OBIT

Tom

I just wanted to inform you of the passing of another great Marine who had served in WWII. Karl R. Lefler was a BAR man, in the first wave that landed at Tarawa, at 18 years of age. He was a Professor at Purdue University and an all around great guy. He never forgot his Marine Corps roots, and was impressed with our magazine and what we went through at Khe Sanh.



Louis Famiano
Mag-36 FAC Team 01

POETRY**By Mike Fishbaugh**

Doc G, HM-2 Hospital Corpsman, served with the 1st Battalion 9th Marines September 1967 - November 1968. His tour of duty included Con Thien, Camp Carroll, Rock Pile, Ashau Valley, Khe Sanh, and various other scenic spots in Northern I Corps. Doc today is a husband, father, Presbyterian minister, valuable member of his County Rescue Squad, and Chaplain to the County Police Force.

Reflections of "Doc G"**Why I Am Who I Am**

You may wonder why I'm so different
Why I have so many unusual ways
But feel not alone, for I wonder too
But in answer, this is all I can say...

My life before Nam was quite normal
Not a prep course for what I'd encounter
And in your wildest dreams you'd never imagine
How intense just living in Nam could be,

Well, here is part of the story of Life in the Nam
Of how I was changed into what I am

Over there, you didn't see a tree in a forest,
You saw an ambush behind every leaf.
There were no fields of grass to romp in,
Just another place for booby traps and pits.

There were spiders and snakes, elephants, tigers, insects...
None of which seemed to care much for me.
And of course there were people of a different culture,
Who wanted me to die more than they cared for their own life.

So listen to this story...and find out who I am
I'm a man changed by the misery of Vietnam.

I have walked through a river of blood
While death tugged at my shirttail.
I have slept with the corpse of a friend

Who hours before was my bosom buddy.

I have lived in the stench of feces and urine
While rats scampered across my feet.
I have held men too young to shave in my arms
While they gasped their very last breath.
I have cried at the loss of a comrade
And I wondered why it was him and not me.
I have eaten food with blood caked on my hands
While I sat among the wounded and the dead.
I have endured great hunger for food
While my lips were parched with thirst.
I have lived in a hole in the ground with vermin
While my brains seemed to cook in the sun.
I have invaded a land that was not my own
And I hated a people I didn't even know.
I have had muscles ache from extreme fatigue
While my eyes bore witness to the extreme horror.
I have run unafraid through artillery and bullets
While wondering if the next round would get me.
I have grown faint from fear
While my mind entombed the living nightmares.
I have witness pain of intolerable degree
While I held the pieces of destroyed tissue in my hands.

I was obligated to play God, and I did it
As I decided who was to live and who must die.
I have fired at the enemy with a vengeance
And I have promised to kill a friend out of mercy.

I have done these things...

For you, it is a spring rain
For me it is a memory of haunting death.
For you it is a walkway through a pleasant wood area,
For me it is a one-way path to devastation.
For you it is a restaurant with wonderful atmosphere,
For me it is an invitation to mortar attack.

Yes, it is true I have changed.
I'm not who I was and never will be again.
So as you wonder why I am the way I am
Or why I do as I often do,
Please remember...
Sometimes I don't know why either.

"Doc G"**Richard A. Goodwin**

PERSONAL MEMORIAL

ROBERT LEE HAYS REMEMBERS HIS LOVING WIFE

Frieda Jean Hays, the daughter of the late Wilton Fredrick and Mary Louise King Witzgall, was born March 18, 1943 at Huntington, West Virginia. She entered into eternal rest November 20, 2005 at the age of sixty-two years.



She graduated with the Class of 1961 from the Highland Springs High School, Highland Springs, Virginia. On December 16, 1961, she was married at Sandston Virginia to Roger Emeritt Lovan who preceded her in death on February 24, 1987. On October 9, 1992, she was married at West Plains, Missouri to Robert Lee Hays. For twenty-five years, she had been employed with International Shoe Company, Hy-Test and West Plains Shoe. She was the Municipal Court Administrator for the City of West Plains. Mrs. Hays was a member of the Missouri Association for Court Administrators since 1997. Since 1972, she was a member of the First United Methodist Church where she taught Children's Church, assisted with God's Kids and Junior High Youth and was a member of the Esther Group and Seekers Sunday School Class.

Mrs. Hays is survived by her husband, Robert Lee Hays, and a family of six children: Kenneth Dwayne Lovan and wife, Marie, Elkland, Missouri, Elizabeth Francine Smith and husband, Dennis, West Plains, Missouri, Jeffrey Wilton Lovan and wife, Sonya, Jordan, Arkansas, Robin Lynn Doyle and husband, Joseph, Lebanon, Missouri, Robert Leon Hays and wife, Sheila, Rolla, Missouri and Amanda Gene Hays, Joplin, Missouri; nineteen grandchildren, Ashlee, Geoffrey, Jack, Eathan, Mystique, and Eddie Lovan, Sethanie Cox, Amanda, Clayton, and Dustin Smith, Richard, Roger, and Holly Lovan, Daniel, Ryan, and Joshua Williams, Shawna, Kobe, and Cody Hays; two great grandchildren, Chad and Colby Hays; one brother, Kenneth Witzgall and wife Alberta, Annapolis, Maryland; and several nieces and nephews.

Her parents and first husband precede her in death.

*In
Memory*



Frieda Jean Hays

1943 - 2005

POETRY

Submitted By Dennis Chericone
(Author Unknown)

The Main Thing
You must remember
Is the Jungle
Has retaken the trenches

Think it forgiven
Look on it healed
As a scar.

WE GOT MAIL

Tom, I am sending in double dues, please pay for a brother who cannot afford to. I am proud to be a Khe Sanh Survivor, and associated with the RED CLAY magazine. I have just completed a two year battle with Lymphoma Cancer. On Dec 14, 2005, I received a most wondrous Christmas present when I was finally diagnosed to be in complete remission.

I was already receiving 100% compensation from the VA when I was first diagnosed with cancer. Lymphoma cancer is associated with agent orange and the many defoliants, used in Vietnam. I thought I had escaped the wrath of those chemicals until being diagnosed in 2004. It is terrible that so many of us are being brought down by these symptoms after being involved in such terrible direct combat as we endured at Khe Sanh. We are in fact still fighting the effects of war in many different ways.

During the war my mother suffered so much always worrying about my well being. She watched the news every day when broadcast live, hoping to get a glimpse of me. Mom and dad are still alive and we spend a lot of time together. That is why it was so hard for me to tell them about my cancer after being diagnosed. I had to deliver the news face to face and it almost killed me. My wife is my strongest supporter. We met and married after I left military service. She also anguishes about this war that never leaves us.

I want to thank everyone for their efforts with the **RED CLAY** magazine. I find it a very good source of closure to our war.

KHE SANH VETERANS STILL SERVING OUR COUNTRY

Dear Mr. Eichler, just a short note to let you know that my husband, Wayne Silva, D Co 1/26, is still serving in the Marines. His unit has just been activated, and they are headed for Iraq. He will be stationed at Camp Fallujah, with the 1st Marine Regiment.

He is not scheduled to return until November of 2006, which will give him 30 years of service in the USMC. I dare say I do not think there are that many Khe Sanh Veterans in Iraq, especially A 58 Year

old. I guess there are still **A Few Good "OLD" Men left.**

KENNETH W. BARTELS, (B Btry 1/13)

Is also serving in Iraq. As of this writing we do not know the unit he is serving with.

Editors Note: if any member wishes to express their good wishes to Wayne or Ken, here are their email addresses, Wayne -**USMC126D@YAHOO.COM**.

Ken -**DEBABARTELS@AOL.COM**

Of course we will be sending our brother WAYNE & KEN our good wishes, and gifts, as we have our other brothers who serve/served there.

MEMBERS SENDING CONTRIBUTIONS

ADAMS, Harry J Jr
ALLEN, Lewis
ARNDT, Terrence D
BOWMAN, David J
CAMPO, Carl C
CAUSEY, Hubert L
CHANDLER, Daniel T
CROSBY, Craig
DAKIN, William E Jr
EUSANIO, Thomas B
FESSENDEN, Gregory L
FOSMO, Harold D Jr.
HERNANDEZ, John
KEATING, Michael E
KESEK, Ronald S
LESLIE, James
FETTER, Charles H
FORBES, James
GREEN, CT
HENDRY, David J
KENDIG, Dennis R
LALIBERTE, Daniel J
LAFOUNTAIN, Norman S
LEAHY, Michael M
LEMIEUX, Lorne A
LESLIE, James
McFARLANE, Andrew
MOSEBAY, Watson T Jr
PETERS, Thomas R
PIERCE, Thomas A
PROVENCIO, Ramon
SMOYER, Nancy
SNIEGOWSKI, Ronald
VAN DE BOGART, Allan F
WALKER, Colin C.
WHITTON, Donald
WRIGHT, Phillip J

MEMOIRS**Journalists and Others**

By Craig W. Tourte

The loss of anyone in war is tragic, but it is the nature of the beast. The war in Vietnam was covered and brought to the American public via television live for the first time. I don't know how many journalists were lost covering that conflict, but Bernard Fall, a French journalist, author and educator, comes to mind. I think I have read all of his books dealing with the war in Southeast Asia. Who can forget books such as "Hell In A Very Small Place, the Siege of Dien Bien Phu," and "Street Without Joy." He was a popular individual who was known and loved by many Marines and who's death came at the age of 40 on February 21, 1967, along with those of GY/SGT Byron Highland and L/CPL Glenn Harris while on a patrol with A&C/1/9 near Hue.

I know that Walter, Harry, and Dan were in country. I remember seeing the newsreels of them when I returned home in 1968. Each describing in a breathless whisper the dangers the American forces faced dealing with the soldiers of the north and rebels of the south. They all seemed to be dressed the same, some kind of khaki bush jacket with matching pants. I remember a photograph of Walter wearing a flak jacket and helmet, it made him look out of place and rather odd, I thought at the time how old Walter looked. There were lots of pictures taken by various journalists and cameramen who visited the war. Male and female came and went, some were lost to the conflict, but I never saw nor knew any of them.

I think I have seen most of the photographs taken of Khe Sanh during the Siege. Considering the historical circumstances, there really don't seem to be that many. It appears the majority were taken by the men who were themselves involved in the conflict. I don't have any personal recall of ever seeing a news type person at Khe Sanh during the 8 months I was there. Of course I realize that I was located in one of the more isolated corners of the base and few "visitors" ever came that way. There were few officers around and those who were in the area during the Siege seemed to be fairly inconspicuous.

It was one of those afternoons; a clear day after the fog had lifted. Helicopters would come and go. Toilet waste barrels were burning and the big guns of

the NVA had not hurled anything at us for an hour or more. There was a feeling in the air that I could not describe, more of a sense than anything else, but I didn't know what it was. Sgt. Michael Secli had to report to H.Q. 1/26 for some reason, quite a walk (or run) from our location on a road we traveled only when it was absolutely necessary. Sgt. Secli was gone for two or three hours and returned with some exciting news. Sgt. Secli told us that he was talking to someone when he sensed something in the air, which he could not describe. He asked if there was a woman on the base and was surprised to hear that there was a female journalist in the area. I was surprised to hear this news, I never had seen a journalist, newsperson, cameraman or any other type of media at Khe Sanh, at least where our unit was located. On the other hand, there really was not much to look at or report on in the southwest corner of the base. Lots of blown up tents and sandbags, large holes in the ground, jagged metal objects lying all over the place, pretty much the same that could be observed anywhere on the base. But there were few good-looking officers or people of any importance in our area. We were just a bunch of privates, doing our job and trying to stay alive.

It would have been interesting years later, to be able to see my young face on the cover of Life Magazine, to have been able to read a quote I might have made that had historical significance, and which was still repeated to this day. I might have been standing by a sign that read "Home Is Where You Dig It," but it never happened. There was no photograph of me in my torn battle fatigues with cigarette dangling out of my mouth, or my name with hometown listed. No journalist visited us at our little corner of Khe Sanh and if they had, they probably would have spelled my name wrong.

I am reminded that although I did not see any journalists, they did visit Khe Sanh, along with various journalists and photographers who covered the Siege extensively. Ernie Spencer and Lawrence "Mack" McCartney brought Robert Ellison to my attention. Ellison arrived sometime during the start of the Siege but left in February. Ellison was returning to Khe Sanh in March onboard the C-123 Caribou that was shot down while on approach to the base, which tragically killed all. Ellison took numerous photographs of the destructive power of the NVA's incoming rounds, including the famed photograph of

the ammo dump explosion featured on the front page of Newsweek Magazine on March 18, 1968. Another famous photograph taken by Ellison was one titled "Marines In Trench" depicting three Marines laying prostrate in the bowels of the red clay trench in their dated flack jackets and helmets, hands over their face and helmeted head. A powerful photograph even when viewed 38 years later and a photograph that still evokes strong remembrances and emotions.

Ellison is also noted for the famous "Red" photograph. This photograph is the face of a Marine with the words "Red" written on the side of his helmet and a PFC chevron drawn on the front. The haggard face, sunken eyes and drawn whiskered cheeks reveal the utter exhaustion and hopelessness felt by so many of us. It is the face of all who went through the Siege of Khe Sanh.

Anyone who has read Bernard Fall's book "Hell In A Very Small Place, the Siege of Dien Bien Phu," cannot help but make the comparison of the Siege at Dien Bien Phu and the Siege at Khe Sanh. President Johnson made the comparison when speaking of Khe Sanh when he summed up his feeling while the fighting was still in progress, "I don't want any damn **Dinbinphoo.**" Khe Sanh Veteran Gordon Young reminds us that Bernard Fall was killed while on a patrol with Marines on his own Street Without Joy near Hue, in the area he so eloquently described and wrote about some years before.

Leland Upshaw and Lawrence "Mack" McCartney inform us that David Douglas Duncan, a retired Marine and then photojournalist visited the base and hills during the Siege. Lawrence McCartney said Duncan visited Echo Company on Hill 861-A after the morning battle of February 5, 1968. Duncan took photographs for Life Magazine and wrote extensively, authoring two books, which include photographs of Khe Sanh. One was "War Without Heroes," and the other was "I Protest." An important passage in his book, "I Protest" reads, "I am no kook, hippie, hawk, or dove. I am just a veteran combat photographer and foreign correspondent who cares intensely about my country and the role we are playing...and assigning to ourselves...in the world today. And I want to shout a loud protest at what has happened at Khe Sanh and in all of Vietnam." Duncan gave the royalties from "I Protest" to the

families of Marines killed at Khe Sanh.

One of the more memorable photographs taken by Duncan while at Khe Sanh showed deceased Marines being loaded onboard a CH-46 helicopter. Khe Sanh Veteran Kevin Macaulay, a former Corporal with Bravo 3rd Recon writes, "In all probability, one of the deceased Marines being carried aboard the CH-46 on 21 January 68 was Bill Bryan. We of Bravo Recon gave our brother Marines their last salute as they left Khe Sanh on their way home."

In 2003 David Douglas Duncan was 88 years old and living in the South of France.

It was Jim Madara who remembers the female reporter being at Khe Sanh and relates that towards the end of the Siege that he, and another Marine were driving alongside the airstrip while helicopters were landing and disembarking many starched utility types (could they have been officers?). Both were looking at the crowd for the rumored return of the female reporter when one of the starched utility types got in their way. Jim caught the gleam of a silver insignia going over the fender of his jeep. It wasn't the reporter (female) so Jim decided to continue on and fulfill his assigned mission. He was surprised that he never heard anything else about the incident. Jim's recall is that the silver flash looked a lot like a bird.

Jurate Kazickas was a 24-year-old correspondent visiting Khe Sanh during the Siege. Tall and blond and some said even exotic-looking, she gained access as a free-lancer and the Marines liked her being around. "It was a quiet day, March 8, 1968, and Kazickas was interviewing a group of Marines in the sunshine. Suddenly she heard a whistling sound and the men shouted, "Incoming!" A rocket exploded 50 feet away. Instead of throwing herself on the ground, she made the mistake of running toward the bunker. Shrapnel tore into her face, arms, legs, and rear end."

Johnny "Doc" McBride was one of Corpsmen who had "the pleasure" to cut off Ms. Kazickas pants. "It was a surprise when we saw a female anatomy but we were too busy working on the wounded for it to really make a difference...it was like a treat from heaven...she was very cute. It motivated me to survive the incoming and make it home...I have a letter

from her thanking us for taking care of her.”

Ernie Spencer remembers that Doctor Ed Feldman was also one who attended to Ms. Kazickas and that Doctor Feldman and Ms. Kazickas are friends to this day. Ernie points out that Bill Gay with engineers was badly wounded as he stood next to Jurate Kazickas that morning.

“Word traveled quickly that a female reporter was among those who had been taken by helicopter to a hospital in Da Nang. The military didn’t send flowers. One colonel said, “She got what she was looking for.” (Cristina Rouvalis and Bill Schackner).”

Jurate Kazickas is now a 63 year-old freelance writer who lives in New York City and “...still carries the faint scars from the bloody Siege of Khe Sanh.” She is a board member of the Adoption Institute, which is dedicated to improving the lives of people touched by adoption, and the co-author of “War Torn.” Ms. Kazickas recalls her time at Khe Sanh. “I was only there 24 hours before I was wounded: mercifully not seriously. It was a little humiliating to have shrapnel in my rear end.” “... fortunately the only plastic surgeon in all of the northern part of Vietnam was on duty that day, and he said if you were a Marine, I would just take a Brillo pad and just scrub all of that stuff out of your face, but he worked on me for about an hour, taking out every little piece of shrapnel.”

Dickey Chapelle was a war correspondent known for her horn-rimmed glasses and boonie hat decorated with jump wings she’d earned in another war. With cigarettes, custom-tailored fatigues, and pearl earrings, she had a passion for her stories and loved Marines. In the fall of 1965 Dickey convinced the editors of the National Observer to send her back to Vietnam where she had been many times before.

“On the morning of November 4, 1965, Dickey, on patrol with a platoon of Marines, stood second in line behind the platoon leader, Lt. Mauriski. Making their way out of camp, the lieutenant tripped a hidden wire triggering a grenade and mortar that sent shrapnel flying. Dickey was thrown 20 feet and caught a piece of shrapnel in her neck, which nicked her carotid artery. She bled to death, her head in the lap of another reporter. Dickey once told a general, “When my time comes, I want it to be on a patrol

with the Marines.” She was the first member of the press killed during Vietnam and the first American woman reporter killed in battle. One can’t help wonder, with her love of the Marines and having spent her career striving to be the first, if she couldn’t have written a better epitaph.”

I think back to 1965 and Chuck Chamberlin transporting the remains of the Marines beloved Dickie Chapelle. I believe Ms. Chapelle’s family would be proud to have known that Chuck, a Marine who would survive the bloody Siege of Khe Sanh years later, was the person who was with Dickie on her last journey. I believe it was fitting and proper and to a certain extent, destiny that Ms. Chapelle was placed into his care. I believe that Ms. Chapelle would have considered it her privilege.

I am thankful for the presence of the journalists and photographers on the hills and base, and for their bravery. Their photographs allowed us to recall the bravery we had in ourselves and helped us to remember our comrades who had not returned.

Editors Note: In the above article Craig speaks of Khe Sanh Veteran Chuck Chamberlin who had to escort the body of Chapelle. Below is Chuck Chamberlin’s personal account of that occurrence.

Transporting Dickey Chapelle

By Chuck Chamberlin

One of the worst jobs I had prior to joining the Marine Corps was working for a funeral home out of Fairfield, CA that had the Army contract for bodies being returned from Vietnam. I was paid \$1.25 per hour as I recall, and the job consisted primarily of assisting with the processing of remains at Oakland Army Terminal/Mortuary Section. There were about a half dozen of us on the grunt crew, and after unloading the shipping cases from trucks we would then open the cases, remove the bodies, and place them on gurneys, which were then staged for the morticians in the preparation room.

It took awhile to get used to the smell of camphor and Formalin, and that other smell that can’t be disguised. I don’t think I’ll ever forget the sight of so many men’s bodies, some whole and others mangled beyond all recognition. I soon learned to block out the fact that not long ago these were walking/talking human beings. The morticians embalmed the

remains, dressed the deceased in their Class 'A' uniforms and, for those that were "viewable", applied makeup to make them more presentable to their friends and relatives. We would then place these soldiers in caskets, using silver spray paint to obscure the glass on those deemed "non-viewable", seal the caskets and place them in plywood shipping crates. An American flag was provided for each of them. I then transported these fallen heroes to San Francisco airport for their final flight home. In the case of those from the Bay Area, I provided transportation to local cemeteries including the National Cemetery in San Bruno, CA for burial with military honors. Business was brisk and there was plenty of overtime.

I think my experience with this gruesome job had a lot to do with my joining the Marine Corps. I figured by then that I'd seen enough Army bodies to last a lifetime. That and the fact that my older brother had done a hitch in the Corps, including 6 months in 'Nam before rotating home for discharge. In my naïve/ignorant teenage mind I thought I'd be better off as a Marine! Little did I know that 2 years later I'd be offered a similar escort assignment by a marine officer while assigned to Casual Company, Treasure Is., CA. By then I was a Corporal fresh out of Oak Knoll Naval Hospital after surviving the Khe Sanh siege. I took a guard detail at the federal building in San Francisco instead, but that's a whole other story.

One Friday night in November of '65 I was told to drive the "funeral coach" (hearse) up to McClellan AFB about an hour north of Fairfield. There, I was to pickup the remains of a civilian "VIP" who'd been flown in separate from the usual route via Air Force transport, and I was told to return the remains to the Travis AFB morgue near Fairfield. I was handed a sheaf of paperwork that in typical military fashion consisted of multiple carbon copies to be duly signed and stamped by the appropriate personnel, and proceeded to carry out this somewhat unusual assignment.

It's been over 40 years since then, but either upon my return to Travis that evening, or the next day, I assisted with removing those remains from the shipping case. I recall being shocked to discover that the deceased was in fact a diminutive female in her mid-40's, with a single small shrapnel wound in her neck. At Oakland Army Terminal I'd gotten used to seeing the remains of relatively young adult males

with the entire range of combat wounds. To see this woman with a seemingly tiny wound surprised me, but at the time I didn't know who she was or the circumstances of her death. I have since learned more about the woman I transported from one Air Force base to another that night...

The following information, was compiled from various sources on the Internet such as "Wikipedia" and "digital journalist.org".)

Dickey Chapelle was born Georgette Louise Meyer in Shorewood, Wisconsin in 1919, and by the age of sixteen she was attending aeronautical design classes at MIT. She soon returned home, where she worked at a local airfield, hoping to learn to pilot airplanes instead of merely designing them. However, when her mother learned that she was also having an affair with one of the pilots, Chapelle was forced to live in Florida with her grandparents.

Eventually, she moved to New York, and met her future husband, Tony Chapelle, and began working as a photographer sponsored by Trans World Airlines. She eventually became a professional, and later, after fifteen years of marriage, divorced Tony, and changed her first name to Dickey. Despite her mediocre photographic credentials, Chapelle managed to become a war correspondent photojournalist for National Geographic, and with one of her first assignments, was posted with the Marines during World War II.

After the war, she traveled all around the world, often going to extraordinary lengths to cover a story in any war zone. She later learned to jump with paratroopers, and usually traveled with troops. This led to frequent awards, and earned the respect of both the military and journalistic community.

Despite early support for Fidel Castro, Dickey was an outspoken anti-Communist, and loudly expressed her pro-American views at the beginning of the Vietnam War. Chapelle was killed by a landmine in Vietnam on November 4, 1965; her last moments were captured in a photograph by Henri Huet. She became the first war correspondent killed in Vietnam, as well as the first female reporter to be killed during battle.

Whiskey-voiced and brave, Dickey Chapelle spent most of her adult life in a man's world. She knew

how to parachute out of a plane as well as how to fly one, had adventures in three wars, and was remembered by nearly everyone she ever met.

In 1962, she won the Overseas Press Club's George Polk Award for the best reporting in any medium, requiring exceptional courage and enterprise abroad. Her proudest achievement was the Distinguished Service Award, presented by the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association. At her memorial service, a representative of the Women's National Press Club said Chapelle was "the kind of reporter all women in journalism openly or secretly aspire to be. She was always where the action was."

I saw many dead bodies from Vietnam before this one and many more after, but none seemed sadder to me than Dickey Chapelle's. There's one of those Australian campaign hats lying on the ground near her head in the picture, and I read that she'd put a flower in the hatband that morning. I've also read that she once told a general, "When my time comes I want to be on patrol with marines". It's been said that she got her wish, though I've never been sure about that, with her or anyone else. Her last words reportedly were... "I guess it was bound to happen".

I quit that lousy job not long afterward, and within a year was in boot camp in San Diego. Dickey Chapelle is also the subject of a song by Nanci Griffith. The last verse is included below:

"It was 1965,
Over Chu Lai in a free fall dive
In a dawn patrol to cover the dead zone ground
She tiptoed through the land mines
All along the enemy lines
But she never saw the one that took her down
She captured the bloody pearls of war so well
That war was bound to steal the end of Dickey Chapelle"

"Pearl's Eye View (The Life of Dickey Chapelle)"
by Nanci Griffith/"Maura Kennedy



The photo below is from "R E Q U I E M" by Horst Faas, taken by Henri Huet in Chu Lai, Vietnam, 1965 (AP). The caption reads: "U.S. Marine Corps chaplain John Monamara of Boston administers the last rites to war correspondent Dickey Chapelle"



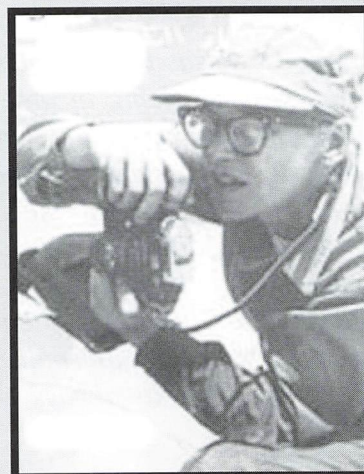
Dickey Chapelle and Archie's Angels, 1962

Dickey Chapelle (Left Kneeling) and some of Archie's Angels display a communist flag captured by the troops they carried in early operations against the Viet Cong. This photo was part of an article written by Ms Chapelle for National Geographic, Vol 122, No. 5, November 1962. This article documents the first meeting of Dickey and HMM-362. The relationship ended in tragedy as an Ugly Angel helicopter piloted by Greg Lee raced her shattered body to Delta Med at Ky Ha 3 years later. She did not survive. Marines in photo are from the left: R. J. Dumas, G. T. Simmons and A. J. Rohl.

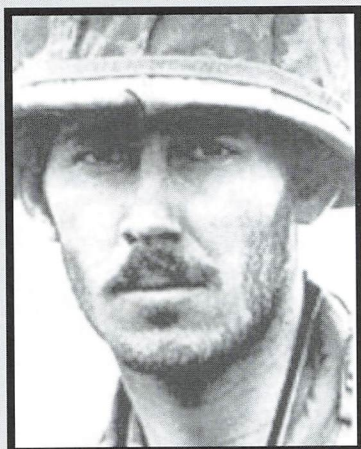
A FEW OF OUR NOTABLE PHOTO JOURNALIST THAT SERVED WITH THE USMC



David Douglas Duncan - WWII,
Korea, Vietnam.



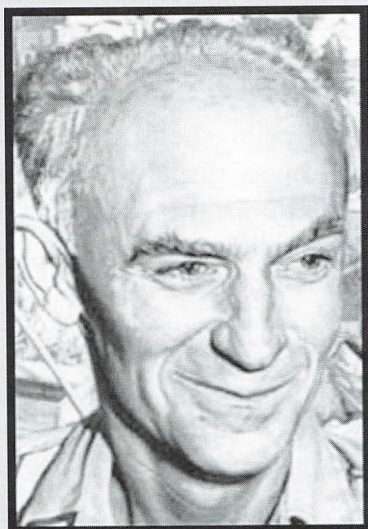
Dickey Chapelle - WWII, Vietnam KIA 04
November 1965



Robert Ellison Vietnam - KIA 06
Mar 68, KSCB



Juarte Kazickas- Vietnam - WIA KSCB 08 Mar 68
Current Member of the Khe Sanh Veterans



Ernie Pyle, WWII - KIA Okinawa 17 April 1945



Bernard B. Fall-Vietnam -KIA
21 Feb 67 near the City of Hue

POETRY

My Belated Christmas Greeting to All Khe Sanh Vets

By Mike "Animal" Preston

The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light, I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight. My wife was asleep, her head on my chest, my daughter beside me, angelic in rest.

Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white, transforming the yard to a winter delight. The sparkling lights in the tree I believe, completed the magic that was Christmas Eve. My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep, secure and surrounded by love I would sleep.

In perfect contentment, or so it would seem, so I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream. The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near, but I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear. Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know, then the sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow. My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear, and I crept to the door just to see who was near. Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night, a lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.

A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old, perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold. Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled, standing watch over me, and my wife and my child. "What are you doing?" I asked without fear, "come in this moment, it's freezing out here! Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve, you should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift, away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts.. To the window that danced with a warm fire's light Then he sighed and he said "Its really all right, I'm out here by Choice, I'm here every night." "It's my duty to stand at the front of the line, that separates you from the darkest of times. No one had to ask or beg or implore me, I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me.

My Gramps died at 'Pearl on a day in December," then he sighed, "that's a Christmas 'Gram always re-

members." My dad stood his watch in the jungles of 'Nam', and now it is my turn and so, here I am. I've not seen my own son in more than a while, but my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile. Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag, the red, white, and blue... an American flag. "I can live through the cold and the being alone, away from my family, my house and my home.

I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet, I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat. I can carry the weight of killing another, or lay down my life with my sister and brother.. Who stand at the front against any and all, to ensure for all time that this flag will not fall." "So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright, your family is waiting and I'll be all right." "But isn't there something I can do, at the least, "give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast?

It seems all too little for all that you've done, for being away from your wife and your son." Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret, "just tell us you love us, and never forget.

To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone, to stand your own watch, no matter how long. For when we come home, either standing or dead, to know you remember we fought and we bled. Is payment enough, and with that we will trust, that we mattered to you as you mattered to us.

*

WE GET MAIL

A Simple Thank You

It is now the beginning of the year 2006. A lot of years have gone by since 1967, and part of 1968, at Khe Sanh. I have had 7 heart attacks and PTSD to compound my health. I would like to express , and I am sure all would agree, what a blessing the Reverend Ray W. Stubbe has been for all of us, especially for our deceased brothers and their families.

Personally I will always be grateful for his belief in my truthful discussions regarding my time at Khe Sanh. God Bless him always. I would also like to express my gratitude to Phillip Wright and Larry McCartney for listening and believing in me. May the good Lord bless them and all who served at Khe Sanh.

Semper Fi
Daniel Laliberte

BOOK REVIEW**By Tom Eichler**

In the last edition of Red Clay there was an article in the memorial section with a story concerning a former Marine paying tribute to his Father Lt Pham Van Hoa, a former member of the Vietnamese Air Force. His son, Quang X. Pham, the former Marine's name should have been listed as the author.

Besides writing that article, Quang X. Pham has written an outstanding book, called **A Sense of Duty, My Father, My American Journey**. Below is just one of the many fine reviews of his writings

*Reprinted with permission
Quangs book reminds us of price they paid
By GORDON DILLOW,
The Orange County Register*

This month will mark the 30th anniversary of a shameful chapter in our nation's history. Thirty years ago we abandoned a longtime ally, the Republic of (South) Vietnam.

And with it, along with millions of others, we abandoned Quang X. Pham's dad.

Quang is an old friend of mine, a 40-year-old Mission Viejo businessman who came to the U.S. as a boy refugee from Vietnam, and later served as a U.S. Marine helicopter pilot in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. His father, Pham Van Hoa, now deceased, was a U.S.-trained South Vietnamese Air Force pilot who spent 12 years in a communist "re-education" camp, because he refused to leave his country when the North Vietnamese army swept through South Vietnam in April 1975 - this, while America, after investing 58,000 of its own sons' lives, stood by and washed its hands of the entire bloody and tragic affair.

And even though he became an American who loved his country and served it courageously in uniform, for many years that abandonment rankled Quang's heart. It rankled mine, too.

Quang has written a new book about his father, and about his own experiences as a refugee who became an American Marine. It's called "A Sense of Duty: My Father, My American Journey," published by

Ballantine Books (you can get more information at www.asenseofduty.com.) I highly recommend it for anyone who wants to understand what the Vietnam War meant to some of the people who suffered the most because of it - that is, the people of South Vietnam. It's powerful, and moving, and in it Quang tries to dispel a myth about Vietnam that still persists.

The myth is that guys like his dad didn't fight for their country.

"I just want to see South Vietnamese (military men) like my father acknowledged," Quang told me. "Not made into heroes or anything, but just acknowledged for what they did. I wanted to set the record straight."

Certainly the casualty numbers tell a story that's far different from the myth. The South Vietnamese armed forces lost a total of about 250,000 men killed in the war - a number that, as a percentage of national population, was about 50 times greater than American deaths.

And the numbers of the maimed were even greater. Ten years ago, as a reporter for the Register, I went back to Vietnam to cover the 20th anniversary of the end of the war, and everywhere I went I would meet aging former ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) soldiers who were missing arms or legs or eyes, many of them reduced to beggary because the communist government offered no pensions or even menial jobs for former ARVNs. When they found out I'd been an American soldier in the war they would often break out yellowed, crumbling, long-hidden South Vietnamese military ID cards and tell me, "I was with you, I was with you." And they were.

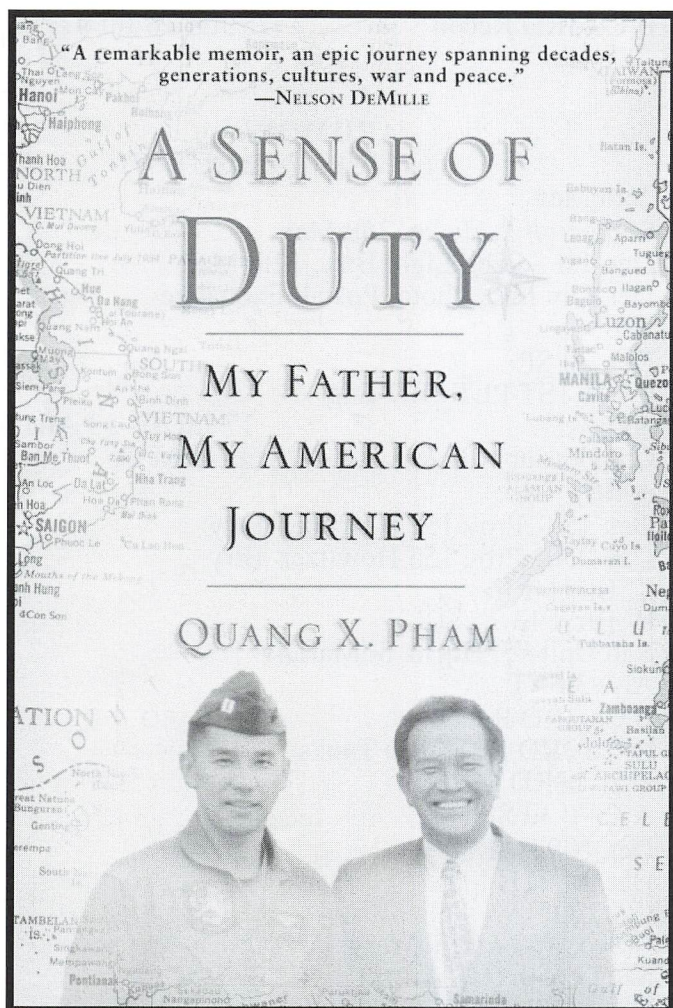
Now, I know some of my fellow American Vietnam veterans will disagree with me on this subject. They'll call me up and tell me bitter tales about "Marvin the ARVN," about South Vietnamese M-16s that were in perfect condition because "they'd never been fired, and were only dropped once," about South Vietnamese corruption and incompetence and cowardice. Certainly there was no shortage of such things, particularly in the ARVN's politicized upper ranks.

But don't tell me - or Quang X. Pham - that 250,000 guys died with no brave men among them. Don't try to tell guys who got their arms or legs blown off, that they didn't fight hard enough. Don't think that a lot of guys like Quang's father didn't have a sense of duty and honor, even as they lost their war, and their country, and languished in brutal communist prison camps for years and years and years.

In the coming weeks you'll probably see and hear a lot of retrospectives about the Vietnam War, some of them truthful, many of them media myths perpetuated by people who were never even there - the same sort of myths that even now are being created about the Iraq war and the Americans fighting it. More on that in a future column.

But if you think that the Vietnam War was strictly an American war, if you think that the people of South Vietnam weren't worth fighting for, or with, then I have a suggestion. Talk to a guy like Quang X. Pham. And ask him about his dad.

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OBIT

Glenn's Rappold's wife Helen, has been ill for several years. It is with great sadness to let Glenn's Khe Sanh brothers know Helen passed away 16 Feb 06. Ronald and Cliff have been with him over the past few weeks, and I know Ronald would want me to let his brothers know this sad news. Please keep Glenn and his family in your thoughts and prayers.

Lynn Shouse

Rappold, Helen F. (nee Bryan), St. Peters, MO, February 15, 2006, age 63. Beloved wife of Glen B. Rappold; loving mother of Terry Savage and Sherry (Mike) Landen; dear sister of Barbara (Robert) Hernandez; cherished grandmother of Rachel (Jason) Huffman, Ebony Jimenez, Jordan Savage, Kara Landen, Melissa Landen; and great grandmother of David and Christian Jimenez.

Many don't know what Glenn has been through these last years, especially recently, with Helen in the care of Hospice. Glenn hang in there, we are with you in your time of grief. To send Glenn a card:

Semper Fi

Jim and PJ

Glenn Rappold

1 Inverness Ct.

Saint Peters, MO 63376



Rest In Peace

In moments of loss and sadness we all tend to look skyward and ask the question, "Why?" Why her? Why now?

We who have sought this answer for so long for the many who have slipped away from us in this lifetime, whether in the jungles or at home. We who have witnessed these losses since our youth, are perhaps eternally confounded by this part of life which comes to us all at yet some unknown place and time. We share your Grief, We Mourn your loss, We send you our Love, Thoughts, and Prayers, and most of all - We Shall see each other in God's Good Care. Glen Keep the Faith & Stay Strong. Love, Your Brother in Arms.

Semper Fidelis

Neil Joseph Kenny

KHE SANH: A COMPREHENSIVE CHRONOLOGY

Many of our members have requested a re-print of an article by Reverend Ray W. Stubbe that appeared in Issue 93 (Spring) which listed which units served at Khe Sanh, and the various combat operations that were conducted. Ray wrote in that same article, a chronology of Khe Sanh going back 130 million years. For this article I have condensed it to the years 1962-1975. Ray has updated the information to include reports from the North Vietnamese Army, and their day to day operations during that period.

NOTE: unless otherwise noted, units indicated participated in the operations for the entire period noted.

B Btry 2-94 USA

24 Apr-13 May 67

OPERATION CROCKETT (13 MAY 67-16 JULY 67)

OPERATION VIRGINIA (17 Apr 66- 01 May 66)

1ST Battalion 1ST Marines, A- Co, B- Co, C- Co
B BTRY 3/12
A Co 3RD SP
B Co 1ST Platoon 3RD Engineers
5TH Platoon 1ST Force Recon

(NO NAME)

(30 SEP 66 - 23 APR 67, (Part of PRAIRIE), SOP
Khe Sanh, 3RD MAR DIV REP

26th Marines
1/26

A Btry 1/13

A Co 3RD Recon

13 May-25 Jun 67

F Btry 2/12

13 May-14 Jun 67

A(-) 3RD AT

W Btry1/13 4.2

25 May-16 Jul 67

3/26

13 Jun-16 Jul 67

CAC"O"

C Btry 1/13

14 Jun-16 Jul 67

B Co 3RD Recon

25 Jun-16 Jul 67

1/3	30 Sep 66-02 Feb 67
B Co 1/9	02 Feb 67-23 Apr 67
E Co 2/9	07-27 Mar 67
1/3/3	17-19 Mar 67
F Btry 2/12	05-23 Apr 67
I Btry 3/12	Feb- 05 Apr 67
CAC"O"	06 Feb 67
A Co 2ND PLT 3RD AT's	27 Mar -23 Apr 67
Det, 3RD Force Recon	Jan-06 Apr 67
A Co 3RD Recon	15 Mar- 23 Apr 67

ARDMORE

(17 JUL 67-31 OCT 67)

26th Mar

SubUnit # 1, HqCo, 26thMar

Det, 1st Search Light Btry, 12th Mar

Det, Div ISO, Photo, Postal, Exchange

I/26

Det, 3d SP

C/ Co 1ST PLT 3RD Eng

3/26

17 Jul 67- 13 Aug 67

Cmd Group + K & L Co, 04 SEP, I&M Co

A Btry 1/13

Det, 1ST Prov 155 Howitzer Btry

Det 2ND Prov 155 Howitzer Btry

C Btry1/13

W Btry1/13

Sub Unit #5, HqBn, 3dMarDiv

A(-)/3d AT

B Co 3RD Recon

B-Co 3RD PLT 3RD Tanks

C 2(-) 3RD Med Bn

A-2(-)/ 3d SP

Det, N 9TH MT

Det, B 9TH MT

CAC"O"

LtSec, NI-44 (US Army)

Sec G/65th (US Army)

Det A-101, 5th SFGA

BATTLE OF KHE SANH SEARCH AND DESTROY (24 APR 67-13 MAY 67)

3rd Marine Div Consisting of:

2/3	26 Apr-12 May 67
3/3	25 Apr-13 May 67
B Co 1/9	24-27 Apr 67
E Co 2/9	01-12 May 67
1ST Battalion 26TH Marines	11-13 May 67
C Co 1/26	04-13 May 67
K Co 3/9	25 Apr-13 May 67
M Co 3/9	27 Apr-13 May 67
F Btry 2/12	24 Apr-13 May 67
B Btry 2/12	27 Apr-11 May 67
A Btry 1/12	13 May 67

HqBtry, 1/13

27 Jul- 31 Oct 67

SCOTLAND**[01 Nov 67—31 Mar 68]**

The list indicates those eligible for the Presidential Unit Citation for the dates indicated. Some of these units were present at Khe Sanh before the Siege battle, e.g., 26th Mar and 1/26 for the entire period, 2/26 arrived 17 Jan 68, A-1/3rd Eng arrived 27 Dec 67, 1st Prov, 155 How Btry/3/12 arrived 05 Jan, and some were there prior to the siege, e.g., I/3/12 (01-09 Nov 67), C-1/3rd Eng (01-27 Dec 67) [Units are listed as indicated in ALMAR 232010Z/May68:

26th Marines

HqCo 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

1/26 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

2/26 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

3/26 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Attached and supporting units:

USMC:

1/9 (less Co C) 22 Jan—01 Apr 68

C/1/9 23 Jan—01 Apr 68

1/13 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

2nd Prov, 155 Howitzer 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det, 1st Searchlight**Btry, 12th Mar** 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det, 3rd Eng 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

B/3rd Recon 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

3rd Plt, D/3rd Recon 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

1st Plt, A/5th Recon 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

A(-), 3rd AT Co 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

A/3rd SP 24 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det, H&S/3rd SP 24 Jan—01 Apr 68

2nd Plt, C/3rd Med 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Otter Plt, 3rd MT 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det, B/9th MT 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det A, 9th MT 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det SU#1, 1st Radio 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det, 3rd Dental Co 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det, HqCo, HqBn, 3rd**MarDiv (Postal, Photo,****Exchange, ISO, AOs,****Staff Augment:**

CAC "O" 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det, Comm Co, HqBn,**3rd MarDiv:** 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det, 5th Comm 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det, 7th Comm 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det, FLC 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

SU #1, 17th ITT 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

B/3rd TK 20 Jan—01 Apr 68
 Det 0-1, H&MS, MAG-16: 20 Jan—14 Mar 68
 Det 0-1, VMO, MAG-16: 05 Mar—01 Apr 68
 Det 2, MASS-3 20 Jan—01 Apr 68
 Det B, ASRAT 3 20 Jan—01 Apr 68
 Det, H&MS-36 20 Jan—01 Apr 68
 Det, MACTU-62 20 Jan—01 Apr 68
 Det, WERS-17 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

U.S. Navy units:

Det B, CBMU-301 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det MCB-10 20 Jan—19 Feb 68

Det, MCB-53 20 Jan—13 Feb 68

Det, MCB-5 20-24 Jan 68

U.S. Army units:

Det, A-101, 5th SFGA 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det, 44th Arty 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det, 65th Arty 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det, 238th Counter-Mortar**Radar Unit, 108th Field Arty** 22 Jan—01 Apr 68**Det, 1st Plt (Smoke),****25th Chemical Co** 09 Feb—01 Apr 68**544th Signal Det,****37th Signal Bn:** 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

FOB-3 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

U.S. Air Force Units:**Det (Operating Location AJ), 15th****Aerial Port Sq** 20 Jan—01 Apr 68**Det, 366th Transport Sq,****366th Combat****Support Group**

20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det, 903rd Aero**Med Evac Sq:** 20 Jan—01 Apr 68

Det A, 834th AirDiv 20 Jan—31 Mar 68

Others:

37th ARVN Ranger Bn

In addition to the above, personnel of the following aviation units who were located at or landed at Khe Sanh are eligible for the PUC:

USMC units:

HMH-463

HMM-163

HMM-262

HMM-362
 HMM-364
 VMO-3
 VMO-6
 HMM-165
 HMM-363
 HMM164
 VMGR-152
 USAF units:
 309th ACS, 315 ACW
 310th ACS, 315 ACW
 311th ACS, 315 ACW
 319th ACS, 315th ACW
 535th TAS, 483rd TAW
 536th TAS, 483rd TAW
 457th TAS, 483rd TAW
 458th TAS, 483rd TAW
 537th TAS, 483rd TAW
 459th TAS, 483rd TAW

Det, 3rd Eng
 1st Plt, 25th Chemical Co (USA)
 Det, C/3rd MT
 4th Plt, SU#1, 1st Radio
 Det, 238th Arty (Radar)/1/40
 1st Mar
 1/1
 2/1
 2/3
 11th Eng
 NMCB 5
 TF KILO, 3rd MarDiv
 3rd ITT
 Det, A/1st Med
 B/1/12
 A(-)/1st Eng
 A(-)/1st SP
 A(-)/1st MT
 C-3(-)/3rd TK
 AT-1(-)/3rd TK

PEGASUS**[31 Mar—15 Apr 68]**

Prov Corps Vietnam
 Prov Corps Vietnam Arty
 1st Cav Div (including 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Brigades)
 26th Mar
 HqCo, 26th Mar
 Det, 5th Comm
 Det, 7th Comm
 Det, 3rd MarDiv Postal 31 Mar—12 Apr 68
 Det, 3rd MarDiv Photo
 Det, 3rd MarDiv Exchange
 Det, 3rd MarDiv ISO
 1/26
 2/26
 3/26
 1/9
 1/13
 3rd Recon
 B-3/3rd TK
 A(-), 3rd AT
 Sec Btry, G/65 (USA)
 LtSec A/1 ADA AW(SP)/44
 A/3rd SP
 C-2/3rd Med
 Det, H&S/3rd MT (M-76)
 MACTU-62
 Det 20th TASS, USAF
 CBMU-301, Det B
 LSU Khe Sanh

SCOTLAND II**[15 Apr 68—28 Feb 69]**

TF GLICK	15 Apr -
TF HOTEL	(deactivated 01 Jul 69)
2/1	15 Apr—2-7 Jul 68
1/1	15 Apr—12 Jul 68
3/4	19 Apr 68 -
3/9	04 Jun—05 Jul 68
2/3	15 Apr—20 Jun 68
1/4	06-16 Oct, 01-30 Nov
68	
1st Mar	
4th Mar	
A/1/9	
B/1/9	
11th Mar	
2nd Brig (USA)	
1/5 (USA)	
2/5 (USA)	
1/77 (USA)	
A/1/30 (USA)	

CHARLIE**[17 Jun—06 Jul 68]**

3/4	19 Apr 68 -
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DAWSON RIVER WEST**[02-19 Jan 69]**

9th Mar

2nd Bn/2nd ARVN Regt

3rd Bn/2nd ARVN Regt

PURPLE MARTIN**[27 Feb—08 May 68]**

4th Mar

3/12

NO NAME**[01 Mar—22 Apr 69]**

1-5 Mech Div (USA)

MAINE CRAG**[10 Mar—02 May 69]**

3rd Mar

TF REMAGEN

1/3

2/3

3/3

1/12

TF HOTEL

4th Mar

1-5 Mech Div (USA)

12th Mar

3rd Eng

3rd Recon

3rd TK

TROJAN HORSE**[04-27 Aug, 08 Sep—01 Oct 69]**

Project DELTA, 5th SFGA (USA)

FREDERICK HILL**[13 Mar 69—]**

USA units

HERKIMER MOUNTAIN**[09 May—16 Jul 69]**

4th Mar

1/4

CAMERON FALLS**[29 May—23 Jun 69]**

9th Mar

3/9

F/2/12

UTAH MESA

1/9

3/9

Bn of 1-5 Mech Div (USA)

LAM SON 719**[30 Jan 71—06 Apr 71]**

XXIV Corps (US):

HQ, XXIV Corps

101st Abn Div (Ambl)

DISCOM (-)

23rd Inf Div

1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech)

1st Brig, 5th Mech Div:

1st Bn, 22th Inf

1st Bn., 77th Armor

3rd Sq, Cav

5th Bn, 4th Arty

3rd Bn, 187th Inf, 101st Abn Div (Ambl)

4th Bn, 3rd Inf, 23rd Inf Div (OPCON)

1st Bn, 82nd Arty, 23rd Inf Div (Attached)

7th Eng Bn

11th Brig, 23rd Inf Div.

101st Abn Div:

101st AHB:

A, B, C, & D/101

235th AWC

158th AHB:

A, B, C, & D/158

D/227th Avn Bn

159th AHB:

B, & C/159

478th Avn Co.

132nd Avn Co.

179th Avn Co.

223 CAB:

48th Avn Co.

173rd Avn Co.

238th Avn Co.

282nd Avn Co.

14 CAB:

71st Avn Co.

174th Avn Co.

116th Avn Co.

III MAF—HMH 463

163rd GS Co.

2nd Sq, 17th Cav:

A, B, C, and D/2/17

4th Bn (Aerial Arty), 77th Arty

27th Eng Bn
I Corps (ARVN)
HQ, I Corps
1st ARVN Inf Div
1st ARVN Abn Div
1st VNMC Div
1st ARVN Ranger Group
10th ARVN Engr Group

1962

08 FEB – US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) is established.

02 MAR – 12 Apr - The fall of Tchepone prompts American involvement in Vietnam and becomes the focus of the SEATO exercise TULUNGUN, conducted in the Philippines. The exercise provides a “cover” for introducing US Marine helicopters into Vietnam.

08 JUL – First permanent American military unit arrives at Khe Sanh to check infiltration on Route 9. The “A” Team under the command of Capt WEAVER locates at the Old French Fort (XD 858388, designated Thuong Van on the tactical maps) on the eastern side of Khe Sanh Village.

23 JUL – Declaration and Protocol on the neutrality of Laos is signed in Geneva. The USSR Ambassador PUSHKIN) pledges to the US Ambassador HARRIMAN) that it will keep North Vietnam from conducting operations in Laos. (This is, of course, violated as the Ho Chi-Minh-Trail network is constructed).

16 SEP – A violent typhoon strikes Khe Sanh.

Nov – Operation SWITCHBACK commences as paramilitary operations are removed from CIA control and assumed by MACV. (This includes the USSF “A” Camp at Khe Sanh, which had been prevented from conducting local patrols by the CIA, even from possessing a .50 caliber machinegun for its defense.)

NOV-DEC – The Khe Sanh airstrip is upgraded by laying PSP (Pierced Steel Plate) by an ARVN engineer unit.

1963

05 SEP – An Air America C-46 was hit by ground fire and crashed near XD2548, approx 2 km. NW of Tchepone. Eugene DeBruin and 4 non-US crewmembers parachuted and were ultimately captured while 2 other crewmen were killed in the crash. As a result, Air America began resupply of BV-33 (CP at Ban Houei Sane, XD 625379) from Khe Sanh rather than from eastern Laos.

1964

24 JAN – MACV SOG established.

FEB – Monsieur WOLF, a French pharmacist from Dong Ha, is assassinated on Route 9 by VC following a visit with Monsieur LLINARES, one of the French planters at Khe Sanh.

03 MAR – Father PONCET of the Foreign Missions of Paris arrives at Khe Sanh to begin ministry as the local priest. (He is assassinated in Hue, 13 Feb 1968).

26 MAR – Capt FLOYD THOMPSON, CO of “A” Team at Khe Sanh, is shot down while on an aerial observation flight and becomes the longest-held POW of the Vietnam War. Capt Richard L. WHITE-SIDES, the pilot, becomes the first American KIA at Khe Sanh.

APR – SESU (Signal Engineering Survey Unit) organized. MAJ Alfred M. GRAY, Jr. (later Commandant of the Marine Corps) makes a preliminary recon of Tiger Tooth Mt. (Hill 1739, XD 832543, the highest point in northern I Corps) with a handful of Vietnamese. He runs out of food, overruns a NVA base camp en-route to friendly positions, and captures a large quantity of NVA documents. SESU’s infantry element, 76 Marines from Co G/2/3, is the first Marine ground unit to conduct operations in Vietnam; this is at Khe Sanh.

20 APR – EUGENE POILANE, the French coffee planter and botanical explorer, is assassinated in a Communist ambush along Route 9.

MAY – VC rampage the MILLER’s house in a local Bru village during their absence as tensions rise in the Khe Sanh area.

13 MAY – Advance party of ARVN occupy Tiger Tooth Mountain for SESU operation.

13 JUN – MAJ GRAY and his unit occupy Tiger Tooth Mountain for SESU operation.

24 JUN – Operation LEAPING LENA inserts 8-man reconnaissance teams (with 2 Americans per team) by parachute east of Tchepone. Only 5 men survive and return to friendly control.

16-19 JUL – SESU departs Tiger Tooth Mountain. During 1964, a 4-star American General visits the POILANE plantation where he is informed that defoliant spray in nearby Laos has caused the POILANE's durian fruit tree to cease producing fruit. A claim for damages is filed at Quang Tri and the Americans pay damages, but the Vietnamese officials keep it for themselves.

USSF "A" team at Khe Sanh relocates from the Old French Fort position to the Khe Sanh airstrip and begins construction of concrete bunkers (which the Marines were later to assume were from the French days).

1965

21 SEP – Presidential approval given for SOG for American USSF to lead reconnaissance teams behind enemy lines.

18 OCT – First SOG mission launched into Laos as part of Operation SHINING BRASS.

22 DEC – USSF at Khe Sanh makes significant contact with sizable unit of NVA and annihilates them.

1966

03 JAN – USAF aircraft arrive at Khe Sanh airstrip to commence Project TIGERHOUND (aerial recon of eastern Laos).

03 JAN – USSF Camp on the Khe Sanh airstrip is attacked by NVA using 120mm mortars, the first use of these large-caliber weapons in the Vietnam War.

MAR/APR – North Vietnam reorganizes the battlefield, creating B-4 Front (everything south of Route

9 to southern border of Thua Thien Province) and B-5 Front (everything in Quang Tri Province north of Route 9 to the DMZ). B-5 is also referred to as "Tri-Thien Military Region Route 9."

APR – The North Vietnamese Central Military Party Committee issues a directive establishing the Tri-Thien Military Region which is detached from Military Region V. In JUN, 1966, directives are issued establishing the Highway 9 Front.

17 APR – Operation VIRGINIA commences in the Khe Sanh area conducted by First Battalion, First Marine Regiment (1/1), the first battalion-size infantry operation in Khe Sanh

01 MAY – Operation VIRGINIA concludes with negative enemy sightings. (They had swept the area recently swept by USSF and did not enter areas where USSF claimed the NVA were operating but where they, the USSF, had insufficient manpower to sweep).

29 JUL – FOB-1 recon patrol on Co Roc makes contact resulting in 2 American KIA.

SEP-OCT – Various intelligence sources reflect large-size NVA units moving into the Khe Sanh area. Debate between Gen WESTMORELAND, COMUSMACV (who believes a sizeable invasion is imminent) and Gen L. W. WALT, CG, III MAF (who believes NVA have no interest at Khe Sanh) develops.

10 SEP – A Det of 65 Navy Seabees of NMCB-10 arrive on the Khe Sanh airstrip to upgrade it. They are augmented on 30 Sep by another 32 Seabees.

29/30 SEP – Battalion 1/3 moves to Khe Sanh USSF camp on the Khe Sanh airstrip. AO is a circle with a 10,000 meter radius from the Khe Sanh camp.

OCT – 22 Seabees of NMCB-7 build six concrete bunkers at Lang Vei for the ARVN.

10 OCT – Battery B, 1/13, (105mm howitzers) arrives at Khe Sanh.

15 OCT – Project DELTA arrives at Khe Sanh to launch Operation 13-66: scour area just under the DMZ near the Laos border. AO XD6670 – XD9070

– XD9050.

Mid OCT: JTAD (Joint Technical Advisory Detachment) at Khe Sanh forms.

DEC – Staff of 3rd Marine Division prepares a detailed, comprehensive analysis comparing Khe Sanh with Dien Bien Phu.

02 DEC – a Project DELTA recon team is overrun in the Khe Sanh area.

19-25 DEC – USSF Camp at Khe Sanh displaces to Lang Vei, displacing ARVN battalion 3/2 which moves to the Old French Fort position.

DEC – LSU [Logistic Support Unit] is established at Khe Sanh.

1967

JAN – Det of 3rd Force Reconnaissance Company arrives at Khe Sanh to replace Project DELTA unit and operations.

14 JAN – The codename for SOG operations into Laos, SHINING BRASS, is replaced by PRAIRIE FIRE (for operations into Laos) and NICKLE STEEL (for operations in the western DMZ west of the YD/XD line).

18 JAN – First Marine KIA at Khe Sanh, CPL MICHAEL JOHN SCANLON of the Det, 3rd Force Recon Co.

23-26 JAN – The DRVN Party Central Committee holds its 13th Plenum and issues Resolution #13 which calls for winning “a decisive victory in a relatively short period of time,” while making preparations for prolonged warfare.

26-27 JAN – Recon patrol in heavy contact at Khe Sanh. 4 USMC helicopters are destroyed in rescue effort and GEN WALT (CG, III MAF) is on scene.

01 FEB – BLT 1/3 departs Khe Sanh except for Company B/1/3.

02 FEB – Advance party of Co B/1/9 arrives to relieve B/1/3.

06 FEB – B/1/9 arrives at Khe Sanh and relieves B/1/3.

06 FEB – CAC OSCAR is established in Khe Sanh area with 52 Marines organized into 3 platoons. (CP is at the Huong Hoa District HQ in Khe Sanh village, XD 846380). It is the only USMC CAC in Vietnam whose indigenous force is Montagnard soldiers.

25 FEB – Squad-sized patrol of B/1/9 makes contact.

02 MAR – Two USAF planes accidentally bomb the civilian village of Lang Vei (XD 794363) causing 116 Bru KIA and extensive property damage.

MAR – As a result of the bombing of Lang Vei, MACV Advisory Team #4 is established in Khe Sanh village for the Huong Hoa Subsector of Quang Tri Province.

07 MAR – Co E/2/9 arrives at Khe Sanh.

13 MAR – The MILLER family returns to Khe Sanh after a year's absence.

15 MAR – Co A, 3rd Recon Bn, begins to arrive at Khe Sanh to relieve the Det of 3rd Force Recon Co.

16 MAR – A patrol of Co E/2/9 is decimated at XD823440 while patrolling near Hill 861.

27 MAR – Route 9 is reopened (had been closed to vehicular traffic since 1964).

APR – A decision is made not to sever the Ho Chi Minh Trail (by moving west on Route 9 to Thailand as a road-improvement operation) by President JOHNSON and his Cabinet, fearing a repetition of Korea where Chinese troops entered the conflict. Dr. Walt ROSTOW notes that this is the decisive point that determined the result of the Vietnam War: had the US insisted that USSR honor the Laotian Accords of 1961 to prevent North Vietnamese troops to operate in Laos, the Vietnam War would have ended right there. GEN WESTMORELAND continues to plan for an operation to move westward and sever the Ho Chi Minh Trail network to be launched from Khe Sanh airstrip. (This eventually is executed as LAMSON 719 in Jan-Mar 1971, but is

far too late).

APR – North Vietnamese Politburo and Central Military Party Committee discuss intention of achieving a “Decisive Victory.” The Joint High Command assigns a number of cadre groups to examine battlefields and get a feel for the situation and prepare forces in battlefields to determine the direction of a strategic attack.

24 APR – 1ST and 3RD Platoons of B/1/9 make extensive contact with NVA on Hill 861 (XD 803443) precipitating the “Battle of the Hills,” or “Battle of Khe Sanh, Search and Destroy.”

25 APR – 3/3 Command Group (together with Co K/3/3 and Co K/3/9) arrives at Khe Sanh.

26 APR – 2/3, the SLF (Special Landing Force) then conducting Operation BEACON STAR, arrives at Khe Sanh. Co K/3/9 arrives from Camp Carroll.

27 APR – Co M/3/3 arrives at Khe Sanh to replace Co K/3/3; M/3/9 arrives to replace B/1/9.

28 APR – 2/3 assaults and seizes Hill 861 (XD 803443).

02 MAY – Hill 881-South (XD 777438) is captured by 3/3.

03 MAY – E/2/3 is attacked at XD 738451 by a large NVA force which, although it penetrates the defensive perimeter, is repulsed.

04 MAY – USSF Camp Lang Vei (at XD 798371) is attacked following internal sabotage by NVA agents posing as CIDG recruits. Both the CO and XO are KIA.

04 MAY – F/2/3 and E/2/3 commence final assault of Hill 881-North.

05 MAY – Hill 881-North is captured by 2/3.

09-10 MAY – Recon Team BREAKER (Team 1A2) is almost totally annihilated at XD 758534 in the Khe Sanh area. 3 survivors are rescued as flames engulf them together with sizable NVA force. Dead bodies, not rescued, remain on the battlefield.

11 MAY – Lead elements of 26th Marine Regiment arrive at Khe Sanh to relieve 3rd Marine Regiment.

13 MAY – “Battle of Khe Sanh, Search and Destroy” concludes: 168 US KIA, 443 US WIA, 2 USA MIA, 824 NVA KIA (confirmed), another 551 NVA KIA (probable), 6 NVA POW captured, over 24,000 artillery rounds fired, total ordnance dropped is over 3,000,000 pounds, not to include TPQ-10 directed flights or 23 B-52 Arc Light strikes. Operation CROCKETT commences, conducted by an abbreviated staff of 26th Marines regiment (the rear element remaining on Okinawa) as a 9th MAB unit, and battalion 1/26.

13 MAY – COL JOHN J. PADLEY, CO, 26TH Marines, relieves COL J. P. LANIGAN, CO, 3RD Marines, as “SOP 3RD Mar/Div/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh.”

15 MAY – John and Carolyn MILLER, the Wycliffe Bible Translators, move into concrete house in Khe Sanh village, refurbished by efforts of newly established FOB-3 and funds donated by Marines at KSCB.

21 MAY – Patrol by 3rd Platoon, A/1/26, makes contact at XD751449 resulting in 2 US KIA.

JUN – The North Vietnamese Politburo determines to implement strategic planning to achieve a “decisive victory” in 1968. “We had to attack the American forces and force them to defeat militarily in order to change the scope of the Vietnam War.”

02-04 JUN – Marine helicopters, launching out of KSCB in support of a FOB-1 mission to OSCAR-8 in Laos (XD 793044, assumed site of NVA headquarters controlling the entire Ho Chi Minh Trail network) are shot down, beginning a desperate battle resulting in 4 American MIA (one, LCPL Frank Edward CIUS, is later returned to US control in 1973.)

05 JUN – One Marine (GySgt Di R. IBANEZ) mysteriously disappears while in an evening harbor site of a recon patrol from Co A/3rd Recon Bn.

06 JUN – SFC Charles F. WILKLOW is rescued from the OSCAR-8 battle.

06 JUN – KSCB receives approximately 19 rockets

at 0105H. Hill 950 (XD 844456) is attacked by approx. 40-50 NVA from the 6TH Bn, 95C Regt, 325C Div. and feared overrun, but a few Marines hold off the attack and in a daring early morning counter-attack, repulse remaining NVA attackers.

07 JUN – Co B/1/26 makes contact at XD 760445 with NVA unit resulting in 18 USMC KIA, 16 USMC WIA, and 63 NVA KIA (confirmed).

13 JUN – Bn 3/26 arrives at Khe Sanh to augment 1/26 due to recent NVA activity.

18 JUN – Hill 950 is struck by lightning igniting 30 claymore mines.

25 JUN – Co A., 3rd Recon Bn, is relieved by Co B, 3rd Recon Bn.

27 JUN – Battle of Hill 689 (XD 803409): after KSCB is mortared a CAC patrol is sent to determine NVA mortar positions resulting in 4 CAC “O” Marines KIA. I/3/26 and L/3/26 are dispatched to the area. Total KIA for the day: 25 US KIA.

12 JUL – CBMU-301 Det “B” Seabees, arrives at KSCB to upgrade the airstrip which has washed-out in places.

15 JUL – Census of local area reflects 8,930 Bru living within 8,000 meters of KSCB along Route 9.

16 JUL – Operation **CROCKETT** concludes (206 NVA confirmed killed and another 417 probably killed).

17 JUL – Operation **ARDMORE** commences (26TH Marine Regiment (-), 1/26, and 3/26).

17 JUL – Command Group “A” and Companies K and L depart Khe Sanh. Companies I and M and the remaining elements of 3/26 depart 04 SEP.

21 JUL – 175mm guns enroute to KSCB return to Camp J.J. Carroll as a large NVA ambush site is uncovered by patrols of M/3/26 and B/1/26 moving on Route 9. 19 UA KIA result from the contacts. the 175s return to Camp Carroll.

12 AUG – COL DAVID E. LOWNDS relieves COL JOHN J. PADLEY as CO, 26TH Marines at Khe

Sanh.

15 AUG – C/1/26 Bridge position (XD 910400) is abandoned; 1/26 radio call-sign changes from PINE-FOLD to MOLLY PITCHER.

16 AUG – One Marine drowns in Rao Quan River while evacuating the Bridge Site and assisting locals across river.

17 AUG – COL LOWNDS closes the KSCB airstrip in order to effect repairs.

20 AUG – Recon Team SAMPLE CASE I (2B1) is shot out of insert zone killing 2 Marines.

23 AUG – USAF TIGERHOUND aircraft crashes on airstrip killing the pilot.

31 AUG – Work on KSCB runway begins with removal of 150-ft. of matting.

AUG/SEP – NVA Agent “X-1” surrenders and gives Mr. Robert BREWER, Quang Tri Province Senior Advisor (who is CIA) a copy of “Resolution 13,” the NVA 1968 Tet Plan.

03 SEP – South Vietnam holds its first national presidential election.

02-04 SEP – Recon Team BROAD WEAVE II encounters extensive contact with NVA soldiers.

05 SEP – Remainder of 3/26 departs KSCB leaving only 1/26 as the infantry element defending the area.

17 SEP – Heavy rains collapse bunker being constructed; 2 Marines die.

18 SEP – OpPlan 5-67, Relief of Lang Vei Special Forces Camp, is issued.

11 OCT – 65 Navy Seabees of Detail JULIETT, NMCB-10, arrive to construct new bunkers in the FOB-3 compound. Navy Seabees of MCB-11 construct a new site for Camp Lang Vei at XD 786456.

15 OCT – A USAF C-130F aircraft crashes on the KSCB airstrip.

20 OCT – North Vietnamese artillery units begin

preparation of the Khe Sanh battlefield.

30 OCT – People Sniffer missions begin at Khe Sanh to detect enemy by detecting ammonia.

31 OCT – Operation **ARDMORE** concludes with 113 NVA confirmed KIA and 210 additional probably KIA.

NOV – FOB-3 relocates from Old French Fort position in Khe Sanh village to KSCB for better security.

01 NOV – Operation **SCOTLAND** commences (26TH Marine Regiment (-) and 1/26). AO: From DMZ south along GL85 to GL48, east to GL90, south to GL43, east along GL to GL95, south on GL95 to Da Krong River, southeast along Da Krong River to YD004302, then south to Laotian border at YD004234. Boundary then follows Laotian border on S and W to the DMZ and east along DMZ to point of origin. The area encompasses approx. 403 square miles.

NOV/DEC – Based on USMC signals intelligence from MAJ GRAY's Radio Battalion, the decision is made at a meeting of Generals CUSHMAN, TOMPKINS, DAVIDSON (MACV J-2), METZGER, and COL HOUGHTON (G-2, III MAF) and various intelligence specialists, to reinforce Khe Sanh rather than Camp J.J. Carroll, the previously assumed target.

NOV/DEC – North Vietnam creates a new Front Headquarters, a portion of the B-5 Front designated "B5-T8" to control operations in the Khe Sanh area. The Front HQ is located approx 10 miles west of the western edge of the DMZ at Sar Lit (XD6266).

03-22 NOV – 1,000 troops of US 4TH Division and 173RD Airborne Brigade at Dak To are attacked by 4 NVA regiments (about 6,000 troops); NVA fatalities are estimated at 1,455 while US casualties are 285 KIA, 985 WIA, 18 MIA. Some regard this as a prelude to Khe Sanh, testing siege tactics and gearing-up for the attack against Khe Sanh.

06 NOV – Radio call-sign of 1/26 changes from MOLLY PITCHER to BLACKBUD; CAC "O" from ACTIVATOR to MUTTER; 26TH Marine Regiment from MORRAY to INTRIGUE; recon

from SANTA ANA BRAVO to AIR-MINDED BRAVO.

09 NOV – Signals intelligence personnel operate on Hill 881-South.

09 NOV – LTGEN ALFRED D. STARBIRD (DCPG, a cover for a CIA project) visits Hill 881-South. DCPG develops an electronic sensor program.

10 NOV – COL LOWNDS, during Marine Corps Birthday ceremonies on Hill 881-South tells troops, "You will all soon be in the American history books."

16 NOV – Two air-delivery Marines are killed while parachuting into KSCB; one Marine from recon drowns in the Rao Quan River.

17 NOV – a 300-pound deer (actually a Kouprey) is shot near Hill 881-South.

17 NOV – COL LOWNDS emphasizes camouflage: need to erect false antennae and bunkers on KSCB to confuse enemy observers.

19 NOV – North Vietnamese Politburo and Joint High Command issue directives for the "General Offensive and Uprising" (Tet) establishing 2 battlefields across the entire South Vietnam area. Highway 9 Front is given the mission of drawing-in and dispersing mobile forces to create favorable conditions for all of South Vietnam. N-Day [the Vietnamese equivalent of D-Day] is set for 31 January 1968.

27 NOV – Khe Sanh begins to be a focus of concern by President JOHNSON and White House staff due to multi-intelligence indications that Khe Sanh will be struck with a massive NVA force.

DEC – DRVN Political Bureau issues historic resolution on "transforming our revolutionary war in the South to a new phase—the phase of winning a decisive victory."

03 DEC – The Highway 9 Front receives the "General Offensive and Uprising" directive.

06 DEC – North Vietnam Central Military Party

Committee orders establishment of the Party Committee and Headquarters of the Highway 9 Front, commanded by Brigadier General Tran Quy Hai. The mission: destroy the enemy, draw in and hold in place Americans and South Vietnamese mobile forces to create favorable conditions for subsequent attacks in the Tri-Thien and Hue area.

13 DEC – Bn 3/26 arrives at Khe Sanh to augment defense as part of the decision to reinforce rather than abandon the position, knowing the NVA plan to attack the position. The augmentation is phased so that NVA do not realize we know they will attack. General WESTMORELAND argues that this will provide an opportunity to destroy large numbers of NVA which otherwise would have moved into the densely-populated areas to the east making combat more costly to civilians.

15 DEC – Dr. Walt W. ROSTOW forwards completed intelligence analysis of probable attacks on Khe Sanh and the NVA Tet Offensive to President JOHNSON.

22 DEC – Recon Team SEVEN UP (3B3) makes contact (at XD763411) resulting in 1 Marine KIA.

25-30 DEC – the 325C Division enters the Khe Sanh battlefield.

26 DEC – B/1/26 on Hill 881-South is relieved by Co I/3/26; D/1/26 on Hill 861 is relieved by Co K/3/26.

28-30 DEC – 1/26 conducts a battalion sweep northwest of KSCB; patrols encounter NVA squad and capture a map marked with all entry routes to Marine positions in the area.

28 DEC – the North Vietnamese Campaign Party Committee meets to ratify the campaign order: Khe Sanh is to be the principle area while the eastern Quang Tri Province area (e.g., Hue) is an important area.

30 DEC – Recon team BARKWOOD (1B3 at XD 761409, 4 KM directly west of Hill 689) engages NVA unit resulting in 2 Marines KIA.

1968

01 JAN – There are 298,498 Marines in the Corps with 81,249 of them serving in Vietnam. Gen Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., becomes 24th Commandant, USMC, and his son, 2/Lt Walton F. Chapman, commands 3rd Plt, D/1/26, at Khe Sanh.

01 JAN – NVA recon unit probing western portion of KSCB perimeter is detected and engaged by Co L/3/26.

03 JAN – Lead elements of the 320th NVA Division enter the Khe Sanh battlefield.

05 JAN – COMUSMACV directs SLAM mission in Khe Sanh area. The code-named operation NIAGARA is approved by the Ambassador to Laos on 16 JAN and by CINCPAC on 17 JAN to be executed 21 JAN.

05 JAN – a FOB-3 patrol en-route to its insertion is shot out of the air and crashes at XD 701021 resulting in 5 US KIA.

09 JAN – The North Vietnamese Command HQ assigns missions to their 2 infantry divisions. The 304 Division is to attack and seize Huong Hoa District (Khe Sanh village) and then eliminate Ban Houei Sane (BV-33, in Laos) and Lang Vei. The 325C Division is to eliminate Americans on Hill 861, surround and constrict Hill 881-South and 950, and be prepared to attack American forces landing by air to the north and northwest of KSCB.

10 JAN – CIA concludes in a document of this date that Khe Sanh is the target for a major NVA attack.

11 JAN – A large unit from FOB-3 scours Co Roc Mountain (XD 742318) just inside the Lao border under the leadership of MAJ QUAMO in charge of Special Projects, discovering numerous NVA caches and engages the enemy.

12 JAN – GEN WESTMORELAND requests JCS declassify COFRAM munitions for use in **non-**populated areas of I Corps (i.e., Khe Sanh).

13 JAN – A portion of KSCB's ASP is relocated; COL LOWNDS directs various defensive measures

be implemented.

14 JAN – COMUSMACV requests III MAF review contingency plans to relieve Lang Vei USSF Camp.

14 JAN – LTGEN Robert CUSHMAN (CG, III MAF) directs various defensive actions be made by COL LOWNDS.

14 JAN – Recon Team DOCKLEAF (2B1) determines enemy presence on Hill 881-North; 2 Marines of the patrol are KIA.

14 JAN – The North Vietnamese 304th Division Party Committee meets from 1800 to 0300 on 15 JAN to discuss their combat mission. The main issue was the change in launch time which had been planned to begin the end of February; now it was changed to 20 JAN and combat preparations “had to move quickly.” Troops, moving over a long route of march, had just arrived on the battlefield. Organization of the troops and preparation of caches of rice and ammunition had not yet been accomplished. Recon of the battlefield had just been initiated. Military medical detachments had just arrived on the battlefield and route to evacuate wounded had still not been established. The mission assigned to 304 Division was to attack BV33 at Ban Houei Sane and to “liberate” the Huong Hoa District (Khe Sanh village). The 7th Bn, 66th Regt, did not reach its regrouping point to attack Khe Sanh village until 0400, 21 Jan since their route of march had just been bombed by B52s which knocked down trees causing slow movement with some elements becoming lost. The 7th Bn was the unit assigned to “liberate” Huong Hoa District and was reinforced by a 82mm recoilless gun company, a 82mm mortar company, a transportation platoon, a sapper squad, and an engineer squad.

16 JAN – ASRAT BRAVO arrives on KSCB and is operational 18 JAN.

17 JAN – 26th Marines received OPCON of 2/26 making the first time all of the 26th Marine Regiment and attached infantry battalions are operating together in combat since Iwo Jima in WW II; 2/26 moves to positions near Hill 558 (XD 820451) to guard the northwest valley approach to KSCB.

17 JAN – USAF O-2 plane crashes on take-off from KSCB killing the pilot and one FOB-3 soldier passenger.

18 JAN – GEN WESTMORELAND directs diversion of electronic sensors to the Khe Sanh area.

20 JAN – III MAF notifies COMUSMACV that contingency plans for the relief of Lang Vei are valid; no additional support is required.

20 JAN – Electronic sensors are first seeded in the Khe Sanh area.

20 JAN – Co I/3/26, patrolling towards Hill 881-North where recon team DOCKLEAF made contact, makes contact with an estimated NVA battalion resulting in 4 USMC KIA including 2 platoon commanders.

20 JAN – NVA Lt La Thanh TONC surrenders at KSCB and discloses the NVA battle plan of attack against the position.

20 JAN – Recon Team NURSE is surrounded. On the basis of this contact, Bn 1/9 is later located at the Rock Quarry vice Hill 471 as originally planned.

20 JAN – North Vietnamese Rear Service Bases A1, A2, and A3 are established.

21 JAN – The Khe Sanh Siege battle begins. According to North Vietnamese histories, the battle has 4 phases: Phase I (20 Jan – 07 Feb) has the mission of eliminating Hill 861 and drawing in 2 to 3 American infantry divisions, pin them down and eliminate them, destroy the positions at Ban Houei Sane and Lang Vei; Phase II (10 Feb – 31 Mar) has the mission of encircling KSCB; Phase III (01 Apr – 07 May) has the mission of attacking American forces relieving the siege; and Phase IV (08 May – 15 Jul) has the mission of encircling KSCB and attacking withdrawing American forces. The NVA's battlefield includes 3 districts of Laos and extends to the Cua Viet River. The Khe Sanh portion of the battlefield is identified by the secret designation “B5-T8.”

21 JAN – **Hill 861** defended by K/3/26 is attacked by 6th Bn, 95C Regt, 325C Div; perimeter is penetrated with brunt of the attack on the northwest side

of the hill. NVA force is repulsed by the Marines leaving 47 NVA KIA. Hill 861 is reinforced with a platoon of D/1/26.

21 JAN – KSCB is attacked by fire 0500H-0530H. ASP #1 blows scattering ordnance; extensive damage to buildings and equipment but little personnel casualty.

21 JAN – An A4D “Skyhawk” is shot and crashes while making runs on enemy near the KSCB perimeter. Pilot, Capt DOWNING, safely ejects and is rescued.

21 JAN – Battery B, 1/13, arrives on KSCB making friendly fire support at 46 artillery pieces.

21 JAN – Capt KENNEDY, flying a CH-53 on mission “LUMINOUS 51,” delivers 8500-pounds of whole blood, morphine and other essential medical supplies in night darkness and fog with no airstrip lighting.

21 JAN – Huong Hoa District Headquarters (XD 858386, 2 mi. south of KSCB) with MACV Det 4 (also HQ of CAC “O” and the JTAD) in Khe Sanh village, is surrounded and attacked by 7th Bn, 66th Regt, 304 Div. A relief force from MACV Det 19 is launched from Quang Tri via helicopters of the 282nd AHC, lands at the Old French Fort and is decimated.

21 JAN – Project TIGERHOUND ceases operations at Khe Sanh.

22 JAN – 1115 Vietnamese civilians are evacuated from Khe Sanh; Bru Montagnard tribesmen are not permitted to evacuate and told to return to their villages.

22 JAN – USMC helicopters evacuate Marines of CAC OSCAR from Khe Sanh ville to man a portion of the FOB-3 perimeter.

22 JAN – Counter mortar radar arrives at KSCB.

22 JAN – Bn 1/9 arrives on KSCB and subsequently moves to positions at the “Rock Quarry.” (XD 831419).

23 JAN – 3RD MarDiv G-2 augmentation arrives at KSCB consisting of Majors MIRZA MUNIR BAIG

(TIO) and ROBERT B. COOLIDGE (Signals Intelligence).

23 JAN – ASRAT B sets new MASS-3 squadron record by controlling the delivery of 210.7 tons of bombs. (The record is again broken 27 Jan with delivery of 247.37 tons).

23 JAN – An A-4 aircraft is shot down over KSCB; MAJ WILLIAM J. LOFTUS, pilot, safely ejects and is rescued.

23 JAN – USAF reports sighting NVA tanks at Ban Houei Sane, 13 miles west of Khe Sanh on Route 9, the position of BV-33.

24 JAN – The NVA 24th Regt, 304 Div, and 198th Bn, 203rd NVA Regiment (tanks) overruns BV-33 Royal Laotian Battalion at Ban Houei Sane (XD625379, referred to as Ta May Strongpoint in North Vietnamese literature). Refugees (soldiers and their families) move to Lang Vei.

24 JAN – Marine and Air Force fighters and bombers fly 301 missions against North Vietnamese Army positions around Khe Sanh, a record number for a 24-hour period.

24 JAN – KSCB begins to receive artillery from 100mm field guns and 152mm artillery guns at Co Roc, Laos. A bunker in the area occupied by Co B/3rd Recon Bn is struck killing 3 Marines and 1 Navy Corpsman.

24 JAN – Co F/2/26 on a company-minus patrol to Hill 516, makes contact with entrenched NVA company. F/2/26 resumes assault 25 Jan, but is unable to neutralize objective.

25 JAN – “Gravel” mines (“MICRO GRAVEL,” XM-45E1) are seeded at Khe Sanh.

25 JAN – MGEN RATHVON MC CLURE TOMP-KINS (CG, 3rd MarDiv) prohibits patrols beyond 500 meters of friendly positions; plans a “set-piece” battle.

26 JAN – Hatchet Force DENVER from FOB-3 conducts patrol into Khe Sanh village and encounters heavy fighting but sustains no casualties.

27 JAN – 30 large secondary explosions at XD 843385, a site 500 meters directly north of the former CAP O-2 position at Khe Sanh ville and at XD 847369 (about 1000 meters directly south of Khe Sanh village)—probable NVA artillery HQs—is destroyed following the newly-arrived Maj BAIG's perceptive analysis of NVA movements and his extensive knowledge of NVA tactics after being at Khe Sanh only 4 days.

27 JAN – 37th ARVN Ranger Bn arrives on KSCB (425 Rangers with US Advisor, Capt Walter GUNN); occupies positions on eastern side of defensive perimeter in a line forward of perimeter manned by B/1/26 Marines.

28 JAN – Project 972 office at 3rd MarDiv sends contact team to KSCB to train Marines in use of new ground surveillance radars (NOD, PPS-5, PPS-6, MSS-3); another electronic sensor string is seeded.

29-31 JAN – North Vietnamese and VC forces launch attacks against some 105 cities and towns throughout South Vietnam. Enemy ground assaults are launched against 5 South Vietnamese provincial capitals. Ultimately, more than 80,000 North Vietnamese regulars and Viet Cong guerrillas are committed to the 1968 Tet Offensive.

29 JAN – President JOHNSON requests and receives statement from the Joint Chiefs of Staff that KSCB can and would be held against any NVA assault.

29 JAN – FOB-3 patrol makes heavy contact at Hill 471 (XD 846393) and Khe Sanh ville resulting in 3 US Army KIA.

29 JAN – A planning group on the staff of 3rd MarDiv suggests installation of gear to ensure Arc Light delivery within one kilometer of friendly positions. (Previous limit had been no closer than 3 KM of friendly positions).

29/30 JAN – Signals and photo intelligence disclose large NVA positions poised to attack Khe Sanh.

30 JAN – Largest B52 strike of the Vietnam War hits the B5-T8 command center in Laos controlling the battle at Khe Sanh; HQ displaces. There are 85 secondary explosions.

30 JAN – MSGT DU rallies at Lang Vei and discloses his Bn is to ambush American troops moving between KSCB and Lang Vei and eventually to attack and overrun Lang Vei itself.

01-09 FEB – Elements of the 2nd Bn, 5th Marines and 1st Bn, 1st Marines, clear enemy forces from Hue south of the Perfume River. In a house-to-house battle, they are able to retake the province headquarters, jail, and hospital. By 09 Feb, the last organized resistance in the city south of the river ends with more than 1,000 NVA killed.

01 FEB – Aerial photographs reveal tanks near Khe Sanh.

02 FEB – US Army 37th Signal Bn bunker is struck killing all occupants.

02/03 FEB – Electronic sensor SPOTLIGHT reports reflect heavy NVA troop movement along avenues of approach to KSCB.

05 FEB – Co E/2/26 on Hill 861-A (XD 805445) receives heavy NVA ground attack which temporarily penetrates part of the defensive perimeter resulting in 7 USMC KIA and 109 NVA KIA.

05 FEB – USAF C-130 aircraft, loaded with ammunition, is struck, but fires are extinguished and plane is able to depart KSCB.

06 FEB – Contingency Arc Light targets submitted today include, within their "boxes," Hills 950 and 558, and are within a thousand meters of Hills 861 and 861-A.

06 FEB – While the 2nd Bn, 9th Regt, 304 NVA Div, was moving into its regrouping position the night of 06 Feb, it was hit by 3 B-52 strikes along the Hoc Coc Giang Stream. The entire Bn suffered nearly 200 casualties.

06 FEB – Marines fighting in Hue City tear down Communist flag at the provincial HQ building and replace it with the Stars & Stripes.

07 FEB – USSF Camp at Lang Vei (XD 786357) is attacked by the 66th Regt, 304 NVA Div, supported by the 198th Bn, 20-3rd Regt (tanks), the first use of tanks (Soviet PT-76 amphibious tanks) by the North Vietnamese Army in the Vietnam War. The attack

overruns the camp. USMC artillery fires COFRAM munitions, the first use of this type of ordnance. Several thousand refugees gather at KSCB including approx. 2,000 Laotians and 5,000 – 6,000 Bru Montagnards. The refugees are refused access onto the KSCB and told to return to their villages. Most of the Bru are subsequently killed while Lao are eventually evacuated. A daring rescue by a small group from FOB-3 rescues Americans from Lang Vei.

08 FEB – An outpost designated “Hill 64” manned by a platoon of A/1/9, is assaulted by NVA troops and almost completely overrun; a few defenders are able to hold a section of the outpost until it is evacuated at first light.

10 FEB – North Vietnamese newspaper Nhan Dan warns that U.S. forces at Khe Sanh face a defeat as disastrous as that suffered by the French at Dien Bien Phu.

10 FEB – USMC C-130 of VMGR-152 crashes on the Khe Sanh airstrip.

10 FEB – NVA withdraw 5 regiments from Khe Sanh battlefield as the 66th Regt (304 Div) replaces the entire 325C Division. (Probable result of press release of 09 Feb that nuclear weapons were being discussed for use at Khe Sanh). CIA document notes that additional artillery support units more than compensate for the withdrawal of the infantry units.

11 FEB – COL ARGO, Gen. WESTMORELAND's staff historian, presents extensive analysis comparing Khe Sanh with Dien Bien Phu and numerous other military sieges. He doubts that Khe Sanh will be able to hold.

12 FEB – USAF ceases landing C-130s on Khe Sanh airstrip, considering it too dangerous. Up to this point, from 21 Jan – 11 Feb, USAF C-130s had delivered 7,338,000 pounds of assorted supplies via 320 C-130K and C-7A sorties to KSCB.

13 FEB – USAF begins massive air-drop of supplies.

13 FEB – 37th ARVN Ranger patrol captures a 82mm recoilless rifle.

13 FEB – A major NVA supply area (at XD 8734) is

struck resulting in approx. 1,000 secondary explosions.

13 FEB – III MAF reports that Marines killed 1,078 NVA and 52 VC during the past 2 weeks at Hue City.

14 FEB – GEN MAXWELL D. TAYLOR, running the White House “War Room,” recommends to President JOHNSON that Khe Sanh be evacuated “before the battle begins.”

14 FEB – K/3/9 departs Ca Lu Combat Base (YD 012455) and is ambushed while moving west on Route 9 at XD 990450.

14 FEB – A major NVA supply area is struck just inside Laos (at XD 7622, about 21 KM south-southwest of KSCB). The site is repeatedly struck for the next 7 days, generating approximately 1,000 secondary explosions and fires.

15 FEB – A NVA rallier discloses NVA may use FROG (Free Rocket Over Ground) missiles against Khe Sanh.

16 FEB – First use of LAPES (Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System) at Khe Sanh is successful.

16 FEB – Total defenders at Khe Sanh: 154 USMC officers and 3,070 USMC enlisted, 10 USN officers and 191 USN enlisted, 5 USA officers and 30 USA enlisted (does not include FOB, classified at the time), and 5 USAF officers and 24 USAF enlisted, for a total of 3489. (The 16 April manning message indicates 21 officers, 110 enlisted, and 455 ARVN at FOB-3 and 2 US officers, 3 US enlisted, 14 ARVN officers, and 436 ARVN enlisted for 37th Ranger Bn, making a grand total of friendly defenders at Khe Sanh approximately 4530).

18 FEB – During a 24-hour period, ASRAT BRAVO controlled 99 missions with over 275 aircraft dropping 486 tons of ordnance on 105 targets, establishing a new squadron record.

18 FEB – CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific, one of the Unified Commander controlling military operations in the Pacific area, including Vietnam] grants approval of Arc Light delivery within one kilometer from friendly forces.

19 FEB – GCA knocked out by incoming; TPQ-10 technique is used satisfactorily to control air-drops.

21 FEB – TPQ-10 guided air strike accidentally drops bombs about 40 meters inside KSCB perimeter, making a 40-ft. hole near B/1/26 between the 37th ARVN Ranger lines and those of B/1/26.

23 FEB – KSCB receives over 1,300 incoming rounds, mainly rocket and artillery.

24 FEB – Hill 950 is down to 2 gallons of water. The defenders on this outpost have been without water for 7 days.

24 FEB – SUPERGAGGLE helicopter re-supply of the Khe Sanh hill outposts commences.

24 FEB – The city of Hue is declared secure after a 25-day battle. A combined force of Marines, Army, and South Vietnamese forces had accounted for more than 4,500 Communists killed and the capture of large amounts of supplies. Mass graves of several thousand Vietnamese civilians (government workers, priests, and women) massacred by North Vietnamese forces are discovered.

25 FEB – A patrol by 3rd Platoon, B/1/26, is ambushed sustaining very heavy casualties just outside the wire of KSCB (at XD 849409). Dead cannot be recovered and are left on the field; one Marine is captured as POW and released in 1973, RONALD RIDGEWAY.

26 FEB – First close-in Arc Light strikes commence at Khe Sanh with delivery within one kilometer from friendly forces.

27 FEB – Khe Sanh village is struck by multiple B-52 strikes.

29FEB/01 MAR – Regimental-size assault by NVA against KSCB is detected by electronic sensors and decimated by COFRAM as assaulting troops close on perimeter.

06 MAR – C-123 crash kills 43 USMC, 4 USAF, and 1 USN. E/2/3 conducted recovery operations at the site, XD 933404, on 25 Mar, and by C/1/4 on 05 Nov 1968.

06 MAR – Aerial photographs reveal that numerous Arc Light strikes on Khe Sanh village have totally annihilated it, the Old French Fort, and the triangular District Headquarters compound.

07 MAR – The few remaining Bru in Khe Sanh begin to be evacuated. During the period 09-19 Mar, 1,247 Bru are air-lifted from Khe Sanh to a refugee center at Mai Loc, just south of Cam Lo on Route 558.

08 MAR – Jonathan Nathaniel SPICER, a conscientious objector, is hit and subsequently dies due to performing his duties as a stretcher bearer at C Med and is later awarded the Navy Cross for his heroism.

08 MAR – 3 patrols by 37th ARVN Rangers result in 20 NVA KIA.

10 MAR – NVA incoming rounds on KSCB spew propaganda leaflets.

13 MAR – CIA memo of this date notes that although the 320th NVA Div moved from the central DMZ to coastal lowlands of Quang Tri Province, reducing the possibility it would be used against Khe Sanh, a formidable concentration of enemy troops, perhaps as many as 20,000, still threatens Khe Sanh.

17 MAR – COMUSMACV requests Agent Orange be sprayed along Route 9 from Khe Sanh to Bong Kho. Spray missions are conducted 14 and 25 May and 16 June. Within 2.5 kilometers and within 28 days of spraying, an estimated 25,900 Marines were affected according to a report by the Comptroller General of the US.

18 MAR – An estimated 600 NVA assault 37th ARVN Ranger positions on the eastern perimeter of KSCB.

22/23 MAR – In excess of 1100 rounds slam into KSCB.

24 MAR – a 1/9 patrol results in 31 NVA KIA and 5 USMC KIA, 14 WIA (3 evacuated).

25 MAR – Co E/2/3 searches wreckage of C-123 that crashed 06 Mar. (Area also searched 05 Nov 1968 by a patrol of C/1/4), recovering bodies and identification items.

27 MAR – NVA 81mm mortar shells disperse propaganda leaflets on KSCB, the second time in a month.

29 MAR – Last assault attempt by the NVA against KSCB results in 7 NVA KIA by ground fire and 71 KIA by artillery.

30 MAR – GPES (Ground Proximity Extraction System) resupply introduced at Khe Sanh.

30 MAR – Co B/1/26 patrols area of 25 Feb contact to retrieve MIA. Ferocious battle ensues making recovery of bodies impossible at this time.

31 MAR – Operation **SCOTLAND** concludes. Operation **PEGASUS (LAM SON 207A)** commences as largest III MAF offensive of the War, involving 14 infantry battalions. USAF Operation **NIAGARA** terminates. During the siege battle (21 Jan – 31 Mar), total casualties: 354 Americans KIA, 209 Vietnamese KIA (not including 37th ARVN Ranger Bn), for a total of 354 friendly KIA, 2,541 patients were treated in medical facilities (2,031 WIA and 490 NBC—non-battle casualties; between 2800 and 12,800 local Bru were killed; an estimated 24,640 NVA were KIA.

01 APR – Operation **PEGASUS/LAM SON 207A** begins (concludes 15 Apr 68), the largest III MAF operation of the war involving 18 infantry battalions (7 USMC, 8 USA, 3 ARVN) for a total of 19,000 USA soldiers, 10,000 USMC, 300 helicopters and 114 heliborne artillery pieces. AO: XD9766 – YD 0334 to Lao border at XD7726, north along border to southern boundary of DMZ, then east along the DMZ to XD9766. 42 miles of Route 9 which had been closed since Sep, 1967, is reopened.

~~**03 APR** – While 1st Marine Regiment continues to attack west along Route 9, 2-7 Cav makes contact with Co-size blocking force at XD 890404. 2-7 Cav, 1-5 Cav and 2-12 Cav airlifted into various LZs receive incoming receiving 9 KIA.~~

04 APR – Bn 1/9 (- B Co) departs Rock Quarry position, assaults and secures Hill 471 (XD 846393).

05 APR – 1/9 on Hill 471 repulses Bn-size NVA attack.

06 APR – Bn 2/26 breaks out of its CP at Hill 558 (XD 820451) and assaults Hill 700 just to the south southeast of Hill 861.

06 APR – 84th Company, 8th Airborne Bn, 3rd Airborne TF, is airlifted into KSCB to link-up with 37th ARVN Ranger Bn for the initial “relief” of KSCB.

06 APR – 1/9 is relieved by 2-12 Cav on Hill 471.

06 APR – MIA from 25 Feb and 30 Mar are recovered by patrol of D/1/26 and B/1/26.

07 APR – 1/9 assaults and secures Hill 552 (XD 822402), a major NVA stronghold during the siege battle.

07 APR – Cos F & G, 2/26, assault Hill 700 and secure objective 10 Apr.

07 APR – 2-5 Cav secures the Old French Fort after a bitter fight.

08 APR – Co D, 2-7 Cav, enters KSCB to link-up forces and formalize “relief.”

09 APR – 1/9 assaults and secures Hill 689 (XD 803409).

10 APR – Col Bruce F. Meyers arrives at KSCB to relieve Col David E. Lownds as CO, 26th Mar, (relief on 12 Apr) and the mission of destroying and abandoning KSCB.

11 APR – Bgen Jacob E. Glick, ADC of 3rd MarDiv, arrives at KSCB; TF GLICK is activated to deactivate KSCB.

11 APR – 2 helicopters launched from Quang Tri to pick up medevac from Hill 881-South collide in mid-air 7 miles west of Dong Ha.

12 APR – Route 9 reopened to KSCB.

12 APR – Co B, 1-12 Cav, captures Lang Vei (XD 784357) finding 11 dead NVA, extensive NVA weapons and munitions, but no Americans.

13 APR Felix POILANE, the coffee plantation owner, returns to KSCB and is killed when the aircraft in which he is riding crashes. Born at Khe

Sanh, he managed his father's plantation since 21 Dec 1957 when he arrived at Khe Sanh with his wife, Madaleine. The Poilane family had departed KSCB 22 Jan 1968 and sought refuge in Hue.

14 APR – 3/26 assaults and secures Hill 881-North (XD 774457)

15 APR – Operation **PEGASUS** concludes; Operation **SCOTLAND II** commences under command of TF GLICK. Casualties for PEGASUS: 59 USA KIA, 51 USMC KIA, 33 ARVN KIA (total: 143 KIA), 236 USA WIA, 459 USMC WIA, 187 ARVN WIA (total 882 WIA), 5 USA MIA, 638 NVA KIA by USA, 404 NVA KIA by USMC, 260 NVA KIA by ARVN (total: 1302 NVA KIA), 18 NVA POW.

16 APR – Bn 3/26 departs Khe Sanh.

16 APR – Two companies of 1/9 become pinned down in two separate ambushes near Hill 689 resulting in 40 USMC KIA, 1 DOW, 15 WIAE, and 17 WIANE.

18 APR – 1st Marine Regiment assumes OPCON of all units at Khe Sanh.

18 APR – Bn 2/26 departs Khe Sanh.

19 APR – Co I/3/4 arrives on Hill 689 to relieve 1/9.

21 APR – Bn 1/9 departs Khe Sanh.

21 APR – Patrols from 3rd Force Recon Co. begin using KEYHOLE patrols, first used at Khe Sanh, involving 4-man, lightly-armed patrols used only for recon, not as FO or to engage the enemy.

21 APR – 1st Mar recover 38 USMC bodies from the 1/9 contact of 16 Apr plus 2 American KIA believed dead 2-3 months.

25 APR – TF GLICK re-designated TF HOTEL, under command of BGen Carl W. Hoffman.

25 APR – US tanks ambushed upon departure from KSCB

MAY – PAVN High Command sends 308th Infantry Div (minus the 36th Regt.) into combat at Khe Sanh to operate in the southern portion of the battlefield.

06 MAY – Memorial Service for 1/26 KIA at Khe Sanh conducted at Wonder Beach.

08 MAY – The NVA B5-T8 Front begins Phase IV of the Khe Sanh battle (lasting to 15 Jul)

15 MAY – Contacts with NVA increase, reflecting new NVA units in area.

16 MAY – K/3/4 and M/3/4 make significant contact with NVA at XD 788419 and XD 792416.

18 MAY – An entire recon patrol from E/3rd Recon at XD 885512 is annihilated.

19 MAY – NVA ambush road sweep detail and tanks; overall plan was to overrun KSCB. 37 USMC infantry KIA; 5 tanks suffer considerable damage; over 300 NVA KIA (100 by tanks).

23 MAY – President JOHNSON awards 26th Marine Regiment and its supporting units the **PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION**.

27 MAY – M/3/4 makes contact with NVA at LZ PEANUTS (XD 810393).

27/28 MAY – F/2/3 position at XD 874383 is attacked resulting in 13 USMC KIA, 44 USMC WIAE, 174 NVA KIA (adjusted to over 200 as the surrounding area was searched).

30 MAY – 01 JUN – Operation **DRUMFIRE II**, an artillery raid, executed against Co Roc Mountain artillery positions.

31 MAY – E/2/3 attacked from 4 different directions. Co B/1/1, sent to assist, is also ambushed.

JUN – 2/1 defends KSCB, 2/3 provides road security for Route 9 until relieved by 3/4 on 20 Jun. 2/3 departs Khe Sanh to provide perimeter security defense at LZ STUD (XD 996460).

02 JUN – Operation **ROBIN NORTH** commences with 1st Marine Regiment.

05 JUN – C/1/4 receives 130mm arty from Co Roc on LZ LOON (XD 876334) resulting in 9 USMC KIA and 31 WIAE.

06 JUN – LZ LOON attacked by Bn-sized NVA force and artillery. Although attack is repulsed, FSB is abandoned. Results of attack: 154 NVA KIA, 24 USMC KIA, 37 USMC WIAE. USMC KIA are from helicopter that crashes at XD 877334.

06 JUN – Operation **ROBIN SOUTH** commences with 4th Marine Regiment.

08 JUN – C/1/12 at LZ TORCH (XD 911278) receives NVA attack resulting in 28 NVA KIA, 14 USMC KIA, 113 USMC WIAE.

09 JUN – BLT 2/4 attacked by Bn-size NVA force resulting in 7 USMC KIA, 41 WIAE.

12 JUN – Operation **ROBIN NORTH** concludes (91 NVA KIA, 3 NVA POW, 16 USMC KIA, 130 USMC WIAE).

12 JUN – PAVN High Command and Front HQ, B5-T8 (Khe Sanh Front) assigns 246th Independent Regiment to replace the entire 304th Div which is withdrawn to be refitted. The 304th Div's CP sustained a direct hit by a B52 mission.

14 JUN – BLT 2/4 discovers Russian 1 ½-ton truck and van complete with machine shop.

15 JUN – Casualty figures in Khe Sanh area 01-15 JUN: 431 US KIA, 33 ARVN KIA, 2313 US WIAE, 187 ARVN WIAE, 3097 NVA KIA.

15-18 JUN – Bn 3/4 units attacked resulting in 30 USMC KIA, 88 USMC WIAE, 315 NVA KIA.

17 JUN – JCS concurs with III MAF proposal to abandon Khe Sanh and adopt a mobile posture in area.

17 JUN – Operation **CHARLIE** commences with the mission of destroying KSCB. 1/1 occupies Hills 689, 861, 881A, and 558; 3/4 patrols from FOXTROT RIDGE (XD 874383); 2/1 defends KSCB and Hills 552 and 471 plus road security; 3/9 destroys all bunkers and collects all salvageable items.

18 JUN – A Bn of 88th NVA regiment attacks 3/4, penetrating their FEBA. K/3/4 receives brunt of attack. Casualties: 14 USMC KIA, 30 WIAE, 129 NVA KIA.

18 JUN – Operation **ROBIN SOUTH** concludes: 604 NVA KIA, 48 NVA POW, 77 USMC KIA, 286 USMC WIAE, 20 USMC WIANE. During ROBIN operations, helos transported 6,164,374 pounds of cargo and 18,767 combat troops. 1,118 close air support missions expended 1740.5 tons of ordnance resulting in 64 secondary explosions. 13,381 rounds of 105mm and 2,103 rounds of 155mm were fired.

19 JUN – Co I/3/4 defending FOXTROT RIDGE (XD 874383), some 2000 meters SE of KSCB overlooking Route 9, is attacked. Later search on 02 Jul discloses 212 NVA KIA, 77 weapons captured. Capt Merlyn A. SEXTON is awarded Navy Cross for this action.

19 JUN – 05 JUL – KSCB is destroyed.

24 JUN – ASRAT departs Khe Sanh for Chu Lai. News reporter John S. CARROLL "leaks" news of abandonment of KSCB. Within 12 hours of his disclosure there was an immediate increase of NVA artillery into KSCB killing several Marines as well as increased NVA activity against Marines on the Hill 689 outpost.

02 JUL – Advance party of 2/1 departs KSCB, walking off eastern end of airstrip under cover of darkness. NVA artillery slams into now abandoned KSCB.

02 JUL – A patrol from D/1/1 on Hill 689 is ambushed. One body cannot be recovered at the time.

05 JUL – Patrol of 16 men from D/1/1 recover MIA but sustain 8 additional MIA (BNR) at base of Hill 689.

06 JUL – Hill 861 is abandoned by A/1/1 which relocates to reinforce Hill 689. Hill 558 is abandoned by C/1/1 which moves to Hill 689.

08 JUL – 1/1 is reinforced by L/3/4.

11 JUL – Some daring "body snatcher" teams of Marines successfully recover MIA.

12 JUL – 1/1 is heli-lifted from Hill 689, thus ending the period of permanent installations at Khe Sanh for Marines as a mobile tactic is adopted. Cu-

mulative statistics for SCOTLAND II (16 Apr – 11 Jul): 301 USMC KIA, 25 USA KIA, 1489 USMC WIAE, 123 USA WIAE, 242 USMC WIANE, 34 USA WIANE, 2 USA MIA, 2440 NVA KIAC, 56 NVA POW. 2/4 remains in Khe Sanh area with a platoon on Hill 950 (E-3) and one company on ridgeline between Hill 950 and FSB CATES (XD 927437). 3/4 continues to operate in Khe Sanh area.

02 AUG – Hill 950 (XD 844456), manned by a Plt from E/2/4, is attacked. Western edge of position is overrun, but attack is repulsed. Results: 6 USMC KIA, 11 USMC WIA, 5 NVA KIA.

OCT – 4th and 9th Marines launch large-scale clear and search operations in extreme western Quang Tri Province, beginning their sweeps from FSB NANKING, one mile west of the former KSCB. 3/4 sweeps west, finding little enemy presence. 1/4 and 2/4 sweep east toward DaKrong Valley. 4th Marines establishes 6 new Fire Support Bases (FSBs): NANKING, GURKHA (XD 872482), ALPINE (XD 756532), ARGONNE (XD 678572), NEVILLE (XD 824577), and FULLER (YD 0159), all to the northwest of the former KSCB.

06 OCT – 2 battalions of 2nd ARVN Regiment land on Hill 881-South and move north and southwest.

10 OCT – Memorial services are conducted on old KSCB airstrip.

12 OCT – FSB GURKHA (XD 872482) is activated (4 miles NW of FSB NANKING).

23 OCT – FSB ALPINE (XD 756532) is established, 11 miles NW of KSCB.

01 NOV – K/3/4 searches out Tiger Tooth Mountain and locates (at XD 838544) wreckage of CH-46 helicopter, 3 skeletons, and one ID care.

02 NOV – K/3/4 locates remains of a UH-34 at XD 824538 (plane #11-IN).

NOV – 1/4 scours area north of Khe Sanh just south of DMZ.

30 NOV – A Vietnamese CH-34A helicopter with a SOG team from FOB-1 embarked, crashes in flames at XD 515410, one Km north of Route 9).

28 DEC – Camp J.J. Carroll (YD 063548) is deacti-

vated.

31 DEC – Teams from 3rd Recon Bn are inserted west of Khe Sanh along the Laotian border.

1969

02 JAN – **Operation DAWSON RIVER WEST** begins (conducted 020600H/ Jan69 – 191600H/ JAN69 by 9th Marine Regiment together with 2nd and 3rd Bns of the 2nd ARVN Regiment). Minimal contact with NVA is encountered. Numerous small arms caches and various NVA munitions are uncovered near Lang Vei on 07 Jan by E/2/9. No sizeable enemy concentrations or supplies exist in the Khe Sanh area. Results of the operation: 43 NVA KIA, 1 NVA POW, no friendly casualties.

24/25 FEB – Fire Support Bases NEVILLE and RUSSELL are hit by heavy sapper attacks. RUSSELL, manned by E(-)/2/4 sustained 60 casualties; NEVILLE, manned by H/2/4, had 10 KIA and 20 WIA. These attacks launch **Operation PURPLE MARTIN**.

27 FEB – **Operation PURPLE MARTIN** commences (terminates 08 May 1969), conducted by 4th Marines, supported by 3/12 artillery, with mission: to scour the area south of the DMZ in the Khe Sanh area. 3 Bns were employed abreast, occupying FSBs ALPINE, ARGONNE, NEVILLE, and RUSSELL.

05 MAR – Team DOCKLEAF from C/3rd Recon Bn, engages with estimated NVA platoon resulting in 3 USMC KIA. **PFC ROBERT HENRY JENKINS, JR., is posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.**

10 MAR – **Operation MAINE CRAG** commences (concludes 02 May 69) conducted by 3rd, 4th, and 12th Marines, one Bn of 9th Marines, TF REMAGEN (USA armored force from 1st Brigade, 5th Mech Div), 3rd Eng Bn, 3rd Recon Bn, 3rd Tank Bn, with mission: scour area south of Route 9 in Khe Sanh area, determining NVA use of Route 616 and 926.

10 MAR – 2/3 is helilifted into LZ HAWK (XD 895407) and begins overland movement by foot to SW, heading for Route 926.

15 MAR – Battery A/1/12 helilifted into LZ SNAPPER (XD 845344).

19 MAR – 3RD Marines assumed command of TF REMAGEN.

20 MAR – 1/4 completes assault on FSB ARGONNE, the furthest FSB in the AO.

21 MAR – H/2/3 discovers staging area for 150 troops and a rice cache of over 350 tons, 7,000 pounds of salt loaded in a French truck with Russian tires and American markings.

21 MAR – The Bn Commander, COL SARGENT, is KIA and every member of his staff are either KIA or WIA. Results of operation: 355 NVA KIA, 5 NVA POW, 206 IWC, 106 USMC KIA, 428 USMC WIA. 129,000 artillery rounds fired in support of the operation.

06 APR – TF REMAGEN CHOP from 3RD Mar to TF HOTEL and begins operations near Khe Sanh plateau.

07 MAY – **Operation HERKIMER MOUNTAIN** commences (terminates 16 JUL 69) conducted by 4th Marines who remain in place following termination of Operation PURPLE MARTIN.

29 MAY – **Operation CAMERON FALLS** (3/9) commences (terminates 23 Jun 1969).

04 JUN – Recon team FLIGHT TIME (D Co, 3RD Recon Bn) is overrun on Hill 471 (XD 846393) resulting in 6 USMC KIA.

12 JUN – **Operation UTAH MESA** commences (conducted by 1/9, 3/9, one Bn of the 1/5TH Mech Div, and 3RD Eng Bn; concludes 9 Jul).

23 JUN – 1/9 “stood down” from offensive operations and moved to Vandegrift Combat Base to prepare for embarkation.

23-30 JUN – 3/9 makes extensive contact after inserting near Huong Hoa (XD 864376) and sweeping to Lang Hole (XD 871308) with the NVA 4th and 6th Bns of the 27th Regt.

08 JUL – Task Force HOTEL is deactivated termi-

nating a 16-month period in which it was the control HQ for the 3rd Marine Division’s mobile helicopter borne operations.

JUL-SEP – 3rd MarDiv relinquishes large multi-Bn search and destroy missions in Khe Sanh plateau and other western Quang Tri Province areas. Area is now designated a “Reconnaissance Zone.”

04-27 AUG – Det B-52 (PROJECT DELTA), 5th Special Forces, conducts **Operation TROJAN HORSE** in Khe Sanh area. The operation resumes 08-10 Oct and results in 1 US KIA, 24 WIA, 1 NVA KIA, and 1 NVA KBA.

26 NOV – 5th MarDiv deactivated.

1970

The 1st Brigade of the 5th Mechanized Division, US Army, is responsible for the western Quang Tri Province area and conducts operations in it. During late 1970, evidence mounts that the NVA were preparing for a major offensive in the northern I Corps Tactical Zone.

05 MAR – **26th Marine Regiment is presented with the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with palm as a unit award.**

18 MAR – 26th Marine Regiment participates in farewell ceremony at the DaNang airfield. Because of the redeployment of 26th Marines, the Marine portion of U.S. forces in I Corps became less than those of the U.S. Army, and III MAF became subordinate to XXIV Corps.

06 MAY – FSB HENDERSON (YD 081411) defended by A/2-501 Infantry, is attacked resulting in 31 USA KIA, 33 USA WIAE, 2 USA MIA, 19 ARVN KIA, 45 ARVN WIA, and 29 NVA KIA.

18-19, 24 NOV – Electronic Battlefield Hearings conducted by the US Senate Committee on Armed Forces receives testimony from COL LOWNDS, MGEN TOMPKINS, and MAJ JERRY HUDSON who disclose the pivotal role played by electronic sensors which had been seeded as the Khe Sanh siege began.

1971

29 JAN – Operation LAM SON 719, Phase One, begins as LtGen LAM establishes I Corps Forward command post at Dong Ha and Gen SUTHERLAND sets up XXIV Corps Forward HQ at Quang Tri. US Army engineers rebuild bridges and culverts on Route 9. Artillery and support units move into Khe Sanh to build an airstrip capable of receiving C-130 aircraft. This new airstrip parallels the former airstrip. Lang Vei is established as a major helicopter base.

08 FEB – ARVN 1st Armored Brigade advances into Laos along Route 9, beginning Phase 2, pushing toward Tchepone.

18 FEB – South Vietnamese encounter NVA resistance in company and battalion strength.

19 FEB – 400 to 500 NVA overrun the 39TH ARVN Ranger Bn resulting in 178 KIA and 148 WIA. NVA subsequently employ elements of 5 divisions, including an estimated 12 infantry regiments, 2 artillery regiments, and at least one armored regiment, to counter the South Vietnamese incursion into Laos.

17 MAR – Phase 4, withdrawal, commences as armored brigade moves eastward along Route 9. ARVN command loses control while attempting to withdraw too quickly and inadequate advance planning and coordination, resulting in a near rout.

06 APR – Last South Vietnamese troops depart Laos. Results of LAM SON 719: to South Vietnamese forces: 1549 KIA, 5483 WIA, 651 MIA; to US forces: 215 KIA, 1149 WIA, 38 MIA. Estimated NVA losses are 13,000 NVA KIA. The NVA, so tenaciously committed to the Ho Chi Minh supply network, construct another large road further west near the Mekong River to ensure continued movement of supplies and troops into South Vietnam.

04-05 JUN – HICKORY RADIO RELAY site (Hill 950) manned by 27 Americans and 67 indig. of SOG is overrun. SGT Jon R. CAVAIANI, taken prisoner, is released by the North Vietnamese 23 MAR 1973 and later awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions during this attack on HICKORY.

09 JUL – American forces are no longer obligated to defend the region south of the DMZ at the 17TH parallel. The US military had moved into this area in 1966 to reinforce the 1954 Geneva Convention Agreement, prohibiting ground or artillery attacks from the buffer zone.

19 JUL – Redeployment of all major USMC units from South Vietnam is completed.

27 AUG – Army's 1ST Brigade of the 5TH Mechanized Division withdraws from Vietnam. (It had operated along the western area of the DMZ and Khe Sanh area since January, 1971).

11 SEP – In an effort to remove any remaining KIA/MIA from atop HICKORY before all US forces departed Vietnam, Major JOHN W. RIPLEY, advisor to 5th Bn of Vietnamese Marines, accompanies a team to Hill 950 to extract approximately 30 bodies. The force is attacked and MAJ RIPLEY crash lands on the former Khe Sanh airstrip while remainder of force departs, leaving him alone. He makes preparations to fly a crippled chopper out himself but is rescued by a helicopter manned by an Army Warrant Officer.

1972

20 JAN – A USAF gunship patrolling Highway 9 to Khe Sanh is shot down at 5,000 feet right over the Khe Sanh airstrip by SA-2 missile.

30 MAR – FSB SARGE (YD 028478, Dong Toan Mountain) is attacked resulting in 2 American soldiers of the 8TH Army Radio Research Field Station, 509th ASA Group, Army Security Agency MIA when their bunker CONEX box takes a direct hit.

30 MAR – NVA launch offensive to capture Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces. 304TH NVA Division captures area of Khe Sanh after entering Vietnam through the Lao Bao area and moving east along Route 9. 24TH Regt captures Cam Lo on 02 Apr, 66TH Regt captures Mai Loc on 03 Apr, and Quang Tri City is captured 01 May. South Vietnamese forces recapture Quang Tri City on 16 Sep.

07 JUL – Major LEONARD ROBERTSON, piloting an A6A, is killed after his plane is shot down and crashes at XD837304 (1500 meters southwest of

Hill 471), the last American in the immediate Khe Sanh area.

20 NOV – USMC Captain DONALD CHARLES BREUER (VMFA-232) crashes near XD 662350, 1 KM south of the Xepone River, the location of the former BV-33, and becomes the last American KIA in the wider Khe Sanh area.

1973

Bernard C. Nalty's book, *Air Power and the Fight for Khe Sanh*, is published by the USAF.

23 JAN – Paris agreement to end the war in Vietnam is signed. The cease-fire is effective at 0800, 28 Jan, Saigon time.

14 MAR – Sub Unit One, 1ST ANGLICO, the last Marine unit to depart Vietnam, is transferred to FMFPAC.

29 MAR – The last US troops depart South Vietnam, ending 10 years of US military presence. Only a Defense Attaché Office and a few Marine guards at the Saigon Embassy remain. HQ, MACV, is closed. Hanoi releases the last 67 of its acknowledged POWs, bringing the total number released to 587.

Publisher Note:

If any member wishes a complete copy of the Chronology put together by Ray Stubbe, email me at Teic1448@aol.com, and I will send it to you. Ray is still working on his latest endeavor, a history of the battle of Khe Sanh, from the North Vietnamese Army. I have read portions of the book and was amazed how efficient their Armed Forces were at Khe Sanh. In simple terms they really had their shit together, and were a worthy opponent, even though we kicked their ass.

MEMOIRS

Twenty Years Old

By Craig W. Tourte

On January 8th Joe Harrigan wrote a Post about what he was doing on January 21, 1968. Certainly I cannot forget where I was and what I was doing. Many of us have stated over and over again, throughout these many years where and what they were doing on that fateful day. I have to admit many years have passed where I had not thought about Khe Sanh and what occurred those many years ago. Like my friend Tom Horschler discussed, I too don't think I had much recall of those past events until recently.

So many years have passed and it seems like only yesterday. Young men all, long lives ahead, full of promise and hope. I was 20 years old, young in years but old in life, the result of too much battle in a very short time. I may have spent too much time, during these recent years, thinking about me and perhaps not enough, remembering them. My heart still sees a twenty year old, who had the thoughts that twenty year olds should have had.

I had guard duty and was walking north from the south trench line towards the base interior. I was approximately 100 meters or so north of the wire between what I think were a couple of supply tents, when I heard what sounded like a jet plane scream over the top of my head. At first I thought it was another F4 which had flown low across the base going west to east, like I had seen fighters do in the past (flying east to west). I stopped in my tracks and followed the sound as I looked up into the cold early morning sky, not able to identify the sound at first, but upon hearing the first explosion I immediately knew that the base was under attack. The rockets and other incoming continued and I yelled my alert of "incoming." I'm not really sure why I yelled that, certainly everyone knew it and they all rushed for the safety of the below ground trench line from the above ground tents we had so carefully erected.

The above ground sleeping tents, which we ignorantly called bunkers, had dirt filled 55 gallon drums and ammo box's around the sides, about 5 feet high. We immediately recognized the inadequacy of these structures upon hearing and seeing the impact of the

first incoming rounds. The ammo dump had blown and we dodged hot, deadly shrapnel from our own ammunition along with those from the enemy guns the rest of the day and night. I was shocked when I smelled tear gas and had to run back into the venerable protection of the sleeping tent/bunker to retrieve my gas mask, never really thinking it would be necessary to wear a gas mask in a modern day war. Those are my remembrances of that date, when I was twenty years old.

My son came home from college during this winter break. He was filled with stories of school and the girls he had met and the friends he made. He told me it was the best time in his life. The morning he went back to school I went into his bedroom and sat down on his bed. I told him that I loved him and would miss him while he was gone, something my parents never did before I went off to war. Rubbing his back while I spoke to him, I thought back to when he was a child and to all of the things that he did as a small boy. I thought of how now, he was a man and that he had his whole life ahead of him, a life filled with promise and hope. I am sure he was thinking all of the things that twenty year old men should be thinking. I was glad he would never have to think that the hole was not deep enough, pray that he ran fast enough, and that at anytime it could be him, or if it was not him, than who, because with so much incoming, it most certainly would be someone, knowing that for us, it was.

"WHAT A WAY TO FIGHT A WAR"
INTERESTING NEWS FROM THE WAR IN
IRAQ & AFGANASTAN
By Robert Hall

NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE -- Six days a week, Shannon Rogers kisses his wife and two young kids goodbye and wheels his battered 1989 Chevy Cavalier out of the driveway of his suburban Nevada home. The houses here are cookie cutter, done in beige stucco. Like most of the other dads and some moms in this traditional middle-class community, Rogers heads down Interstate 215, toward his job near Las Vegas, using the 30 minute drive to make the mental transition from family man to workplace professional. But Rogers will end up in a place far different from that of his fellow commuters: when he arrives at work, he will be at war in Iraq.

Rogers, an Air Force major and experienced fighter pilot, is part of an elite group of U.S. troops playing a crucial role in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan from the U.S.'s most notorious playground. From Nellis Air Force Base, outside Las Vegas, Rogers controls a Predator, a flimsy drone that has been transformed from a spy plane into one of the wars' most lethal weapons. Predators played a key part in catching Saddam Hussein and have killed al-Qaeda suspects in Pakistan and Yemen. In September a Predator tracked 11 insurgents who had attacked a U.S. base in Iraq, then killed them as they fled.

What makes the Predator mission--and Rogers' job--so unusual is the 7,000 miles between pilot and plane. Basing the crew members at home rather than at the front keeps them out of harm's way and saves the military money. Still, "for us, it's combat," says Rogers, 34, who has been deployed to battle zones twice, most recently Iraq this summer. "Physically, we may be in Vegas, but mentally, we're flying over Iraq. It feels real."

Certainly the decisions they face are life and death, as TIME observed when it was recently granted exclusive access to operations of the Air Force's 15th Reconnaissance Squadron, which commands 25 Predators from Nellis. It was 10:30p.m. in Nevada, 9:30 a.m. in Iraq, and after two hours of watching insurgents fire a pickup-truck-mounted .50-cal. machine gun at U.S. troops in western Iraq, Rogers and the sensor operator with whom he works were given the command to shoot the truck. Both developed a case of what Rogers calls the "trembles"--the nervousness of wanting to kill the enemy but injure no one else, combined with the enormity of taking human lives. Just as Rogers pushed the button to let fly one of the Predator's Hellfire missiles, a car appeared and started to drive toward the pickup. His partner's job is to keep the missile locked on target or, if necessary, divert it to a place where it would cause as little damage as possible. "What do we do, sir?" the partner asked in a shaky voice. "Stay on the target and hope he drives fast," said Rogers coolly. The car passed, and the truck exploded violently when the Hellfire struck. Rogers let out a whoop and exchanged high fives with his partner. The Predator is an unlikely star. In military terms, it is an unmanned aerial vehicle, or UAV. It was first flown a decade ago and for years was armed with only an unsophisticated camera for intelligence gathering.

After the fall of 2000, when Osama bin Laden was spotted in Afghanistan by an unarmed Predator, the U.S. government sped up a program to fit each aircraft with two Hellfire missiles. Awesome sounding but benign looking, the 27ft. long Predator is painted a dull gray and shaped like an upside-down spoon with wings. The drone is made of lightweight composite plastic and metal, and has a tiny, propeller-driven engine--adapted from a snowmobile's--with a decidedly unimpressive top speed of only 150 m.p.h. Rogers' previous craft, the supersonic F-15 jet fighter, can fly up to 900 m.p.h.

The Predators commanded by the 15th Reconnaissance Squadron are launched and landed by troops at the front, but while they are in the air, up to 24 hours straight every day, they are controlled by Air Force crews sitting in six grounded cockpits at Nellis. Each cockpit consists of two large armchairs set in front of banks of computer screens with keyboards, control joysticks and live video images. Video is relayed from a camera mounted on the bottom of the Predator not only to Nellis, but also to troops on the ground, commanders in the region, and the Pentagon. The crew consists of a pilot who flies the plane and launches missiles, and a sensor operator who controls the camera and the laser targeting device for the two Hellfires.

The crew members communicate with troops and commanders in the war zone through secure instant-messaging systems, as well as radio transmissions routed through a mission controller, who sits in a command center at Nellis and issues orders to the crew. The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have proved the worth of unmanned aircraft--which are cheaper and, because there is no pilot to be shot down, politically more palatable than traditional airplanes. The thousand-plus UAVs in the military's arsenal range from tiny craft that can fit in a soldier's palm to ones the size of business jets. Military analysts are predicting that within two decades, UAVs may even take over the jobs of pilots flying fighter jets. It makes economic sense; the \$4 million Predator is a bargain compared with the Air Force's newest fighter, the \$354 million F-22. The effectiveness of the Predator in war zones, however, has translated into stresses in an unlikely place: back home. The operational tempo puts intense pressure on the small group of men and women who deliver death from a distance. The 180-person Nellis unit runs 24 hours a

day, seven days a week, with no holidays. The unit has logged more flight hours than any other squadron in the Air Force yet is only 65% staffed. Crew members are so tightly scheduled that when on duty, they have to ask permission to go to the bathroom and cannot leave their chairs unless there is someone to replace them. The troops call the Predator compound Shawshank because it reminds them of a prison. The schedule demands that the men and women change shifts--days, evenings and overnights--every three weeks, which makes fitting into normal civilian life off base nearly impossible. Morale, say many crew members, is suffering. Crew members are experiencing more problems in their personal lives, including separation and divorce.

One may expect that being home would be a plus for the troops, but actually it's often a complication. Soldiers in the field have to cope with danger, but at least they live in one world, whereas their counterparts at Nellis commute daily from war to civilian life. "How many people can say they went to work today and killed or captured a few terrorists?" says Lt. Colonel John Harris, commander of the 15th. "Our people are proud they contribute to the war from home. But being at home brings some additional stresses.

We're very close to a crisis. Rogers says he feels pulled in two directions, between spending more time helping with the war effort, and also being an integral part of his family. He rushes home after his day shift to jump in the pool with his kids. "At least I get to sleep in my own bed," says Rogers. But he says being deployed in Iraq was easier because he was isolated from the daily errands and the emotional demands of family life. His wife Laura feels differently about his being home. "It takes the edge off being a pilot's wife," she says, "at least I know I won't be getting that phone call in the middle of the night telling me my husband has been shot down or is missing in action."

WELCOME HOME

3 Khe Sanh MIA's Recovered

Listed in "Battalion of Kings" page 416

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced that the remains of four U.S. servicemen, missing in action since the Vietnam War, have been identified. They will be

returned to their families for burial with full military honors. They are: Major Jack L. Barker of Waycross, Ga.; Capt. John F. Dugan of Roselle, N.J.; Sgt. William E. Dillender of Naples, Fla.; and Pfc. John J. Chubb of Gardena, Calif. All were from the Army's 101st Airborne Division. Chubb was buried in Inglewood, Calif., on Feb. 18. Barker, Dugan, and Dillender will be buried on April 12, in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C.

On March 20, 1971, Barker and Dugan were piloting a UH-1H Huey helicopter with Dillender and Chubb on board. The aircraft was participating in a troop extraction mission in the Savannakhet Province of Laos. As the helicopter approached the landing zone, it was hit by heavy enemy ground fire. It exploded in the air and there were no survivors. Continued enemy activity in the area prevented any recovery attempts.

Pictures You Will Not See On Your Local News



MINI REUNION LUNCHEON HELD, TO REMEMBER 21 JANUARY 1968, THE START OF THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH

January 21, 2006 CHICO, CALIFORNIA

By Craig W. Tourte

There are times in our life in which events occur that changes our whole being. January 21, 1968, was such a life altering experience. It's difficult to explain certain events to those who have not experienced the same deprivation and hardship. What that event does however, is to bring those involved closer together.

The start of the Siege of the United States Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh on January 21, 1968, was certainly one of those experiences. As we recall the Siege and honor the many who did not return, we not only met those who were present, but find that there were many more who were impacted by that event. We hear from those who fought on or near the base before the Siege, from those who contributed to our survival, and from those who subsequently served in that area of operation both in the air and on the ground. Their experiences were often just as difficult as those of us who were present during those long 77 days.

We Khe Sanh Veterans, in fact, most being Vietnam Veterans I believe, find a certain amount of solace being with those whom we had served in Vietnam with. When together we are able to share experiences and feelings that we are often unable to share with family and friends. On January 21, 2006, a group of 50 or so Vietnam Veterans got together for a luncheon in Chico California to honor those who served and died at the Khe Sanh Base between 1961 and 1971. In a way, it was a gathering to honor all Veterans who served in that conflict.

Veterans and supporters showed up at the Eagles Hall in Chico, thanks to Tom Horchler (the unofficial Mayor of Chico California), a Marine who I had met at Khe Sanh. At the end of the Siege, Tom drove us (with great skill) out of Khe Sanh, away from that which had not been blown up, shot up, bombed, rocketed, mortared, or otherwise destroyed in 77 days, Quang Tri, from Khe Sanh with far fewer of us than had arrived.

Chuck Chamberlin (C/1/26) (Blackbud Charlie),

described his experience at the luncheon as, "...the whole thing took on a life of its' own. I hesitate to use the term, networking," but I met more neat guys and their gals, and renewed so many old acquaintances. It was absolutely incredible to have been in the company of guys like Steve Wiese (Ghost Patrol), Mike Archer, author of "A Patch of Ground," and my old friend Tony Cueva.

The get-together "Chingadero" (E.Spencer's word) we had yesterday, at the Eagles Hall in Chico, CA was outstanding. Craig Tourte and Tom Horschler put this thing together, to commemorate that morning 38 years ago, when we all found ourselves actually up against it. Anyhow, we all had a great time. There were about 50 paid (\$10.00 lunch) and another 35-50 (who's counting?) that came through."

"The reporter for the local paper was down at the Sierra Nevada Brewery, wondering where the hell all the Marines were suppose to be. There's always that 10% that don't get the word. At the last minute, Tom and Craig changed it to the Eagles Hall due to the great number of folks that wanted to attend. The whole thing took on a life of it's own." "...I believe a good time was had by all. Once again, I'm proud to have friends and associates of this caliber. I'll remember yesterday for the rest of my life. This was a shakedown cruise..." "We're going to do it again next year to get the wrinkles out, and on our 40th we're going to get a band and have a real West Coast reunion/party!" "We're thinking maybe Reno???"

Steve Wiese (B/1/26) remembers the luncheon as, "...it was a great day, I'm glad that it did come together, I hope it becomes a yearly thing, it's a great reason for all to get together and remember the ones that were not able to come back."

Mike Archer (26th Hq Co) notes, "An outstanding event! Many thanks to Tom Horschler for putting this all together. It was great, finally getting to meet Tom, Craig, Chuck, Steve, the Cueva brothers and all the rest of you guys I had heard about, or from, over the years. I brought an old high school buddy along, who lives in Chico, was in the USMC Reserves, but did not serve in Vietnam. Later that day, he kept talking about how incredible it was to watch all we Khe Sanh Vets interacting like family. He spoke of what an honor it was to be able to spend time among such men-and I told him I felt exactly the same way."

Chuck Teasley (C/1/26) reflected, "...I have spent today reading, "A Patch of Ground" and reflecting. I have read many messages (on the Khe Sanh Message Board) asking why now, some 38 years later, we find the need to travel back. As I look at the photographs with all of the "Old Veterans" who shared a common ground, I think I understand. Being around some of the bravest of the brave and knowing, like my own back yard, each spot they were at is like going back to the old neighborhood. It's safe to talk and laugh about things no one else would understand. No one needs to explain anything, as everyone already knows. It is the same feelings as laughing with the kids you grew up with about things you did as a kid. Things you would never want your parents to know, not because they were so bad, but you don't want to hurt them. Sharing our past with "Outsiders" just does not work. I just want to thank you for making this happen and inviting me to join."

Khe Sanh Veterans know there is a place in the world during the month of January, where it's foggy and cold with towering mountains looking down onto a small, isolated plateau, hallowed by many and surrounded by deep green jungle, where the many souls were of those who did not return. While in other places, it's relatively warm, the sun is out and shinning from a rich blue sky onto the faces of aging men who remember that time so long ago when they were young, and are grateful now, that they no longer have to suffer through the deprivation and hardship they once experienced. Aging men and comrades who remember those who did not return, and on this most appropriate day, honor their memory.

Here is a partial list of those who did sign in. Many left prior to the picture being taken

Chuck Teasley C Co 1/26
 Chuck Chamberlin C Co 1/26
 Tom Horschler 1/13 Hq Btry M/T Sec
 Paul Turnbull 1/13 Hq Btry M/T Sec
 Ken "Buzz" Sawyer 1/13 Hq Btry M/T Sec
 Craig Tourte Hq Btry 1/13
 Dave Tonick A Btry 1/26
 Steve Wiese B Co 1/26
 Billy Davis K Co 3/9
 Gary Connor "Doc" 3rd-4th-5th-9th Marines '60-'80
 Dan Ferguson W & A Btry 1/13
 Steve Orr 26th Regt. Comm.
 Mike Archer 26th HqCo

Tony Cueva B Co 1/4
Rich Cueva W Btry 1/11
Dusty Russo E Btry 2/11
Hennie Van De Velde B 2/26 Hill 861A
Harold Tobisch G Co 2/3 & B Co 1/1
Mike Perry G Co 2/1
Steve Busby B Co 1/1
Jeff Green 1st SP HC 1st & 3rd Div.

**There were also many Heroes from the Army,
Navy, and Air Force present.**

TWO HUMOROUS STORIES TO END THE MINI-REUNION WITH

By Craig W. Tourte

Debt Owed-Debt Paid and Recognized For Heroic Deeds

For those of you who have followed my worthless
little stories, here are two more.

I was never a hero in Vietnam; my claim to that most noted Siege of the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh is that I showed up. I was never engaged nor was I involved in any singular acts of heroism. I have mentioned many times in my little stories that Tom Horchler drove the truck I rode shotgun when we left Khe Sanh for Quang Tri. Tom tells the story that during the long, dangerous and dusty convoy, I was sitting in a rocking chair perched on top of the load. We all know that there were no such conveniences at Khe Sanh; perhaps his memory is just different than mine. The ride to Quang Tri was not without incident. While descending a narrow road and traveling down an incline, the truck rose up on all three axles on the right side and nearly went over. Tom was able to right the truck and we continued on to Quang Tri. If the truck had gone over it would have been certain death for me. I always joked that Tom saved my life (of course he would have caused my demise if the truck flipped over).

That debt was repaid many times over January 23, 2006, on the golf course. It was one of those beautiful days in Chico California. We had a great lunch and got on the course a little after noon. All was well when Tom came to play golf as usual, although I was somewhat shocked to hear the amount of profanity he was using to coax along the ball due to his age related deteriorating skills. We were in separate

golf carts as Tom had the much-preferred companionship of his dog Lucy with him. As he descended a small but steep hill his cart locked up and he slid sideways into some rocks, the cart turning over on top of him pinning him to the ground.

Through much effort and individual heroics, I was able to stop my cart just before colliding with his. Casting my fears aside I sprung into action, leaping off of my golf cart and running up to him and yelling, "Hah, are you alright? It just seemed like the thing to say at the time. Tom yells, "Get this thing off me," Without fear for my own safety and completely disregarding any danger that might be present, I lifted the cart off Tom and laid him flat on the ground. While he was laying on the cold ground in great pain I asked him how he was doing. Not receiving a reply and making the instant observation that he was suffering, I thought of just getting a golf club and putting him out of his misery, but collected my thoughts, and grabbed his cell phone which of course did not work. He took hold of my arm and said, "Craig, maybe you could find a Corpsman for me, my legs don't seem to be working." I again sprung into action jumping into my golf cart, never considering the hazards that faced me, and drove alone and unarmed back to the clubhouse at a blinding speed of 2.4 MPH where I called an ambulance.

I returned to the scene and comforted him as best I could by saying, "Does this mean our golf game is over for the day?" He paid for it (I got lunch) and I wanted to make sure he understood his obligation was not yet over. Anyway, everything turned out all right, he was released from the hospital later that evening with some minor scrapes and burses and a few stitches (kind of a nasty to-the-bone cut on his leg). Later that evening he asked me if I would mind rubbing his feet, but I figured I had done enough.

I will never receive any official recognition for my unselfish heroic action but my debt to Tom Horchler for saving my life those many years ago while leaving Khe Sanh is finally paid. Oh, and his dog Lucy was just fine.

Recognized for Heroic Deeds

I wish I could have been a hero. I could sit at the bar and tell all the other liars what a hero I had been. How I had bravely faced the enemy while overcoming my own fears and rushed forward into what I

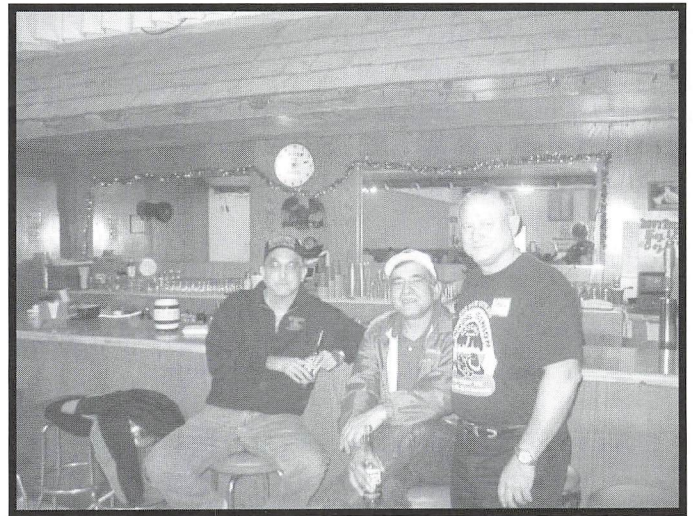
knew were the arms of certain death, but because of my own skill and cunning (and luck) I survived to fight again. When the call went up for a volunteer, I wish I could say I was the first to raise my hand. But I didn't do any of those things, and God bless those who in reality did, they truly are the deserving ones and the real heroes.

But in my own little world I became a hero (to myself) when I braved the dangers of the golf course and it's cart path to help my friend and former Marine Tom Horschler, and yes I'll say it, perhaps I even saved his life. Because of my little story, others have recognized me as someone special and deserving. I am proud to announce that I am now a legitimate holder of a medal. Our own John Pessoni has bestowed on me that most prestigious medal, the 'BRASS STAR' in recognition of my selfless acts and heroic deeds. John also awarded Tom the medal of the "PURPLE FLOWER" for wounds received, which I hate to say is one of those "I was there medals" not quite as prestigious as the BRASS STAR.

So at the reunion in Mobile in June when I'm sitting at the bar and you over hear me say something like". . . and I was awarded a medal for bravery." You know that I was awarded the BRASS STAR for my heroic deeds and actions on the golf course, not for any action at Khe Sanh. Gee, I hope I don't confuse the two events when I'm telling you about the medal I was awarded.



Tom Horschler, HQ Btry 1/13 M/T



L-R Tony Cueva B/1/4 , Tony's brother Rich Cueva W Btry 1/11, Craig Tourte, Hq Btry 1/13



Damm, I got Ham & Mothers



Swapping War Stories



PHOTO OF SOME OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS & FAMILY, THAT ATTENDED A LUNCHEON HELD IN CHICO, CA., ON 21 JAN 06, TO REMEMBER THEIR FALLEN BROTHERS, AND THE START OF THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH, 21 JAN 1968.

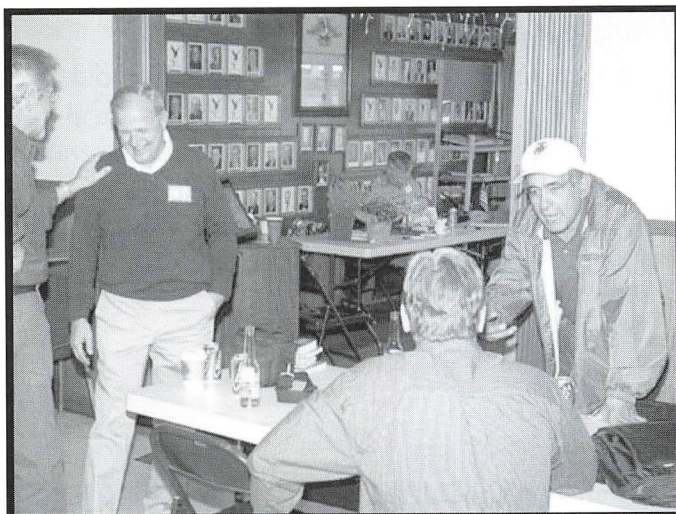
WEB BRIEFS

Remembering 21 January 1968

By Don Meyer

Today is another anniversary of the beginning of the siege of Khe Sanh thirty-eight years ago. I have been thinking that I did not arrive at Khe Sanh until the 22ND, when 1/9 was sent to reinforce the base, so I had missed the initial attack.

As I think about the siege, I cannot help but think of all of the people who have been affected by their time there. It does not matter if you were there during the siege, the Hill Fights or in combat there before or after these battles, Khe Sanh is a part of your life. If you are like me, and many of you are, you have thought of Khe Sanh for decades, and it stands clear in your mind even today. How many other things, if any, can you say the same about? We all



L-R Chuck Chamberlin, C Co 1/26, Steve Orr, 26 Mar Reg Comm, Mike Archer (26 Mar Hdqr Co, sitting) Rich Cueva W Btry 1/11.

lost something there, and we all gained something there. I lost my youth, my innocence, and that spark that made me laugh and enjoy life. I gained sorrow, regrets, guilt, and a hole in my heart that just won't heal. Khe Sanh was a place that changed each of us forever. No matter what or when your battle was, it changed you. We remember it and honor it each day, and will until the day we die. Some have said that they have been able to leave Khe Sanh behind, but I don't believe that. If it is behind, why do we think of it? Maybe some have learned to cope, and I hope they have, but no one has forgotten.

For those who do not believe in PTSD, let them enter our heads for one day, and see how it plagues our souls, and keeps us awake at night. I wish I could be young again, and be able even for one day, regain the innocence, and the joy of life I left behind. I wish I could see my buddies who died, one more time, and laugh as we once did. But I can't so I count anniversaries.

Semper Fi
Don Meyer
C 1/9 67/68

*

Don,

I think you really put the right words and feelings into your post. When you stated why Khe Sanh has remained a part of many of our lives, whether we were there during the Siege, Hill Fights, or any of the other combat actions, and operations around Khe Sanh. I was not there during the Siege, just during the Hill Fights. After leaving Khe Sanh in Mid-May/67, Echo 2/9, went to Dong Ha. Dong Ha, which became the 9th Marine's Headquarters. Leatherneck Square, and the Southern DMZ was included in our TAOR.

Throughout most of 67, the 9th and other supporting units 3rd, 4th, 26th, and 1st marines saw some of the bloodiest and hardest fighting of the war. Speaking for me only, over the years my thoughts tended to go back to Khe Sanh, just like you mentioned. After reading your post, and pondering the thought, I believe I now know why. Years after the war ended, many people did not want to know about Vietnam, or how we veterans felt about having served there. Most just wanted to sweep it under the rug. If some did inquire about the war, it was often, " How come

we lost?", " Did you really kill babies,?" " Did the Military give you guys drugs before you went into the field"? I withdrew, feeling loss, guilt, and betrayal. For some years, the history of the hard fought battles we fought, and the sacrifices we made, were left from history, and mostly forgotten.

When some of the early movies were made about the war, most were pure Hollywood BS. One place that was remembered due to the Siege, and writings from the ones who were there, a place where most of the truth had been preserved, and was then being written about, telling of the sacrifices, courage, pain, and loss, at Khe Sanh. The Siege, brought to light many other battles, and places that had been forgotten. Especially through books such as "Valley of Decision" which not only focused on Khe Sanh, but all of Northern I Corps, including all services. Other books are, The Hill Fights, Con Thien, etc. I believe I am drawn back to Khe Sanh, not to take credit as a siege vet, but to listen to, and share with a fellowship of Marines, who carry a very special courage, no matter where, or when they served, or where they fought. Khe Sanh is a symbol that will always remind others of what Marines and other military branches who stood shoulder to shoulder, in the darkest of days, 38 years ago, did for our country.

Semper Fi

Joe M.

*

Well said Joe,

Unfortunately, now that history is being told, far too many are perverting the accurate historical record we seek to write. Too many with an agenda, too many wishing to profit for the sacrifices of all those who served. We need to stand ever vigilant and correct the mistakes when they are put forth.

Semper Fidelis

Mack

*

Don,

I remember the day 1/9 arrived. A CH-46 landed in our area at the east end of the base. I will never forget it! It felt like help had arrived so don't worry. I think about Khe Sanh almost every day. Even more, since I have found this site. I never have applied for PTSD benefits but probably have it. I just take it one day at a time. I am more fortunate than others who experienced so much more danger.

Stay in touch with your friends, and brothers, like you do today. I don't know you personally, but I am your friend and brother and always will be until the day I die! I am off work now and will check in Monday.

By Pat Hopkins

S/F

Hoppie Blackbud Whiskey Over!

*

DON,

On this anniversary, I attended the funeral of a friend and fellow Vietnam Veteran. Kind of ironic I guess. After all, it is a day of mourning.

Jack Haigwood

*

WEB POETRY

LOST

WHAT IS LOST?

LOST IS MY YOUTH.

LOST IS MY INNOCENCES.

LOST IS MY FAITH.

LOST IS MY CONFIDENCE.

LOST IS MY ENERGY.

LOST ARE MY FRIENDS.

LOST IS MY MIND.

MEMORIES

MEMORIES OF WHAT?

MEMORIES OF DEATH.

MEMORIES OF PAIN.

MEMORIES OF DESTRUCTION.

MEMORIES OF CHILDREN.

MEMORIES OF BEAUTY.

MEMORIES OF FACES.

MEMORIES OF EVERYTHING LOST.

LOST!

LOST MEMORIES.

LOST NAMES.

LOST SLEEP.

LOST LOVE.

LOST COURAGE.

GAINED?

WHAT WAS GAINED?

A BLACK WALL.

A LOT OF GRAVES.

A COUNTRYS INDIFFERENCE.

A LOSS OF LIMBS.

A LOSS OF DIGNITY.

A LOT OF NAMES, BABY KILLER,

DRUG CRAZED, MURDERER, TO NAME A FEW.

A MILLION PLUS MEN AND WOMEN

WHO FACE A LIFE OF PAIN.

NOTHING GOOD WAS GAINED!

"WAR-WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!!!"

Sam Messer

*

SAM,

I am not a poet, but I've always admired your way with words. Yes, so much was lost and nothing gained from that fight. Still and all, we survived to remember those guys who gave their all...we will never forget. Don't torment yourself anymore. It's easy for me to say, yet I too pace the floor at 2 in the morning, like you. I wish we could bring some of our friends back, but we can't. However, I spent yesterday with some real heroes here in Northern CA, thanks to Tom and Craig. We need to focus on the good human survivor stories that the best of us represent. I never did a single valorous act at Khe Sanh or on the hills, but I believe, having read your poetry, that there is a case to be made for just getting thru that meat grinder and retaining our humanity. It ##### near drove me nuts for awhile, but I'll be 60 yrs. old next year and comes a time, you got to' lay down that sword and put away the anger. The Sicilians say revenge is a dish best served cold, and another saying is "the best revenge is living well". Live well my friend, and thanks again for your well written thoughts.

Chuck Chamberlin

Semper Fidelis, Blackbud

Charlie, OUT

Photos That Do Not Appear On Your Local News



"THANKS JOE"

By Gene Weresow

This past Saturday Jan 21, the anniversary of the siege, the NJ Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Vietnam Education Center, hosted a Khe Sanh remembered in prose and poetry. The event was well attended. I would guess near 100. Poetry was read from the Khe Sanh book of poetry. Much credit must go to Joe Belardo who acted as moderator, and put this thing together.

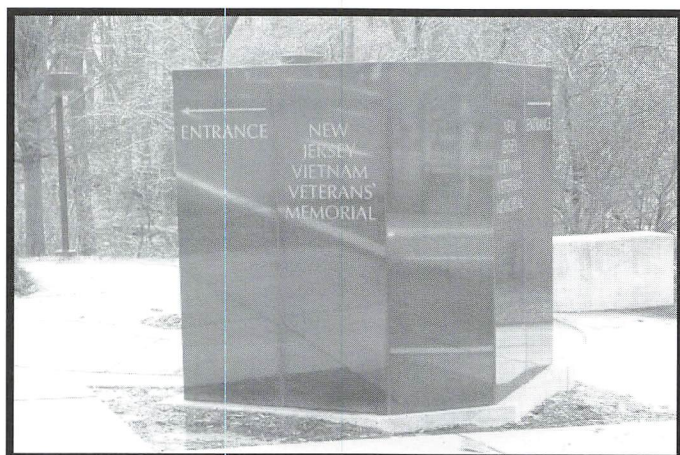
The day was a great experience for me. I was glad to meet some of these heroes of Khe Sanh. I was humbled by the wonderful people who spoke, and feel honored to have been a part of this tribute to those who fought at Khe Sanh. I think I got more out of this than the audience. The memory of our fallen Brothers lives on here in NJ. God bless them all. Thanks Joe, for asking me to be a part of this.



"KHE SANH REMEMBERED" NEW JERSEY VIETNAM ERA EDUCATIONAL CENTER

By Nick Romanetz

Thirty-eight years to the day, New Jersey area Khe Sanh Veterans were part of a program entitled "Remembering the Battle of Khe Sanh – In Prose and Poetry." Hosted by the New Jersey Veterans' Memorial Foundation (www.njvvmf.org), the program was held at the beautiful Vietnam Era Educational Center located on the Garden State Parkway in Holmdel, NJ (on the grounds of the old Garden State Arts Center). **Joe Belardo, a KSV (Army Dusters/Twin 40's), past board member of the VV Memorial Ed Center and resident of South Plainfield, NJ,** arranged the program with the assistance of Sibley Smith, Director of Education at the Center. "The center hosts between 6-10,000 school aged children each year to attend special programs or just tour the Center and explore the many pictures and artifacts on display." The Center also has an outdoor wall where the names of all of New Jersey's Vietnam era KIA's are engraved in granite, similar to The Wall in DC.



The Khe Sanh event on January 21st was a great success. Nine KSV were panelists for the event and another 10-12 KSV were in the audience, nearly all of us members of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association. The event was a mini-reunion! The audience totaled just over 100 persons, many of them Vietnam Veterans from all branches of our armed forces. Sons, daughters, wives and grandchildren of veterans were also present. Although the event was published in local newspapers, several persons that just "stopped by" to visit the Center were treated to the Khe Sanh Experience through the panelists. All of us were honored to have Todd and Grant Fox present, Charlie sons, making the trip in from Pennsylvania.

The format for the event began with an introduction by Sibley Smith and the singing of The National Anthem by Jersey City Fire Captain Daniel Delaney. Moderator Joe Belardo provided insightful opening remarks about the purpose of the event, the significance of The Battle of Khe Sanh and introduced the panelists. Prior to each panelist speaking, Joe read passages or an entire poem from the recently published Khe Sanh Veterans Book of Poetry. To help the audience have a better understanding of Khe Sanh, the event program provided a map of KSCB and units located at the base as well as an area map identifying all of the hill outposts and their proximity to the base.

Gene Weresow (M/3/26 & B/1/26) of Edison, NJ spoke about the now famous "Home is Where You Dig It" sign and explained that the sign meant exactly what it said! He recounted how 11 of 12 men in a patrol he went on off of on Hill 861 were all killed or wounded, he being the lucky one. The weather, c-rats, preparing positions on the base were all recounted and the WIA of the round eye, female, reporter were subjects he touched upon. This being Gene's first time at public speaking at an event like this, he was initially nervous, as were several panelists, but once he got on a roll, his 15 minutes of speaking time was gone and he did just fine!

John Pessoni (A Co 3rd Combat Engineers) of Toms River, NJ simply explained to the audience that the main thing he did was "blow stuff up." His experiences in laying minefields, creating "fugas" obstacles and blowing up trees and having them fall the wrong way were some of the lighter moments of the afternoon. Being shot at while on missions,

dodging incoming and realizing that when 1/9 showed up, "they brought their own NVA with them" were a part of John's sharing. His final recollection was about the female, reporter who took shrapnel in the buttocks and his lost opportunity to administer first aid since he was in the immediate area of the blast that wounded the reporter.

George Einhorn (A/1/9) of Metuchen, NJ remembered being on patrol (elsewhere in I Corps) when his unit received a radio message to report immediately back to base. Soon thereafter, his company was loaded on choppers and dropped off at Khe Sanh. His platoon eventually manned an outpost on Hill 64 near the rock quarry. He recounts how a numerically superior NVA force assaulted and partially over ran the hill on February 8, 1968. Only 13 Marines, George included, of about 64 walked off of that hill after the battle. Most of the platoon was killed or wounded. In April '68 on Hill 471, George told of being wounded by shrapnel from a 122 mm rocket, being med-evaced and the chopper out of Khe Sanh being hit by ground fire, and having to return to the base. He says he was wounded again on the aircraft. Eventually being evacuated to Japan and then the Philadelphia Naval Hospital, where he was medically separated from the Marine Corps.

Dennis Whalen (B/1/9) of Toms River, NJ said he would rather face a platoon of NVA than engage in public speaking. However, like Gene, once he got into his presentation, he sailed through with flying colors! Dennis, like George, recounted his company's sudden warning order and immediately choppering into Khe Sanh. He recounts how beautiful it was (Jan. 22, 1968) with the jungle showing "26 shades of green." As he soon recounted, the beauty of Khe Sahn turned into a daily struggle with life and death. As a radio operator, Dennis recalls watching the battle on Hill 64 from the rock quarry. He said it was like a movie with the NVA taking a part of the hill, counterattacks pushing them back slightly and then the NVA regaining the ground they had just lost. The close in battle between Marines and NVA was described by Dennis as "kids being close to each other and having a snow ball fight, only they were throwing grenades at each other." Dennis described the helplessness of watching the battle, unable to help. He recalls an ARVN prop driven aircraft dropping its ordnance on the hill, which seemed to break the back of the NVA as they disen-

gaged from battle. Other recollections included living like an animal and developing a keen sense for incoming. "One you heard the round leaving the tube, you knew what caliber it was."

Neil Kenny (L/3/26) of Staten Island, NY told the audience that by the time he was 19, he had experienced the war, lost his grandfather who was an anchor in his life, and found himself discharged and on the streets at home as a high school drop out. Neil claims that at the induction center, he was found to be 4F but had his medical records changed because "I wanted to go." He recounts that as a young Marine, he sometimes had "a problem" with authority and the chain of command. Seems Neil had the notion that if a PFC was to fill sandbags for a bunker, anyone using that bunker, including SNCO's or NCO's should also fill them, and he let them know that. Neil had the audiences in stitches with his humorous accounts of life at Khe Sanh, but he also presented one of the most poignant moments of the afternoon when he told of the death of his friend Phil Sheridan while attacking 881N on 14 April 1968, and holding a dying Marine in his arms. Neil recounted that there were too many Phil Sheridans in Vietnam, and it was obvious that his comments and presentation had a deep impact on the audience.

Bruce Geiger (Army Dusters/Twin Fortys) made the trip to **New Jersey from New Rochelle, NY**. He brought many of his large, framed color pictures and set up a display entitled "The Road to Khe Sanh." Bruce spoke of his days as an ROTC student at Rutgers University, his MOS training and the belief that he would spend his Army career in Germany. Calling himself "the Forrest Gump of dusters," he told of his time at Con Tien and eventually winding up at Khe Sanh. One of his most vivid memories was the night of March 22, 1968 when the C/1/26 CP was hit by a 152 arty round. He recalls a night of heavy incoming, the base being on alert for a possible ground attack, and the fact that his lines were being hit hard by incoming. Responding to the call for help at the CP, he tried to get the wounded Marines out of the bunker and assisted Chuck Chamberlin who was in the old company CP about a month earlier, when it was hit by a rocket. The new company CP had collapsed and was on fire. A short distance down the lines near his gun positions and bunker, another C/1/26 bunker took a direct hit from a 122 rocket, killing two Marines and wounding a third. Bruce

personally knew three of the KIA's in the CP bunker, and that night remains a vivid part of his Khe Sanh experience. The only panelist to speak well over the allotted 15 minutes, Joe Belardo was nice enough to let Bruce finish telling his story, ultimately leading to Joe replacing Bruce at Khe Sanh.

Joe Belardo was the final panelist to speak. He recounted his experiences in dismantling the base and running a convoy out of Khe Sanh after the base was "closed." He told of being left at the base with about 12-15 men after the 6,000 Marines were long gone, with no "lines," bunkers, or prepared fighting positions. Joe completed his presentation with the reading of an original poem he wrote about Khe Sanh.

Remember that throughout the afternoon, Joe read an original poem about Khe Sanh prior to introducing each panelist. Joe is to be commended for the effort he put forth in organizing this event. John Pesoni had boxes of the KSV Poem Books as well as Ray Stubbe's "Battalion of Kings" available for purchase. I believe that John sold nearly all of the poem books and a good number of Ray's book. I did note that Big John assumed the posture of a rock star or sports celebrity at the end of the presentation in that in addition to selling the books, he was also busy autographing them and posing for photos!

Other KSV that were present were Bill Griffith, Bruce Lewey, Bob Galiano, Mike Urban, and Sid Patricio. Sid is to get credit as the "official" KSV photo-historian. He took several pictures and posted them on the KSV web site, and as I write this, I am told that one or some of his pictures will accompany this article. I must also apologize in that there were a few more KSV at the event, but I do not have their names.

As I read on our two KSV web sites, several remembrances were held around the country to commemorate the 38th anniversary of the beginning of "The Siege." The New Jersey presentation was top shelf. Once again, thanks to all of the participants and a special thanks to Joe Belardo for planning and executing a most successful event!

Editors Note: The event was also reported in the local newspaper; here is what they wrote about the event:

Bonnie Delaney
Staff Writer Asbury Park Press

January 21, 2006, marked the 38th anniversary of the enemy attack that started the Battle of Khe Sanh, the battle that launched the war's pivotal Tet Offensive of 1968. To remember and honor the American military effort in that action, a panel of Vietnam veterans of the Khe Sanh Battle discussed their personal recollections and reflections. The words of other participants were shared through readings of their poems, recently published in *The Khe Sanh Veterans Book of Poetry*. The panel was moderated by Joseph Belardo of South Plainfield, NJ, a contributor to the poetry book and recipient of the Purple Heart Medal and the Bronze Star Medal with "V" device for valor, for his service during the Battle of Khe Sanh. Panelists included Khe Sanh veterans George Einhorn of Metuchen, NJ, Bruce Geiger of New Rochelle, NY, Gary Parker of Barneget, NJ, John Pessoni of Toms River, NJ, Nick Romanetz of Annandale, NJ, and Dennis Whalen of Toms River, NJ.

The Vietnam Era Educational Center is located adjacent to the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial off the Garden State Parkway at exit 116. The Memorial and Educational Center is maintained through a partnership between New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation, and the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The Educational Center is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 AM – 4 PM. Regular admission is free for veterans and active-duty military personnel. Regular adult admission is \$4.00; student and senior citizen admission is \$2.00; and children under 10 are admitted free.

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Sarah Burton
Staff Writer, Asbury Park Press

It's been 38 years since the Battle of Khe Sanh began, but for the men who risked their lives there, on a remote military base near Vietnam's border with Laos, it could have happened yesterday. "It just stays with you," said John Pessoni of Toms River, a Marine who fought in the 77-day attack, which began Jan. 21, 1968, during what Americans believed to be a cease-fire amid the Vietnam War. "Every day I think of that place," he said. "For a lot of us, it was

like yesterday," said Eugene Weresow, another Marine.

On Saturday, the Vietnam Era Education Center in Holmdel marked the anniversary of the battle with a prose and poetry program. "To tell you about Khe Sanh is very difficult," said moderator Joseph Belardo, who served from 1967 to 1968 in Vietnam. "You can't understand what it's like to be truly frightened, to take another life, to see your friends die, to pick up the pieces. Before you stands a group of noble men, caught between today and yesterday," he said of the men who gathered Saturday in the center's Testimony Theater. Educational lectures and programs are held monthly at the center, which opened in 1998 on the grounds of the PNC Bank Arts Center and draws between 6,000 and 10,000 student visitors each year.

We do not promote war, but we tell you what it's like," Belardo said. Approximately 1,000 American soldiers were killed in the Battle of Khe Sanh. Nearly 5,000 were wounded. Weresow was the lone survivor of a mortar attack on his 12-man squad. "I walked out of that one alive, as the only survivor--guess God was watching over me," said Weresow, of Edison. The men spoke of the hard times they experienced, spending the night in a hole filled with rainwater because it was warmer than stepping out into the cold night air, experiencing napalm so hot "you could feel the heat coming up your back," showering in the rain and washing laundry in a barrel of boiling water. "It's just what you had to do," Pessoni said. "You had to take care of you. If you didn't, you didn't make it home."

They also shared stories that then, and today, still make them laugh: drinking warm Kool-Aid, cherishing a rare can of peaches and pretending a mess hall's mashed potatoes tasted like those made at home. "It may not sound like much, but mashed potatoes (were) like something from home," Weresow said. "Like something mom used to make." According to some of the men, sharing these stories helps preserve the memories of those who were left behind. I personally find it very rewarding," said Nicholas Romanetz of Annandale, Hunterdon County, a second lieutenant with the Marines, about being a part of the program. "It's very moving," said Jean Varga of Freehold, who was visiting the memorial with a friend. "I looked at this whole journey in

Vietnam as an adventure," said Neil Kenny, a Marine from Staten Island who said he grew up playing war games. One night at Khe Sanh, after curling up in a hole as rocket fire passed overhead, Kenny, then 18 years old, said he realized the truth: "I realized that this was not a game. This was not the game I'd played as a kid. This was the real deal."

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Editors Note:

Prior to attending the program on 21 Jan 2006, some Khe Sanh members, toured the facility, and were interviewed by Bonnie Delaney, a reporter from the Asbury park press. The following are those remembrances.

When Dennis Whalen flew into Khe Sanh on Jan. 21, 1968, on a helicopter, he recalled that from the air, Khe Sanh appeared to be "the most beautiful place on earth." "It was a former coffee plantation, and from the air it was 28 shades of green," he said. "Later, I found out it was the most vicious place on earth."

"The first thing we saw when we got out of the chopper was a pile of bloody boots. I knew that it was bad and it was only going to get worse," said Whalen, who left Khe Sanh just three months later but served two tours of duty in Vietnam, which totaled 19 months. "Khe Sanh was a place I thought I'd never get out of." The Dover Township resident will be one of nine Vietnam veterans who will share their recollections of their time in Khe Sanh during a poetry reading and oral history discussion at 1 p.m. Saturday at the Vietnam Era Educational Center in Holmdel.

Saturday marks the 38th anniversary of the enemy attack that started the 77 day Battle of Khe Sanh, which launched the war's 1968 Tet Offensive battle for Khe Sanh, Route 9, and the other bases in that area, said Joseph Belardo of South Plainfield, who will moderate the program. Belardo served in the Army, and his unit was deployed to Vietnam as the 3rd Marine Division's combat mobile fighting team, under Marine control. He operated a "duster," which was a self-propelled tank with automatic weapons.

Belardo, who was wounded numerous times and received the Bronze Star with Valor and Purple Hearts and other medals, and his crew of Duster C131 were the last to leave the Khe Sanh combat base 10 days

after it closed on July 5, 1968. He said he and his crew dismantled the entire base "sandbag by sandbag."

Whalen was a radio operator with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, and was also wounded while at Khe Sanh. He said he was struck by shrapnel from a 60 millimeter mortar round. Just about everybody who was there got hit," he added. John Pessoni, a Dover Township resident who served with Alpha Company, 3rd Combat Engineers, said he considers himself to be lucky. I never got hit, and I was there during the full siege at Khe Sanh," said Pessoni, who did the nightly "listening" post detail outside the base perimeter.

He also did demolition work and helped install land mines around the base perimeter while he was at Khe Sanh. "I blew stuff up. I'd go out with the grunts (infantry) and do demolition with them," Pessoni said. As Pessoni walked around the Vietnam Era Educational Center for the first time on Jan. 11, he, Whalen, and Belardo looked at maps and photographs and tried to pinpoint their locations for one another.

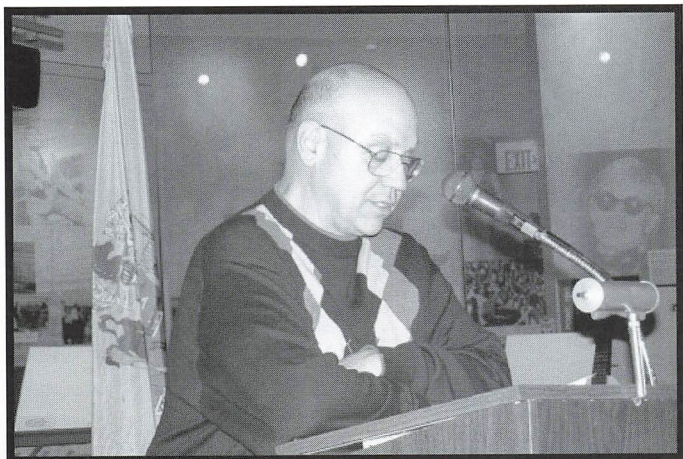
"Holy mackerel, just looking at all this stuff gives me the shivers," said Pessoni. "We were all 18-19 years old when we were there. My sergeant, who was 23 or 24, was like our father," recalled Whalen. Sibley J. Smith Jr., director of education at the center, said that when high school students tour the center they are told that Vietnam was "the teenage war."

Belardo said the goal of the program on Saturday "isn't to rewrite history but to give a historical timeline of the Battle of Khe Sanh with recollections from the people who were there." "It was the most famous battle in Vietnam, and it was one of the most bombed bases. It was a jump-off point for Special Forces, and it was the place Marines were stationed to stop the infiltration of enemy forces down the Ho Chi Minh Trail," he said. Pessoni and Whalen said Khe Sanh was also known for its huge rats, and panelist Bruce Geiger, who served as an Army lieutenant with Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 44th Artillery the Dusters, described the rats as being "extremely cunning" and "as big as large rabbits" in a story he wrote about his experiences. Geiger's and Belardo's stories have been published in **The Vietnam Maga-**

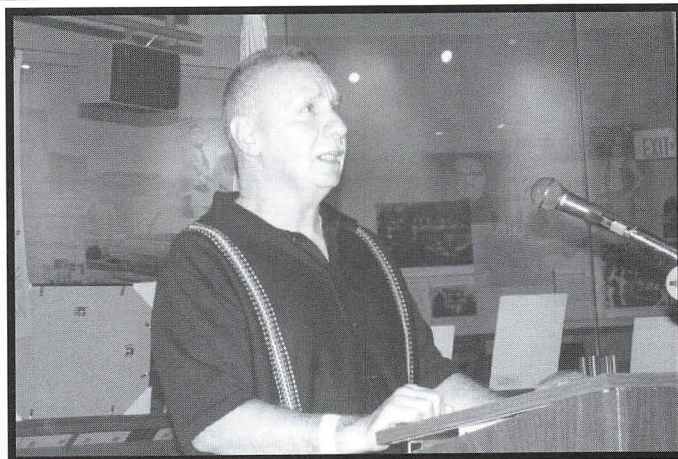
zine, and Belardo's recollections have been published in the book **"The Soldier's Story - Vietnam in their Own Words,"** and **"The Khe Sanh Book of Poetry."** Both have also appeared in television documentaries about the Vietnam War, and Belardo is a past board member of the New Jersey Vietnam

Veteran Memorial and Education Center. He was an original member of Victims of Agent Orange, the predecessor of the first Agent Orange Commission.

SOME OF OUR DISTINGUISHED PANELIST WHO RELATED THEIR STORIES



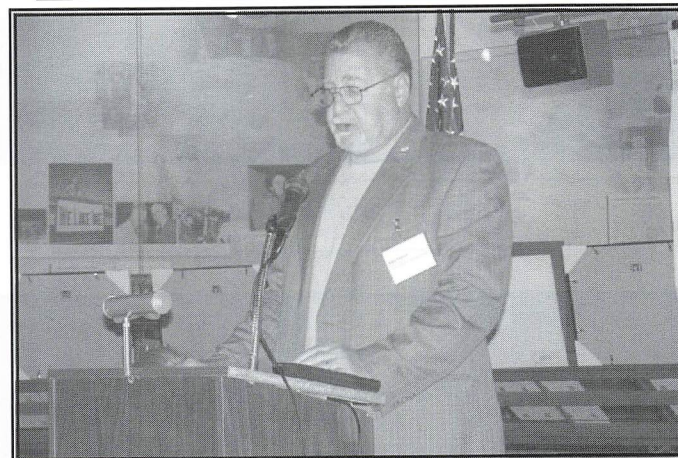
Joe Belardo - C Btry 1/44 TH "Dusters"



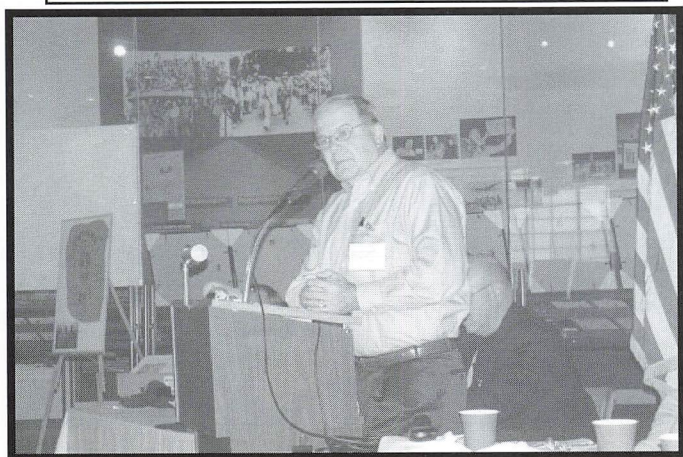
Dennis Whalen B Co 1/9



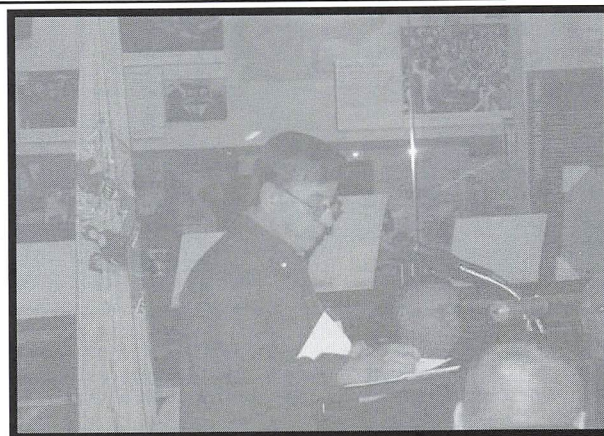
Bruce Geiger - A Btry 1/44TH "Dusters"



"Big John" Pessoni A Co 3rd Engrs



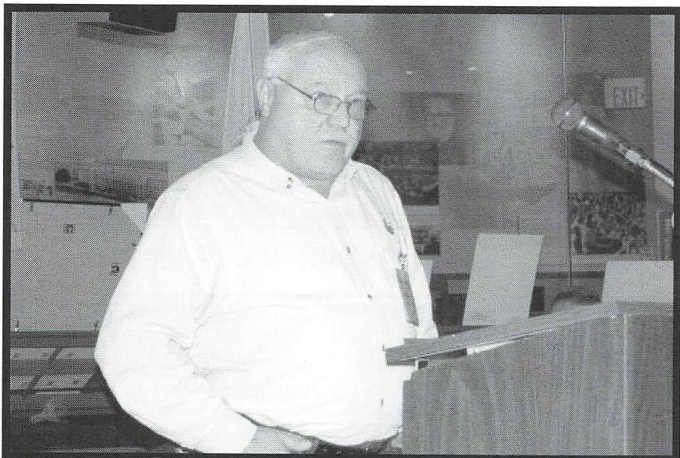
Nick Romanetz- C Co 1/26



Gene Weresow B Co 1/26



Neil Kenny L Co 3/26



George Einhorn A Co 1/9



Sid Patricio of South Brunswick (left) a Marine who served during the Battle of Khe Sanh, points out for Todd Fox of Harrisburg, Pa., the base where he and Fox's father were stationed, at an event Saturday at the Vietnam Veterans Education Center, Holmdel, marking the anniversary of the battle. (STAFF PHOTO: MICHAEL J. TREOLA)

After the program several of the Khe Sanh veterans and their families, gathered at a local Vietnamese Restaurant for Dinner. Needless to say they enjoyed each other's company and a delicious meal.





Todd & Grant Fox with a "Real Foxy Chick",
from SI. Neil Kenny's beautiful wife Alice.



L-R Bruce "Bigfoot Marine" Lewy, E Co 2/26,
Bill Griffith E Co 2/26 and John "BigJohn"
Pessoni, A Co 3RD Engineers.



L-R, Bill Griffith E 2/26, Joe Belardo Dusters, Unknown, Neil "Duracell Kid" Kenny, L 3/26, Gene Weresow B/1/26, Nick Romanetz C/1/26, "Big John" Pessoni 3rd Eng, Bruce Geiger Dusters, George Einhorn A/1/9, Dennis Whalen B/1/9, "Homeless Vet" Sid (Fish) Patrico, D/1/26.

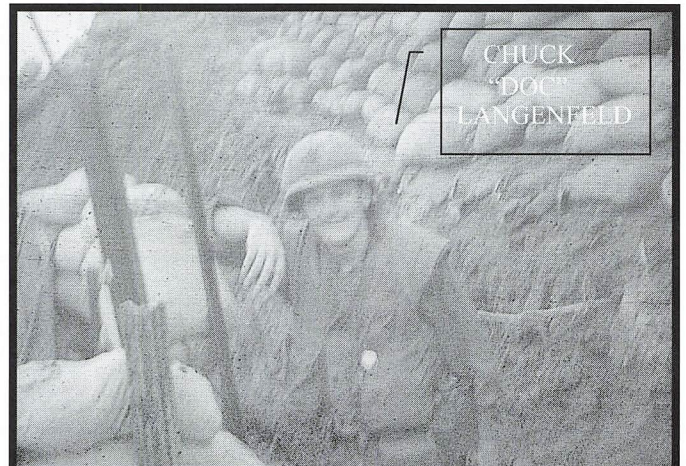
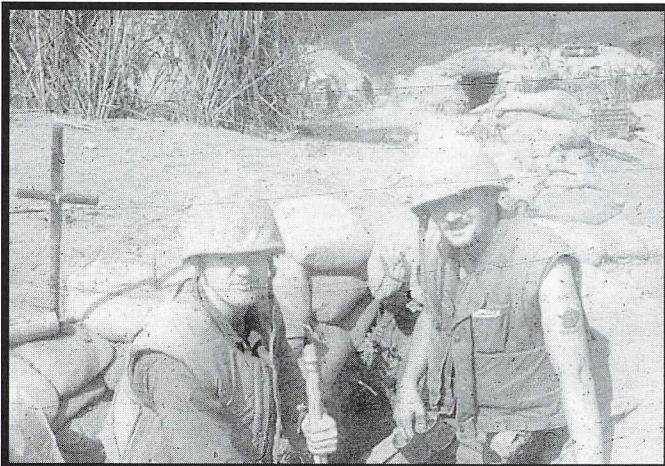
There were others at event who left before the picture was taken.

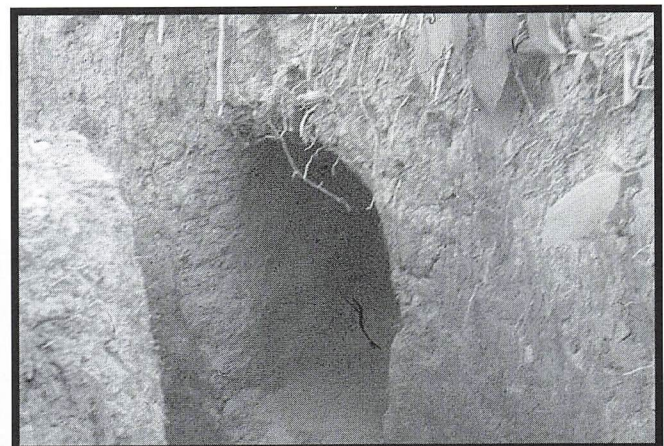
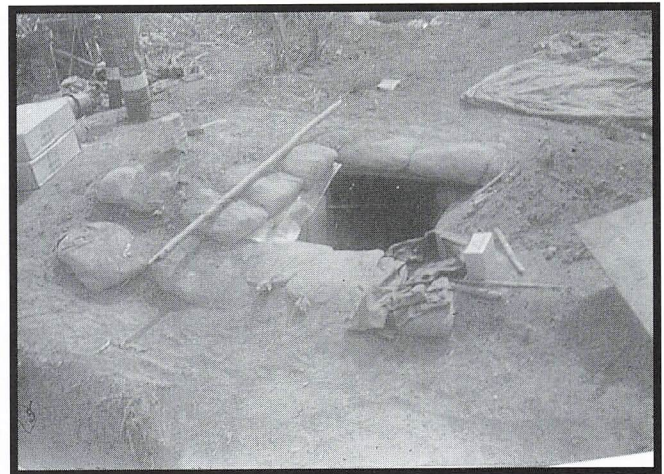
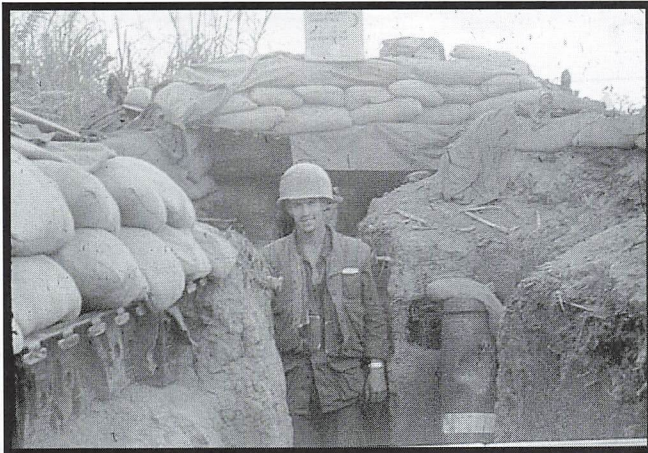
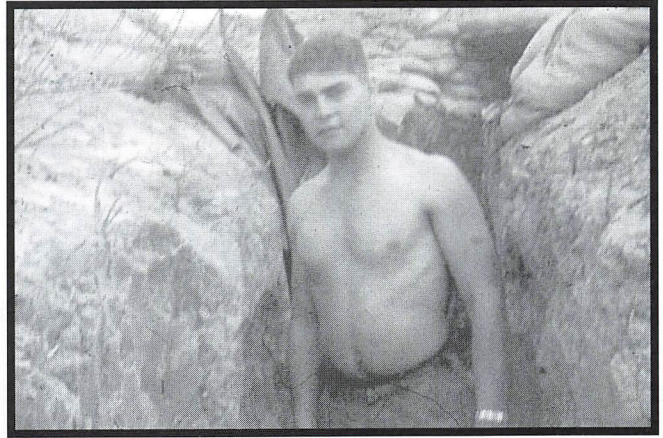
NEVER BEFORE SEEN PHOTOS FROM HILL 861A

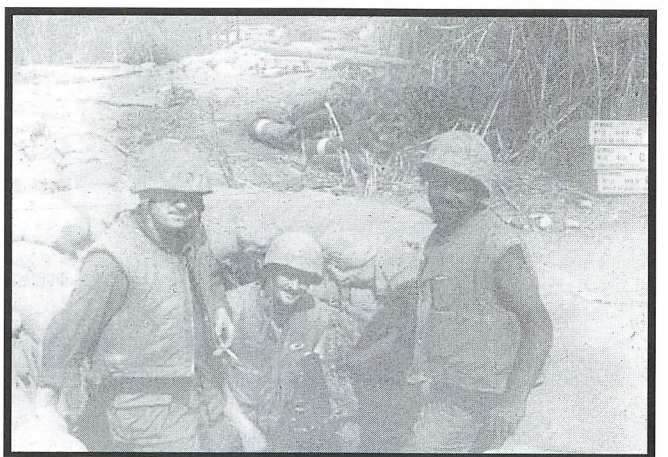
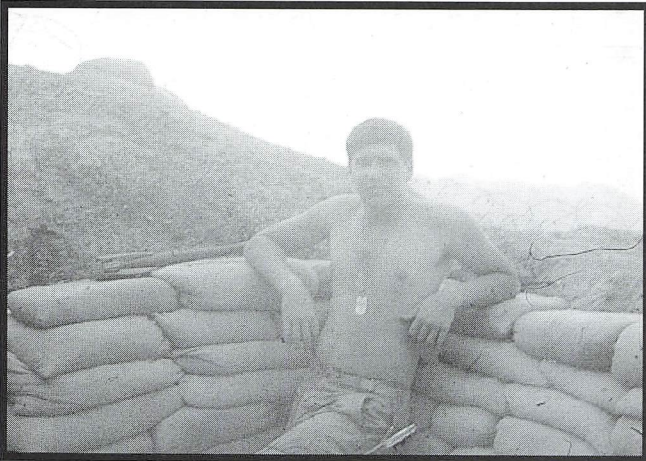
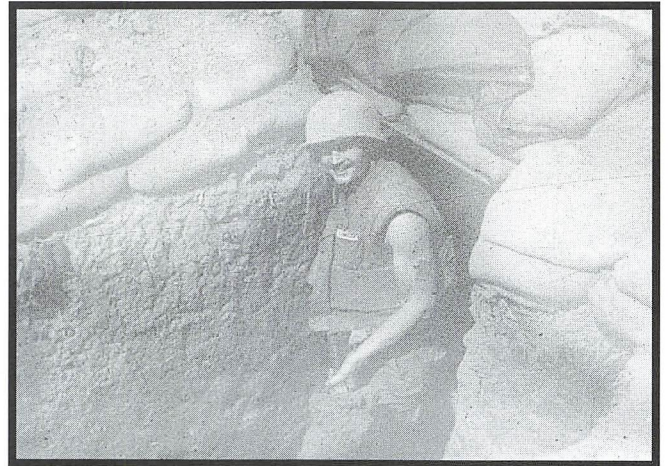
By Tom Eichler E Co 2/26

During the siege of Khe Sanh I served with E Company 2/26 on Hill 861A. I was a corporal, serving as the acting weapons platoon sergeant. As best as I can recall, there were very few if any cameras. Some how I acquired this very small slide action Minolta camera (the kind you saw in those old spy movies). I did not know much about operating it, and one day just went around the whole hill, clicking away. I still had the camera with me when I left Vietnam in 1968. I attempted to have the film developed, and learned it was not film, but very tiny slides, less than a quarter of an inch square. I finally had them developed in 1969, but no one could make them larger, without complete distortion. They sat on a shelf in my home slowly deteriorating. In 2003, Earle Breeding and I traveled to Charlestown SD, to attend an opening of a series of paintings by Terry Redlin, the worlds most popular painter of Americana. We also presented the Redlin family with a **DOC Medal** for Charles Langenfeld the brother of Terry's wife, who was killed at Khe Sanh while serving as a corpsman with E Co 2/26.

We also met Terry's son Charles Redlin, who as his father, is a very strong supporter of the KSV, and has completed an extensive study of our time at Khe Sanh, during the siege. Charles, utilizing very sophisticated equipment, and many painstaking hours of his own valuable time, restored 99% of those slides. Although they are not pristine, they are viewable. Chuck has preserved a part of History for everyone to see.

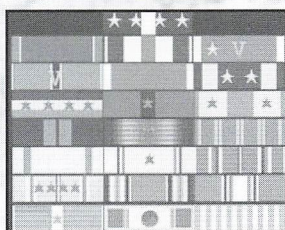
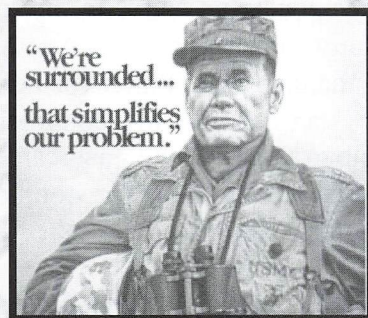






A SPECIAL OBIT AND FAREWELL VIRGINIA MONTAGUE EVANS PULLER "CHESTY'S GIRL"

A MESSAGE TO "CHESTY, WHERE EVER YOU ARE," HAVE THE TROOPS
ON ALERT AT THE GATES, YOUR LOVELY VIRGINIA, IS COMING ABOARD.



BY ELLEN ROBERTSON
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER Feb 8,
2006
Submitted By Mike Fishbaugh

Virginia Montague Evans of Saluda was 16 and Lewis Burwell "Chesty" Puller was 27 when they met at a cotillion in nearby West Point. Puller, who would become the most-decorated Marine in the Corps' history, was smitten, said their daughter, Virginia Dabney of Lexington." My father said that winning her hand was his hardest battle," Dabney said. For years, he'd go on Marine Corps assignments and return to Saluda to ask Virginia to marry him. She finally said "yes" when she was 29 and he was 40 and a Marine captain. They married in a military wedding on Nov. 13, 1937, at Christ Church, the Episcopal Church in Christ, the church where generations of her family had worshipped.

Mrs. Puller, who was widowed in 1971, has died at her home in Saluda. She was 97. One of three children born to a lawyer's family, she grew up at Evan-slea, a big house in Saluda that had 52 windows, said her daughter Martha Downs of Alexandria. She graduated in the early 1920s from St. Mary's School in Raleigh, N.C. "She was everything

he ever wanted. They were everything each other ever wanted," Dabney said. "They were absolutely devoted to each other. He sent her roses all the time and they wrote love letters. "Puller "did the Marine Corps. He thought it was the greatest thing and the best way to take care of us," Downs said. "Mother did everything else." "She bought cars and houses and life insurance, and she did it beautifully. But she didn't want anyone to know she was doing those kinds of things. She wasn't sure it was ladylike. She wanted people to think Father was doing all that.

"She was a genteel Southern lady, but an iron lady," Downs said. "If you didn't have manners when you were coming in the house, you did when you left." Mrs. Puller accompanied her husband on a tour of duty in China in 1940. She and her infant daughter, Virginia, left on the last American dependents' ship before the Japanese took Shanghai in 1941 during World War II. She also followed him to Hawaii and across the U.S. mainland but returned to Saluda during his combat tours in World War II and the Korean War. When he retired in 1955 as a lieutenant general, the couple settled in Saluda. "She really loved the Marines," Dabney said. "She fed hundreds of them. She knew how much it meant to him. He would bring Marines home off the street if he met them at a gas station." She found Marine husbands for her daughters.

At Christmas, she would be "graciously serving a Southern lunch to sergeants at this end of the table and generals at that end," Downs said. "When my father would get tired, she would say, 'The general needs a nap.'" Mrs. Puller loved history, historical restoration projects, and going to old homes and plantations. She was a member of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. A son, Lewis B. Puller Jr., died in 1994. In addition to her daughters, survivors include seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

ANOTHER MEMORY

By Mike Fishbaugh

"Chesty" Puller's Funeral Detail!

I received the below e-mail from an 8th & I Marine, Dennis Bosco, 1970-1973, Long Beach, CA. It contains a fascinating account of his participation in Lt. Gen. Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller's funeral detail.

*John T. Reim
"Semper Fi"*

Dear John,

When Chesty died I was the Section Leader of the Body Bearers. Chesty was lying in rest at the local Saluda, VA funeral parlor. A Gunny from the HQMC was told to take a Dress Blues button for Chesty's uniform and take me to the burial site. I went to the funeral parlor and the man there did not know how to attach the button. So he opened the casket up and the Gunny put the button on his blouse. He was buried in his Dress Blues with a chest full of medals. I remembered that in Boot Camp we said "Good night to Chesty Puller wherever you are!" The gunny and I bowed our heads and said goodbye to Chesty.

We reported back to the Puller residence that we had accomplished our mission. There was more brass in the house than in the Drum & Bugle Corps. His two daughters and son were there too. The gunny and I were the only two enlisted Marines. I never felt more self conscious in my life. Mrs. Puller saw me and zeroed in on me. Asked how I was doing and said her general always loved sergeants. She told me to take my blouse off (wearing my greens) and

sit down in the general's chair and prepared me a huge plate of food and told me to eat. Noticing my embarrassment, she said you just relax sergeant and let me take care of you. After dinner she took me on a tour of their home. I was so nervous I could barely breathe. She was very warm and generous and ignored most of the people there while attending to me. She asked if I wanted a copy of the General's book and I said no Ma'am I have one already. Their son was there in his wheel chair. We made small talk and he was very upbeat and spoke to me for awhile. Finally, the Gunny said we had to leave. After I put my blouse on I thanked Mrs. Puller for her hospitality and tried to stammer out my condolences, and sensing my embarrassment she just came up and gave me a hug. She thanked me for stopping by and said to come visit her anytime.

A few days later we carried Chesty to his final resting place. A week later I received a handwritten letter addressed to me from Mrs. Puller thanking me for the beautiful ceremony. I wish I could take all the credit. I still have it and it is the most cherished memorabilia of my career. A great woman with a huge warm heart.

Semper Fi,
Dennis Bosco
Captain USMC (Ret).

MY ANTIDOTE FOR TET AND THE JANUARY 21, 1968 EXPERIENCE

One evening with Delta Company, Khe Sanh; Belize sailing Expedition

By Doc Cahill

John Rowland, Delta Co 1/26 President, had a novel solution to the depression, intrusive thoughts, and generally bad effects from the memory every year of the anniversary of the Beginning of the siege of Khe Sanh. John arranged for the charter of two, 42' catamarans for a week long sail from island to island along the Belize coast with 7 of his combat Marines/Corpsman buddies. The expedition began on Jan 21, from San Pedro, Belize, with the Muddy Joe, skippered by Fleet Commander John Rowland, with his lady Rachel, first mate Charles Gallagher, and his lady, Melanie. The remaining crew included: Al Knight, Delta friend, Freddy (HOSS) McEwan, and my Bride, Joyce. All three ladies are members of the Delta Chicks, excellent gourmet cooks, and valuable

crew members. The Quo Vadis was skippered by former Delta Company C/O, Ernie Spencer and his lady, Linda, also a member of the Delta chicks. With crew members: Mike Powers, Tom Slaby and his lady Jan, Andy Corr a friend of Delta Co., and Battalion Commander of 1/26, Colonel Fred McEwan.

Being the Fleets' Corpsman, Retired RN and Lifetime Member of the PTSD Health Club, I may have a different or skewed perspective of things. So bare with me! Most of the aforementioned Vets have varying degrees of PTSD, and physical scars, acquired in Vietnam; limiting some social skills; heavy lifting, coherent speech, and graceful moves.

Each catamaran had different rules. The rules for the Muddy Joe were: Have Fun, Have More Fun, and Make sure you have fun! I won't speak of the rules on the Quo Vadis, but let's say the behavior on the Muddy Joe was less military. No set restrictions on shore leave, dress code, or consumption. No taps and the only reveille occurred when captain John decided to start the Muddy Joe's engines or generators in preparation to set sail.

John was excellent instructing what needed to be done in preparation to set sail, to tack, to anchor, and other needs to have an exciting, and safe sailing experience. Amazingly, the rookie crew learned the tactics, and we quickly found ourselves manning our stations without discussion; team work, just like in Nam.....very impressive to John and me.

We found this teamwork very effective dealing with several engine and electric power problems, encountered during our week long cruise. Freddie was a hulk and was the real force in raising the heavy anchors. I assisted Freddie and Gallagher positioned the chain properly as we dragged each anchor in. Raising and lowering of the sails became routine as the three of us took our stations, performing the tasks efficiently. The expertise of our captain in maneuvering the boat around with one engine, made our duties easier. Got to give it to captain John, he had the experience, and we never felt uncomfortable as a crew. Now, where's Big Al, during the crews' tasks... some of you may wonder...oh yeah, he's friggin trollin' off the aft of the Muddy Joe. Ain't caught nothing but a couple damn poisonous blowfish and pressure sores on his ass, in 4 days..... A real fisherman, my sweet sailin' ass!!!! But, his

"What me worry" attitude fits in quite well with this crew. If you know him, you must admit, he is a lovable sort!

The Muddy Joe crippled along with the starboard engine useless, leaving the craft with no electrical power, thus no refrigeration, nor power to raise and lower the two anchors. We were also left with no communication. Our crew persevered, even enjoyed the additional challenge...what a Team! We were sailing north through an area, called Bluefield Range. There were several various sized islands, most uninhabited.

It was late afternoon, and we needed to start looking for a place to anchor, as we saw a storm approaching off in the distance. Skipper John decided to have the Cats anchor in a cove protected by two islands from the oncoming storm. One island, Bluefield Caye, had several small weathered buildings, all painted blue/green with a maze of docks, and piers connecting the buildings, and access to this part of the island, was built over the water.

The remainder of the island was well wooded. John explained it was probably an old fishing camp. It looked deserted, so we decided to send a recon team to check it out, after securing the anchors. Our crew chefs (Delta Chicks) informed us, we only had some sausage and ground meat left, which needed to be cooked, since we lacked refrigeration. We thought we'd check it out and perhaps cook our food at the deserted fishing camp and maybe catch some fish... that is where Big Al comes in...yeah ,right!

We lowered the 6' rubber dingy, equipped with a 15 hp outboard to prepare for a beach assault on the island. The dingy, well used with more patches than my favorite childhood jeans, required inflation with the furnished hand pump, on a daily basis. No problem, we had only a few hundred yards to the nearest pier. John, Freddy, and I climbed into the pitiful looking dingy. John takes one pull on the rope and the Evinrude was cranked. There was no movement on the island as we motored to the nearest pier. Freddy jumped up on the dock and secured the dingy, as John and I made our way onto the pier. We stood there a minute looking over the area. "Hello, hello", we yelled...no response. We walk along the pier, I follow Freddy as John takes an adjoining pier to another area. Walking slowly, we watched our

step due to missing boards and warped planks, making it a somewhat treacherous walk. Also, the sun was lowering in the sky, as some overcast became evident as the storm moved towards our location.

Stumbling along we yell again "hello, hello, again nothing. Suddenly, Freddy grabs me by the arm and points; "There is someone laying on a cot in that building...there's half a bottle of rum next to him." Freddy and I move closer in unison, just outside the open shack door, we yell a loud hello! A thin, dark, wrinkled, old looking man lept to his feet with a smile, dressed in shorts, tee shirt and ball cap. Looking somewhat startled as Freddy asks; "Do you have any fish or lobster for sale?" The startled man answers; "No, but I can always catch you some!" He extends his hand out and says; "I am Omar, the caretaker of the resort. We do not have much, I am keeping an eye on it while the owner is gone, I welcome you."

John joins up with us and asks Omar if we could cook our food here. Omar becomes very jubilant as he states; "You are Americans and you are welcome to use anything I have, let me show you to the kitchen and dining hall, what is mine is yours." He rhythmically gestures and sings his words. Omar is excited to have visitors...who knows how long he has been on this island alone. He said he would start the generator, while showing us to the dining facility. Amazingly, Omar had a full kitchen with cooking and eating utensils, plates, silverware, gas stove, even a pita pan heater. Beyond the wooden stick wall was a large 16'x20' dining area with multi style tables and chairs. The building was well constructed of vertically attached to small diameter wood posts. There were openings for windows and doors, equipped with wooden storm shutters. The interior was decorated with a 3'x5' flag hanging on each of the four walls; one American, one, British Union Jack, one Belize and one Omar identified from South Africa. It stayed very comfortable in the dining area, with the Caribbean breeze. We thought this is great, and Omar welcomed our suggestion to bring our food and drink ashore and prepare a feast for us all. He agreed to get the kitchen going as we walked to our dingy for the ride back to tell our sister ship and our crew of our findings.

Skimming across the smooth Caribbean bay between the islands in the dilapidated dingy was exhilarating

to me. The beautiful blues, greens and turquoise colors of the sea, the sun lowering in the sky, promising a beautiful sunset on the water, and the picturesque islands were just awesome. I am grateful to be experiencing all this....what a paradise I am thinking.....Before I knew it we reached our sister ship and climbed aboard; with excitement in our voices, we tell our comrades of our findings and plans. We invite them to join us, on the island where we can discuss safety plans regarding the storm approaching while we eat and party. We then zip off towards our boat to pick up some crew and deliver drink and food to Omar's.

It requires two trips in the dingy to deliver the crew with a cooler of drinks from the craft to Omar's. We would need to return to the boat for our food supplies once Rachel, Melanie, and Joyce, meet Omar and check out the kitchen. Omar again shows such great delight and hospitality as he meets the rest of the crew. The kitchen will work, and plans are made, but it's time for social hour as the drinks are put on a table with mixers, and Omar's finest glassware, with the local and only Brewery name on it, Belikin, "the Beer of Belize"! Omar then explains he will be back; he had to get some bait to take Big Al fishing...THANK GOD! The crew wanders around the piers and docks checking out the buildings. I followed one pier to another row of blue/green buildings; two were outhouses, equipped with toilet seats and all....gettin' fancy in Paradise, I thought. I lifted the lid and 5 feet below is the clear waters of the Caribbean; Omar explained later, that the marine life biodegrades the feces with no harm to the ecology.....HHHMMMM, I hope to give it a try after supper and tell Big Al not to fish on this end of Paradise! Is this paradise or what, everything works in harmony....ah the tranquility of it all!!

Omar returns with "bait" for Big Al. "Hermit crabs", says Omar. "We catch little fish, and then with little fish, we catch big fish." As he chats with Big Al, the rest of us set up chairs on the pier as the sun begins to set on the Caribbean. Wow what a sight.....seems spiritual in nature, the beauty of it all. I realize how fortunate I am to be here. I hear the crew from our sister craft will not be joining us for supper and are heading to their boat. I was too consumed with the beauty of the setting, before long our crew gathered to watch the sunset. Omar comes to inform us the storm is heading away and will not

affect us. Cool...now back to the sunset! You have to see it to appreciate it, not just the indescribable view, but the actual feeling of it all is inexplicable. Amazing!!! Almost total darkness shortly after sunset, but Omar even has lighting provided by a kerosene generator..... As we retreat to the dining hall.

Big Al, Freddy, Rachel and I, climb into the dingy to go to the boat to get the food. Now some had been drinking and were feeling little pain. I'm not sure who was running the outboard, Freddy or Big Al, as they argued on how to start it. Finally under way, Rachel and I are opposite each other towards the front of the dingy holding flashlights in attempt to avoid some low areas where the motor would hit coral or sand. We get halfway to our catamaran, when the motor dies, and there is a smell of gasoline. Al and Freddy attempt to crank it with no luck. Meanwhile we are being carried out by the tide. The gasoline line was discovered lying on the deck and would not stay attached to the motor. Freddy and Al are screaming at each other, Rachel is laughing so hard, I'm afraid she's about to fall out of the under inflated dingy, that now won't start.....total darkness, except for the flashlights from Omar's and the lights of our sister boat getting smaller and smaller as we continue to drift out to sea.

Freddy then says; "I'm here to make sure Rachel is safe....(I guess John gave him instructions), But we don't have to worry, we have Doc!" I am then thinking as we float away, yeah, this guy is twice my size not mention Big Al, not named Big for the hell of it. Rachel continues to laugh as Al and Freddy are getting gas all over each other and the dingy trying to repair it. The flashlights are getting dimmer, and I notice a large image ahead of us...oh Shit, it's that red schooner anchored earlier as we entered the cove. We hear John yelling from shore; "PADDLE....PADDLE!" Yeah right, do you think we have paddles or oars, I am thinking....Not a chance! Rachel and I start paddling with our hands. Finally, the engine cranks, I turn my flashlight towards the engine as we accelerate, and see gas spraying out of the junction of the motor and fuel line....but we keep moving....the motor slows, then dies again. Al is attempting to keep the fuel line in while Freddy operates the motor. After several attempts and sputtering of the motor we make it to our boat. By then we are hysterical with laughter, and yelling at each other. As I am helping to "drag" Big

Al from dingy to boat he falls onto the steps laughing so hard he is crying. "I peed my pants," Half crying and laughing; "But I have a medical problem!"....."OK, Al, we don't need anymore info about your incontinent issues"; I shout out compassionately! Rachel can hardly walk she is so broken up with laughter.

We finally gather ourselves, and get what we need and prepare to get on the dingy when Big Al yells at Freddy to put his cigarette out because of the gas in the dingy. Freddy complies and flicks the butt! Rachel and I look with alarm as the lit cigarette catches the wind and is blown towards the gasoline laden dingy. I envisioned a ball of flames as I'm sure Rachel did. It just misses and falls harmlessly to the water. WHEW!! We make it back to Omar's with the dingy only dying once, thank goodness!!

The table is set with Omar's dishes and eating utensils. Once again the ladies of the Muddy Joe cook up a delicious meal of egg, sausage and potato burritos with a sautéed mixture of vegetables, using Omar's kitchen. We gather to eat, Omar at the head of the table and the crew were seated opposite each other. Omar says a short Blessing, after which we dig in!! Conversations were going in 2-3 directions as the food is passed around and plates are loaded, while the good food, drink, and friendship are saluted. Everyone is enjoying themselves and each other. Suddenly, the attention focuses in Omar's direction, who is apparently feeling the effects of "good" booze! I was unable to catch the beginning of the conversation Omar was having with Big Al, but I heard Omar make some kind of disparaging remark regarding President Bush.

Big Al, looking pretty well wasted, seemed to be motivating Omar with more political jabs. Omar continues spewing his world political views; his voice became angry and loud. Capt. John, now standing and shaking his finger towards Omar. The crew is scrambling to gather our things as others shout their feelings to Omar. We leave the building with our things, needing a few trips to the docked dingy, leaving Omar with the dirty dishes...sure am glad we were finished eating before Omar became radical terrorist on us.

Freddy and I are carrying things to the dingy, we suddenly hear, "HELP.....HELP", and water splash-

ing. We walk down the pier and see this object wallowing in the water, "HELP ME"...It was Big Al... he had fallen off the dock! Freddy yells, "STAND UP!" Al stumbles around and gets to a staggered stance in the knee deep water, as we reach down and pull him up, laughing like hell. He is a bit unstable; we guide him to a chair in front of the dingy against one of the bunkhouses, to await the dingy ride.

It takes two trips to get the crew to the boat, John has learned to run the motor and hold the fuel line in. The ladies and supplies are taken first with Gallagher using the flashlight to see. Big Al is still in the chair, insisting he is sleeping on the island. Freddy and I tell him that is ridiculous, but Al is too wasted to make a reasonable decision. John and Gal arrive back for us. I say; "Come on Al," knowing he will need help. He is still mumbling about staying on the island...I walk over and get nose to nose with him, I state in a clear, slow, deliberate manner; "Al, if you stay, you will awaken with Omar violating you as you are tied to the bed in there," pointing in the bunkhouse!

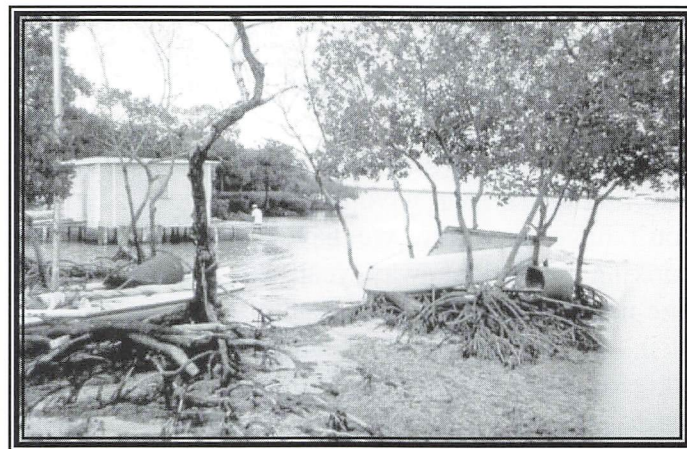
Al decided to try to get up; we help him into the dingy and finally head towards the boat. We make it, with no problem, but now to get Big Al out safely. Gallagher ties the dingy up, Freddy is behind Al assisting him. I am leaning on the portside safety cable as I reach and grasp Al's hand. He stumbles aboard the step of the cat...falls against me, he goes down and I, the only friggin Squid on the expedition, go overboard!! Freddy swears I came out of the water faster than I went in! We finally all get aboard. We get Al to bed, I hit the shower, and coffee is brewed. The remaining crew sits together on the deck sipping coffee, already reminiscing about the events just over the last 4-5 hours. We couldn't believe the evening remembrances for a lifetime!

As I think back, I wouldn't change a thing. The whole Omar experience was enlightening in so many ways to me. I feel grateful again to have shared this experience with my comrades and our brave lovely ladies. The therapeutic effect of this trip has been amazing to me, and oh the thrill and honor of being Corpsman of Marines again. Such a pleasure, too sweet for me to express fully! I stated earlier, I am a PTSD survivor.

Upon return I had an appointment with my trust-

worthy shrink. He has admitted the VA is a major stressor in my life and agreed more time in Belize would do me good. I told him he could help me by giving me 6 months worth of medications and he won't see me anymore..."I'm moving to Belize."Shocked, he stated, "I'll give you the meds, but what about your lab work, and other health problems?" I said, "No sweat Doc, they will resolve themselves as I resolve my stress by going back to Belize." He nodded and said, "You are probably right!" Therefore, if you read this in the Red Clay, I should be living in Belize. Thank you Brother John Rowland for your very therapeutic trip...I recommend it to all who suffer with PTSD, or anyone who wants to seek a better way of life...for me at least....From Caye Caulker, Belize, Central America....this is

Doc Cahill.....OUT
1/26 Delta Co.
1st PLT. Corpsman
RVN 1968-'69



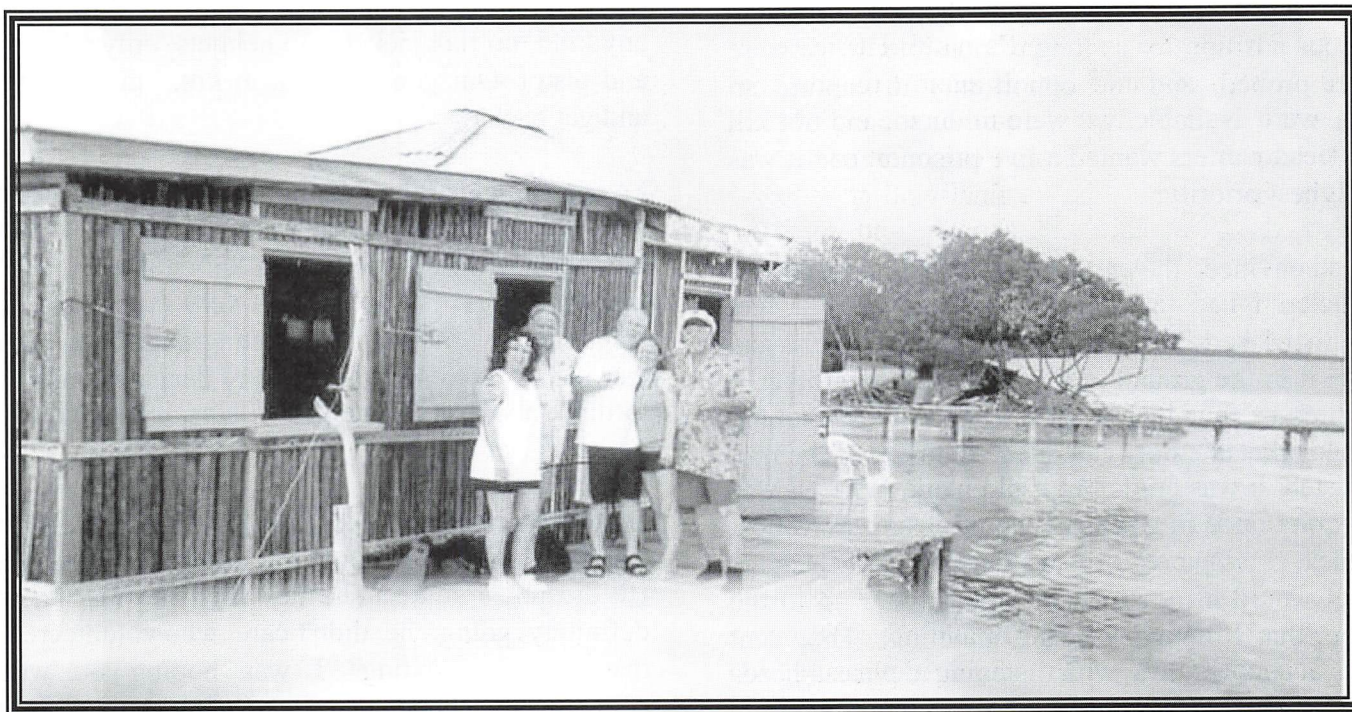
Publisher Comments:

Doc Cahill, I am sure glad you and the troops from Delta had a good time. It must have been a real special experience for you. I hear tell all the time you spent in the US Navy, this was the first time you ever got near water, or put your feet on any kind of boat. Welcome Aboard Ahoy-Mate.

Tom Eichler



Kneeling, L-R Omar, Al (Fisherman) Knight— Standing L-R Fred (Hoss) McEwan, Joyce Cahill, Melanie Stone, Charles (Let me walk point) Gallagher, Rachel Rowland and Doc Cahill



L-R Joyce Cahill, Fred McEwan, Charles Gallagher, Melanie Stone and John (JR) Rowland

A PROUD MOMENT

By Steven Wiese B Co 1/26

I have a story that I'm so proud of, and want to pass it on before it's too late.

We Viet Nam guys are getting older. I'm sure we all have stories to tell. Please believe me, in telling this story I am not trying to make myself out as someone who was a lot braver than the next guy, "I wasn't". I just feel the story needs to be told, to show the character, and bravery of the men at Khe Sahn.

I was a squad leader with Bravo Company, 1/26. I had been with B Company since arriving in Nam over a year earlier (I extended my tour six months). I had been in Khe Sahn since the company came off of Hill 881. I'm sure everyone is aware of the history of Khe Sahn receiving the rockets and mortars every night, where my story begins.

It was sometime between the middle of February and the 25th of February 1968. The nightly rocket and mortar attacks had been getting worse. Like most of the Marines in Khe Sanh, it was taking its toll. One afternoon the Lieutenant came down and informed me that intelligence reported enemy activity around Khe Sanh had intensified, and an attack on the base was not if, but when. We were to hold our position for as long as possible. If we were to get probed, and the opportunity to capture an NVA, were available, we were to do so, and not kill him. Headquarters wanted a live prisoner, and it was the highest priority.

I was convinced the enemy was tunneling under our perimeter. I had taken a steel rod about four feet long, that I had "borrowed" from somewhere. I had driven it in the ground in the corner of my bunker. I left three or four inches sticking out of the ground. I would take an empty can, place it on top of the rod, and listen. It was crude but it did work. When it was very quiet once in a while I would hear a faint tick, or click, I assumed this was when their pick or shovel would hit a rock, and I sent word up to the skipper that I thought I heard tunneling. They sent down a couple guys with listening devices, headphones and the whole works. They hung around for two or three hours, said they didn't hear anything, and left. I didn't care, I was sure I heard digging. I was thinking about it one afternoon while my men

were on various work parties, filling sand bags, reinforcing bunkers, and the usual daily activities. Suddenly a brilliant idea came to me, at least I thought it was brilliant. They wanted a live prisoner, I thought that shouldn't be so tough, we knew they were out there, so I thought I would take a couple men, sneak out in the middle of the night, and capture an NVA. To me, it seemed a snap.

Well that's how it started, how could I make this work. The best way it seemed would be like a recon team, moving slowly and quietly, with maybe just two men. I couldn't order them to go, after all this wasn't an authorized mission; I wanted Lance Corporal Wayne Moore, and Lance Corporal Author Smith (not Arthur). I knew no matter what happened, I could depend on them. I considered them the best the Marine Corps had, (and on March 30th, they proved it) but I couldn't order them to go. I couldn't even ask them if they would go. I decided the best way was to gather my men, tell them my plan, and ask for volunteers.

Once the whole squad met in front of my bunker, I informed them of my plan. I told them I was sick and tired of sitting around doing nothing, getting rocketed and mortared and just sitting waiting to die. I said I only needed two men, to sneak out from in front of our squad area. We would take no gear of any kind, no flak jackets, no helmets, only a bayonet and pistol. Our goal was not to kill, but to capture, and get back.

I again explained this was not an authorized mission, but I was acting on my own. Everyone was to keep this hush-hush, no one was to know about it. I also told them that this could be a very dangerous mission, and I wasn't really expecting anyone to volunteer. I told them not to make any decisions now, but to think about it, let me know later, if they chose to go.

Here's where the pride part comes in, L/Cpl. Moore was the first man to come to me, I'll never forget it. He did not volunteer, he informed me that he was definitely going, he didn't care who volunteered. I thanked him, stating "I was hoping you would come". The second man was L/Cpl. Author Smith. Smitty said, "you can count on me". I knew I could. Something happened that day that I had not expected. Throughout the day, every last man in my

squad came to me and volunteered. One man told me he was afraid, but, if I didn't get two volunteer's, he would go, because he didn't want to let me down. I never would have taken this individual with me on such a mission, but my respect for him rose a notch that day.

Then something truly remarkable happened. A man from a another squad come to me. He said he heard I was going out, and wanted to volunteer. His name was Corporal Claire. He was one of the members of the ghost patrol, later KIA 2/25/68. I was surprised, and wanted know how he heard about it. He informed me that the rumor was going around. I told him the story was bull shit. He replied, "still, if you are going out, I want to go". I had three more men volunteer from other squad's that day. I had said I wanted this to be kept hush-hush, but still, the story spread. I was told to report the Captain Pipes, immediately.

When I reported to the skipper, I did not think I was quite prepared for what occurred. The skipper commenced to chew my ass. He told me he had heard I was taking a suicide mission outside the wire, and in no uncertain terms that I would **NOT** go out. If I did, I would be busted in rank to Private, and spend the rest of my days on work details. And if I still pursued my idea, and someone was to get killed, he would make sure I was court-martialed, and put in the brig for the rest of my life. Then, as only a commanding officer can do he said, "do you understand me Marine"? I snapped back as if I was still in boot camp YES SIR. On the way out the door the skipper said "Corporal, you make me proud to be a Marine". Somehow he had turned that ass chewing around, as only a great leader can, and I came back to the bunker feeling proud.

Needless to say, we never went out of the wire that night, or any other night. I hope I've portrayed some of the pride, to have served with these men, these warriors. In remembrance of L/Cpl. Author Smith and L/Cpl. Wayne Moore, who were KIA 3/30/1968.

Bravo lives on

POETRY

Heart of a Veteran

Does anyone truly see
Into the Heart of a Veteran?
Secrets and memories only
Each other can grasp and know.
'Nam was cruel, and the rain fell
Onto their skin as they stood,
Young, and scared in that hell.
The ones who came home,
Came home to sneers, and to
Friends they no longer knew...
Life went on, but differently.
Some married and had families,
Some never spoke of the things
They had seen, things they had done.

There is a new generation now,
Of the young and the brave,
I am the wife of one of those men.
Letting go, saying goodbye,
Waiting for letters from Iraq every day.
Our baby is due very soon,
A little girl who will change the world.
Will he be home to see her arrive?
We wonder and we pray.

But I have not been alone, you see,
These marines who fought in 'Nam-
They have lifted me above my fears,
Helped me see I will be okay,
And that this baby girl is the prize
At the end of a dark tunnel for one marine.

In the mornings I open my front door,
To see another day begin.
There waiting are baby clothes, gifts,
And cards that contain the prayers and
The well wishes that these veterans
have extended to our baby girl.

So, I ask....Does anyone truly see
Into the heart of a Veteran?
I think I have seen a peak.
Love and compassion live
Amidst the memories of war,
Amidst the aftermath of tragedy.

Although it may feel like the world

Has forgotten and left you behind,
 This family has not and never will.
 You are a true and living example of
 Unconditional love and support.
 And I will always thank God
 For making a place for me
 In the Heart of a Veteran.

Melissa Pierson
Wife of Cpl Douglas Pierson
USMC, IRAQ

THE FEW THE PROUD, THE FINEST

The Visit

by Craig W. Tourte

I realize that all of our members are not Marines, but for those of you who are, I thought you would enjoy this email a friend sent to me.

My dad, Angelo, was in the hospital in Tacoma, Washington. A former Marine, and veteran of the Korean War, he was having his third knee replacement surgery. A long and very painful operation was going to be made even worse because dad was going through it alone. There was no one to hold his hand, no familiar soft voices to reassure him. His wife was ill and unable to accompany him or even visit during his weeklong stay. My sisters and brother lived in California and I lived even farther away, in Indiana. There wasn't even anyone to drive him to the hospital, so he had arrived that morning by cab. The thought of my dad lying there alone was more than I could stand. But what could I do from here?

I picked up the phone and called information for the Puyallup, Washington Marine Corps recruiting station, where I joined the Marines ten years before. I thought that if I could talk to a Marine and explain the situation; maybe one of them would visit my dad. I called the number. A man answered the phone and in a very confident voice said, "United States Marines, Sergeant Vanes, may I help you"? Feeling just as certain, I replied, "Sergeant Vanes, you may find this request a little strange, but this is why I am calling." I proceeded to tell him who I was and that my father was also a former Marine, and 100 percent disabled from the Korean War. I explained that he was in the hospital, alone, without anyone to visit

and asked if Sergeant Vanes would please go and see him.

Without hesitation, he answered, "Absolutely." I asked, "If I send flowers to the recruiting station, would you deliver them to my dad when you go to the hospital?" "Ma'am, I will be happy to take the flowers to your dad. I'll give you my address, you send them, and I will make sure that he receives them," The next morning, I sent the flowers to Sergeant Vane's office, just as we had planned. I went to work, and that evening, I returned home and phoned my dad to inquire about his surprise visitor. If you have ever talked with a small child after that child has just seen Santa Claus, you will understand the glee I heard in my dad's voice.

"I was just waking up when I thought I saw two Marines in their dress blue uniforms standing at the foot of my bed," he told me excitedly. "I thought I had died and gone to Heaven. But they were really there!" I began to laugh, partly at his excitement, but also because he didn't even mention his operation. He felt so honored: Two Marines he had never met took time out to visit an old Marine like him. He told me again and again how sharp they looked and how all the nurses thought he was so important. "But how did you ever get them to do that?" he asked me. "It was easy. We are all Marines, Dad, past and present; it's the bond."

After hanging up with my dad, I called Sergeant Vanes to thank him for visiting my dad. And to thank him for the extra things he did to make it special: wearing his dress blue uniform, bringing another Marine along. He even took a digital camera with him. He had pictures taken of the two Marines with my dad right beside his bed. That evening, he e-mailed them to me so I could see for myself that my dad was not alone and that he was going to be okay. As for the flowers, they hardly mattered, but I was glad for the opportunity to express my feelings. The card read: "Daddy, I didn't want just anyone bringing you flowers...so I sent the World's Finest. Semper Fi."

Publisher Note: I am going to make sure Sergeant Vanes receives copies of this issue of Red Clay, with his story. I will also send copies to Headquarters, USMC, so they know of the wonderful things our Marines are doing.

KHE SANH VETERANS VISIT WOUNDED VETERANS FROM IRAQ

Visit to Camp Lejeune
By Ronald Shouse

Cliff Treese and I went to Camp Lejeune, to visit the young warriors who were wounded in Iraq. Who better to talk to them than a couple of old war Heroes from the 60's. I drove down on the tenth of January from Winston Salem, North Carolina. Cliff drove up from Melbourne, Florida. Upon arrival, I checked in at the Hospitality House and decided to recon the area.

The PX is still in the same place, but now the area around it that used to be a PT Field, is a now scheduled to be a shopping center. The building once used as Force Troops Headquarters, is located in the same place, but is now a barracks. The area where Women Marines were formerly located has also moved. Base and Division Headquarters are still as we left them, and are now designated FSSG.

While I was conducting my recon, Cliff was cruising around the countryside trying to find Camp Lejeune. When he finally arrived, we got something to eat at one of the many fast food restaurants located on the base. After supper we sat on the balcony of the hospitality house and listened to the sound of mortars and artillery fire coming from the impact range located near Courthouse Bay. With the helicopters flying around, it was like being back in Vietnam. We both should have had an attack of PTSD, but strangely it seemed relaxing, or maybe we both just felt safe. We both had the best sleep we have had in years.

On Wednesday, we located the area that we came to visit. It is located at Hospital Point, and is called **"Wounded Warrior Unit"**. Lt Colonel Maxwell who was wounded in Iraq, started this program. It has been designated "Maxwell Hall" in his honor. Even though the veterans we met were 40 years our junior, they received us as if we were one of them.

While these young Marines were eating lunch, Cliff and I put down the convertible top on his vette, and after lunch at Burger King, drove around the base, since it was an unusually warm day, for the month of January. Cliff wanted to visit the base barber to get a military haircut, in case he wore his dress blues dur-

ing our visit. He did not get a "high and tight", but it was regulation. We also got in a little shopping at the PX.

We returned to Maxwell House, met with Lt. Col Maxwell, and visited with the wounded Marines. We brought the video of the battle of Khe Sanh, produced by the History Channel. After viewing the video, they had a million questions. Cliff and I answered them as best we could. We also told a few humorous stories in regards to what they could expect when they reached our age. We informed them of our organization and its goals, and the most important thing, keeping in touch with each other. If they did, they would discover that they would still look out for each other as we, in our organization do.

We personally spoke with a couple of men that were concerned about their future, since their wounds had ended their military careers. Cliff informed them he had felt the same after suffering his disabling injury, but had persevered, and had led a wonderful productive life. Actually talking to veterans that had been through the same circumstances seemed to have a very positive effect on these young men.

While Cliff was talking to the men, I wandered out and talked to some officers in the foyer of the barracks. I first thought they were advance party for a Congressman that was scheduled to visit. They were in fact there, to inform these wounded Marines of their future benefits from the VA. A female Captain looked me straight in the eye, and said she would make sure that they understood everything they were entitled to, before they left. I do not recall receiving any such information concerning future benefits when I got out, but I could be wrong.

Congressman Jones, representing the Eastern North Carolina District, finally arrived. The Marines did not seem to put much faith in what they thought he had to say. I sort of recall we felt the same way when a politician visited us. Of course, as we did, they sat and politely listened, on their best behavior. Congressman Jones surprised me. He seemed like he was genuinely concerned with the situation these men were in. After he spoke, he took a handful of his personal cards and put them on the table. "If you guys need anything at all he said". Although we had never met him, he seemed sincere, not someone campaigning for votes. After he departed, Cliff and I

continued our visit. We presented the Marines with gifts from the Khe Sanh Veterans, and handed out challenge coins from our organization. Cliff and I invited Captain Williams, and his wife to dinner. We decided to meet at the Lone Star Steak house in Jacksonville.

When we left the barracks, Cliff got lost and we almost missed dinner with Captain Williams and his lovely wife. They were just arriving when we finally found the restaurant. Jacksonville has changed a lot in the 30 years since we left. Highway 24 from the main gate still has the pawn shops, but the bars have been replaced with night clubs. There are several shopping malls and restaurants are everywhere. It doesn't look like a military town anymore.

When we went back on base, Cliff and I contacted a young man we had previously met at Dieruff High School in Allentown, Pa. Jeshua Alston told us that he was going to join the Corps and asked us if we would like to come to Parris Island when he graduated. It was almost two years ago that this kid got his first stripe. Now he is a Corporal, soon to be Sergeant, and will be going back to Iraq within the next 2 months for his second tour as a 0311, which seemed to be the primary MOS of all the men we spoke with.

When it was time to leave, I told Cliff that I was going to drive around and reminisce. I ended up at Base Headquarters, and spoke to the Sergeant Major. He was very pleasant, but looked so young. I asked him why all the Marines in the Corps today, looked so young and skinny. He told me it was something they put in the water. I bought a bottle before I left but it hasn't helped me yet. If it works I will get a water buffalo filled to bring to you guys. Cliff called me later to tell me that he went to Clothing Sales to see about a set of the new camouflage utilities, and to the PX for some more goodies.

We returned to Maxwell House and showed the wounded warriors the banner that we all signed at our reunion. We asked if the group would like to have one for all of them to sign. They thought it would be a great idea. Cliff and I will go back to MCB Camp Lejeune for that presentation along with some copies of "Battalion of Kings" for the General and Sergeant Major, sometime in the near future.

Cliff got a late start from Camp Lejeune, so he stopped by Parris Island to spend the night. He got a room on base, and next morning went to see General Tryon, the CG of MCRD, Colonel Valentine, base Chief of Staff and Major White, Base Public Affairs officer. He presented them with a copy of the **RED CLAY** which included the story we did on returning to Boot Camp. They really liked it, and without these three men opening all the right doors for us, we never would have been able to do it. They made sure we got everything we wanted, and treated us like we were some kind of dignitaries.

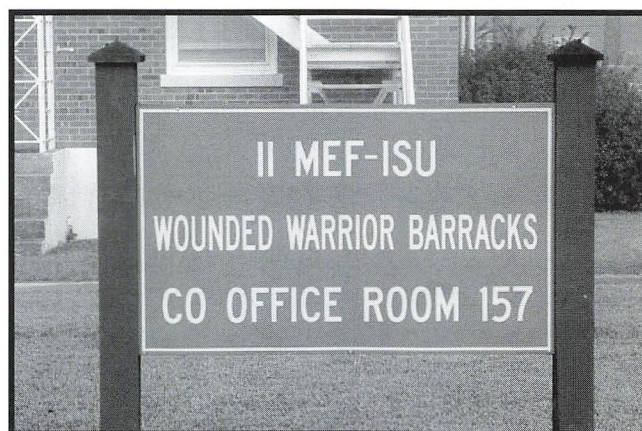
Cliff also made a stop at the Parris Island Museum to see Gunnery Sergeant Charles Taliano, the Rose Garden DI. Sergeant Taliano was on his way to Bethesda Naval Hospital to visit the kid wounded in Iraq that had received the note saying "wish you would die". Cliff caught up with him by phone and said he would see him in March when he speaks to a Platoon of Graduates from the 2nd Battalion.

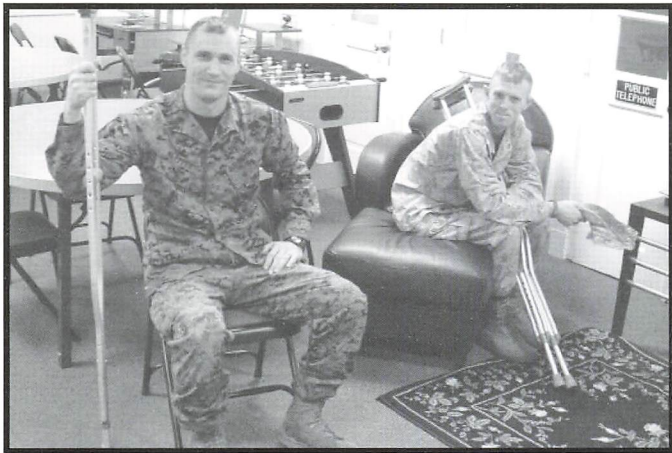
I am sure that I speak for Cliff when I say, we were so proud to be in a room with these men. What the younger generation showed us can not be described in words. You have to stand there to feel the pride and the courage of these young men. In them we saw a lot of you guys, some forty years ago, that no matter what was going on or how bad it was, you had to get back where you belonged to do your job. It was another successful trip by your Roving Ambassadors and we hope you guys can make it someday.

Fortes Fortuna Juvate (fortune follows the brave)

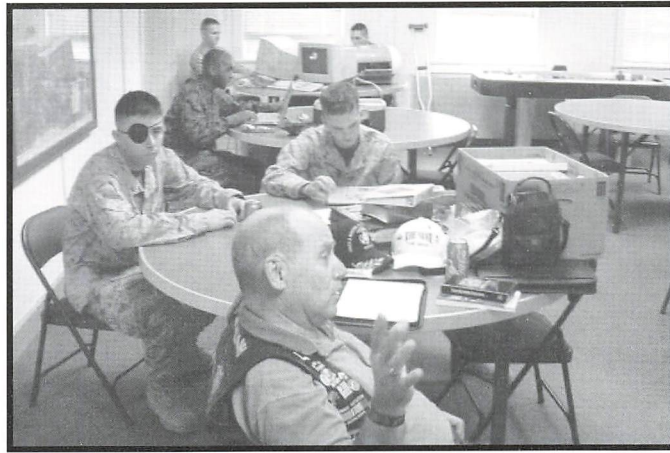
Ron Shouse B Btry 1/13

Cliff Treese B Btry 1/13

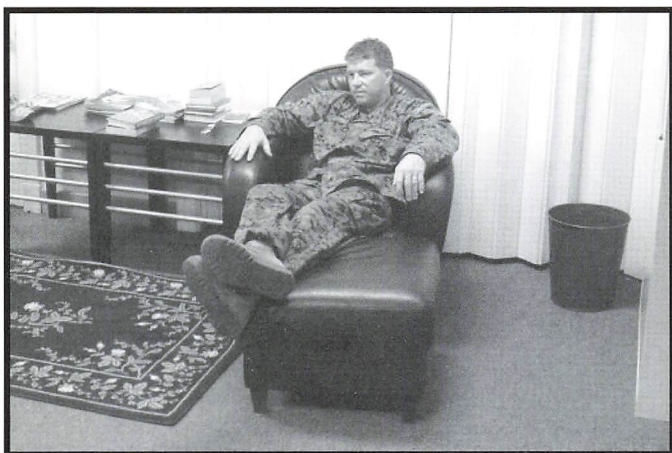




Sgt Klepper and Corporal Moonyhan, Part of the "Stick Brigade."



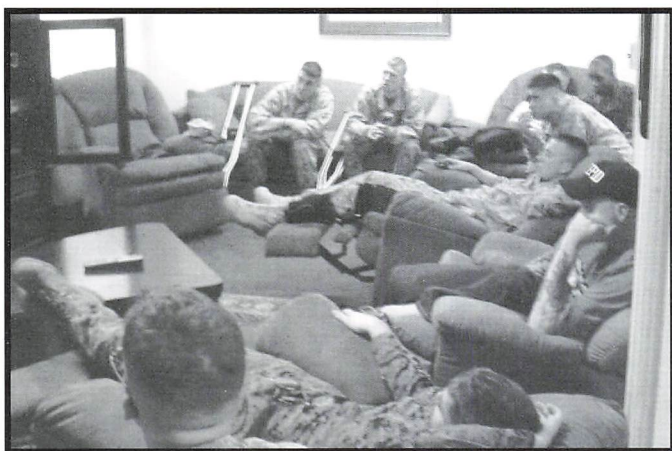
Day Room, with Lance Corporals Silverdale and Williams, the Marines we spoke to, regarding their future.



Gunnery Sergeant Barnes



L-R Ron Shouse, Lt Col Maxwell, Cliff Treese, Captain Williams.



Wounded Marines Watching Khe Sanh Video in their Day Room.

Publisher Note:

Thanks Ron and Cliff, you and your lovely wives Lynn & Linda, at great personal expense, are forever promoting our organization, through your numerous endeavors to help veterans. You are a credit to the Khe Sanh Veterans and the United States Marine Corps, and the United States of America, God Bless

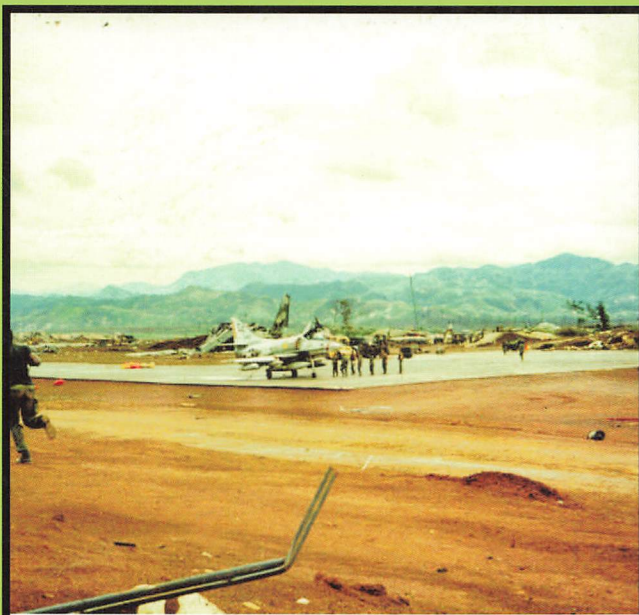
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The Khe Sanh Veterans'

SPRING
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RED CLAY

There have been many stories regarding an F/4 Phantom being shot down and landing at Khe Sanh. Thanks to Joe Belardo, C Btry 1/44 TH (SP) Dusters, here is photographic proof that the plane landed, was repaired and successfully made it back to the carrier from which it took off.



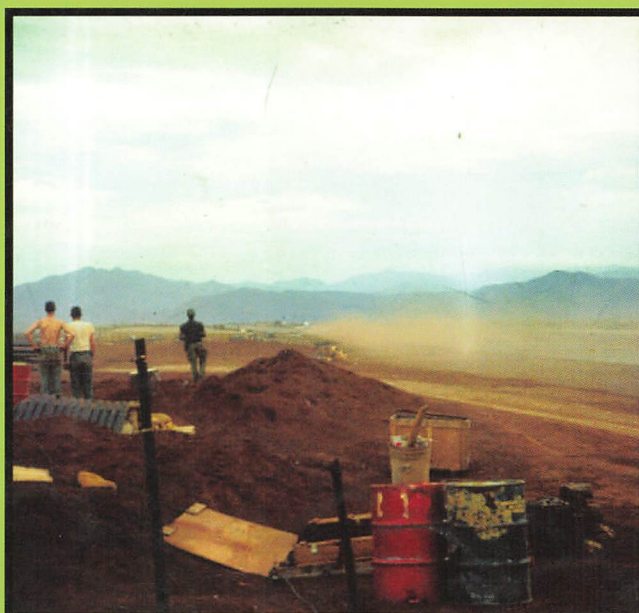
A-4 Skyhawk Off Aircraft Carrier - Shot in Gas Tank.
Notice Fuel on Runway and Tail Hook.



A-4 Skyhawk Readying for Takeoff



A-4 Skyhawk Readying for Takeoff



Jet Flying Down Runway - After takeoff, the jet flew 50 feet over runway and did a victory roll skyward