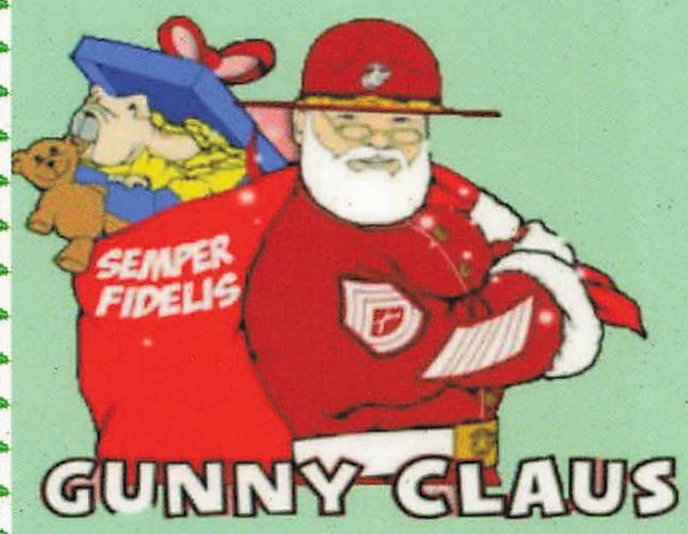
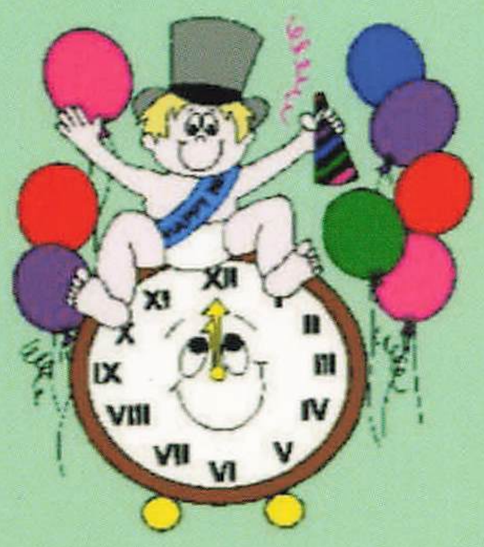
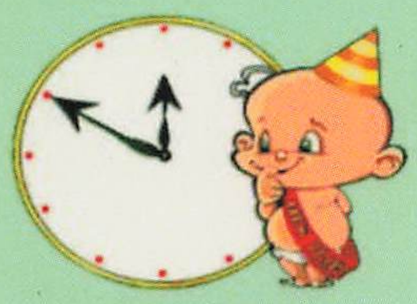
WINTER 2015

RED CLAY

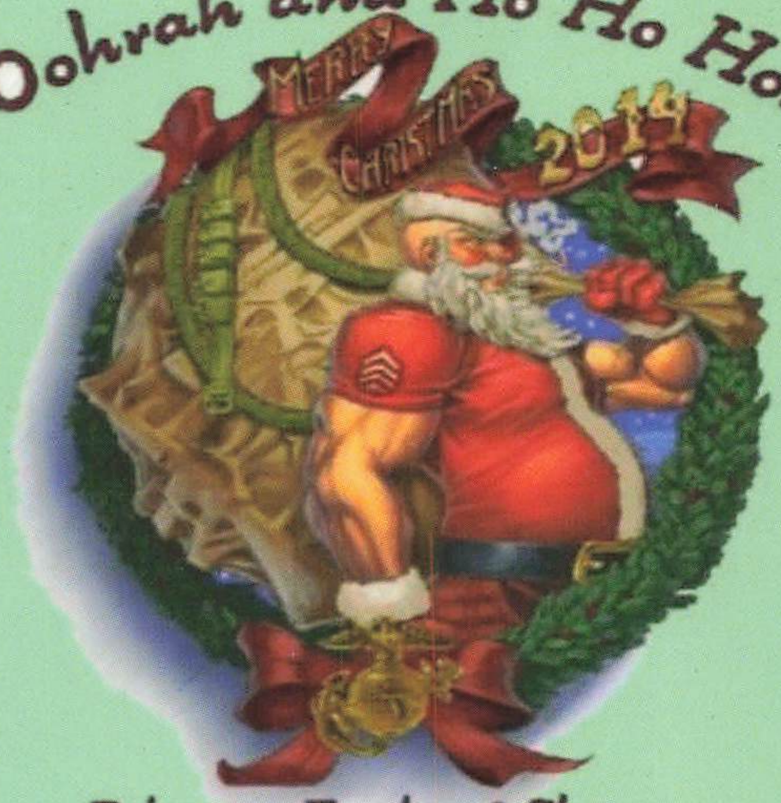
ISSUE 86





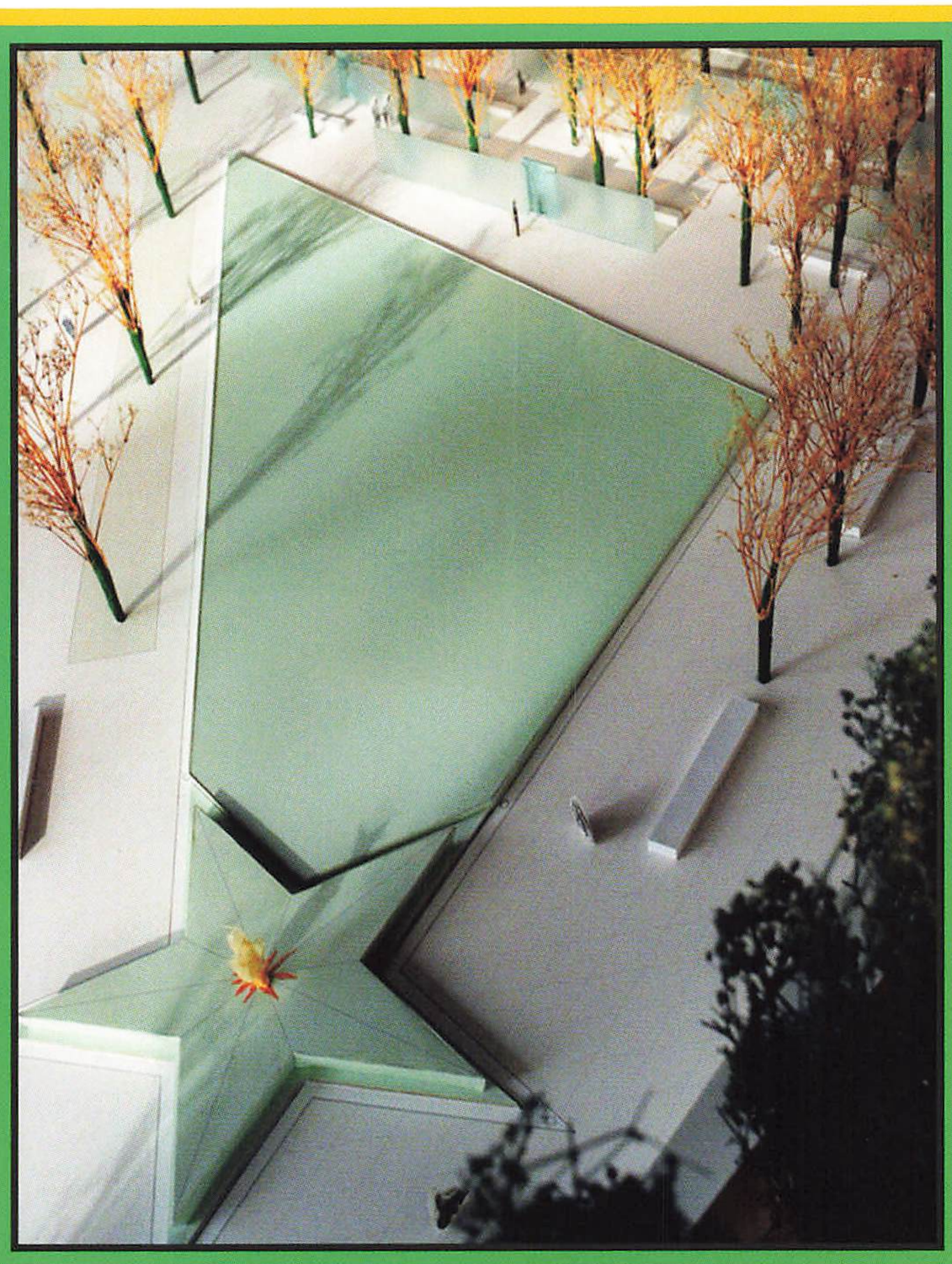


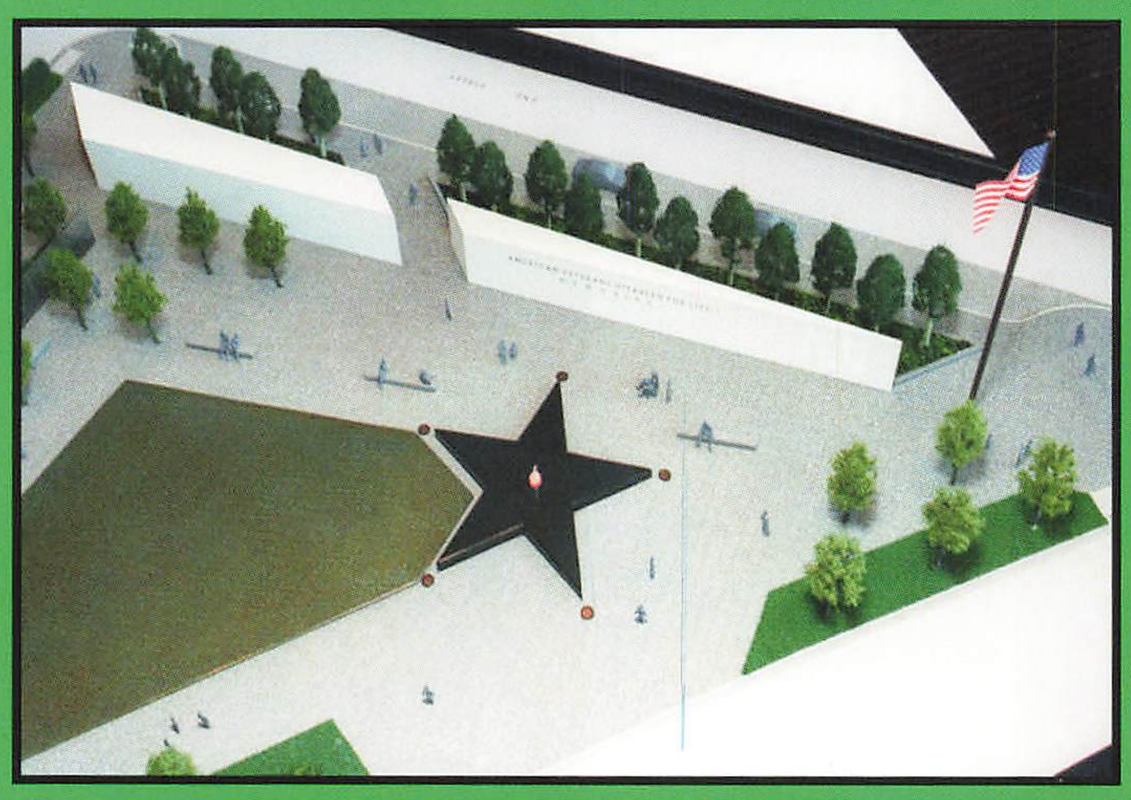
Oohrah and Ho Ho Ho!

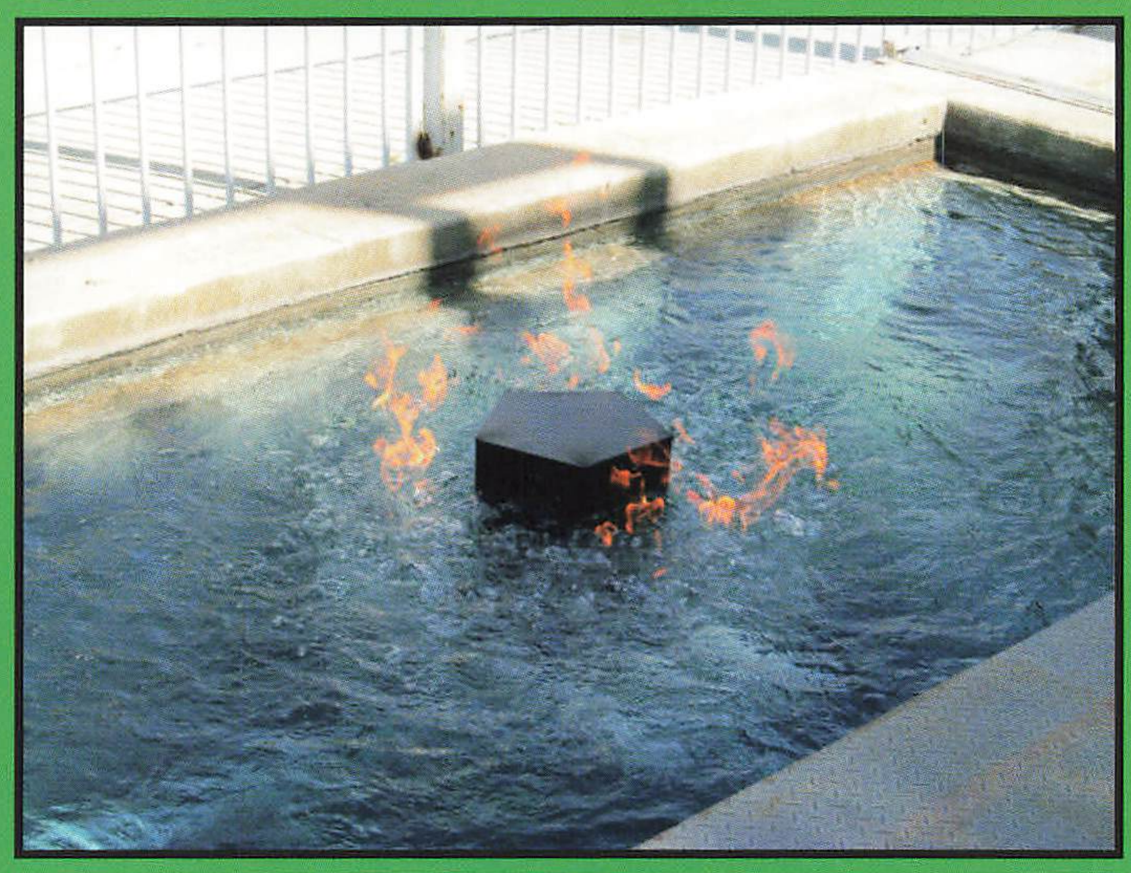


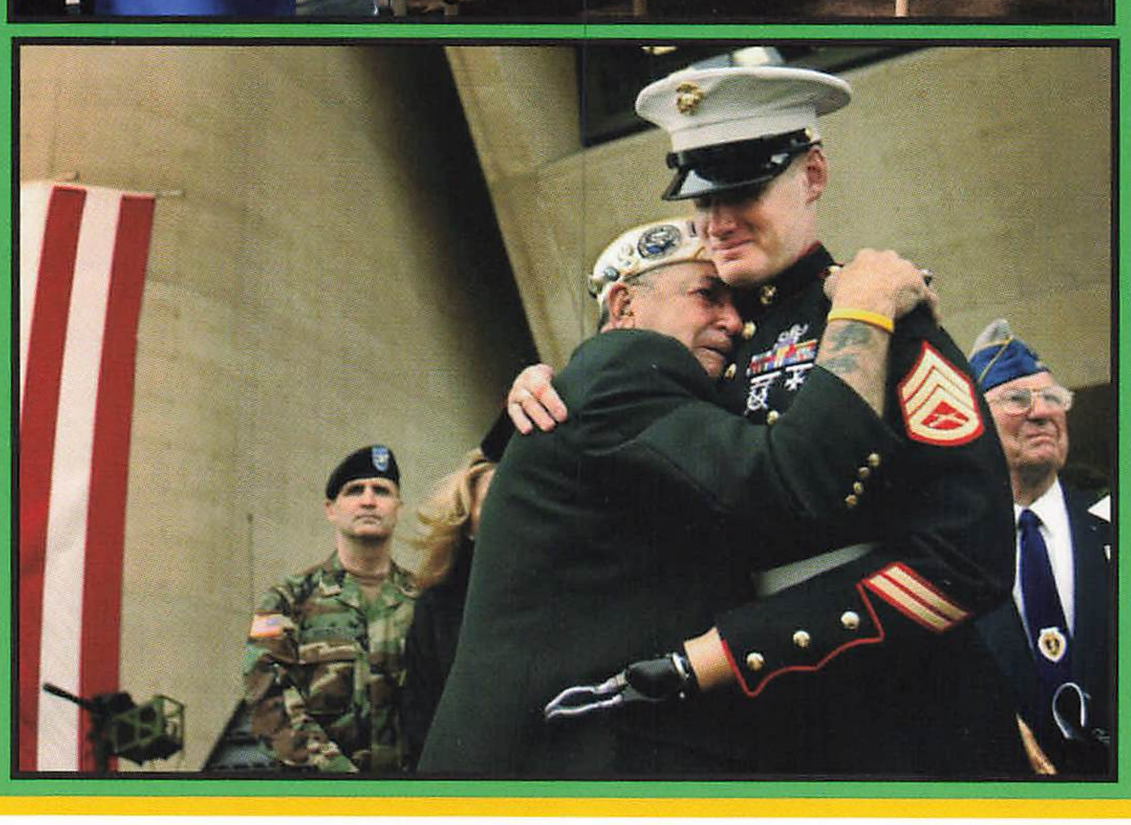
Delivering Freedom & Christmas Wherever We Go!

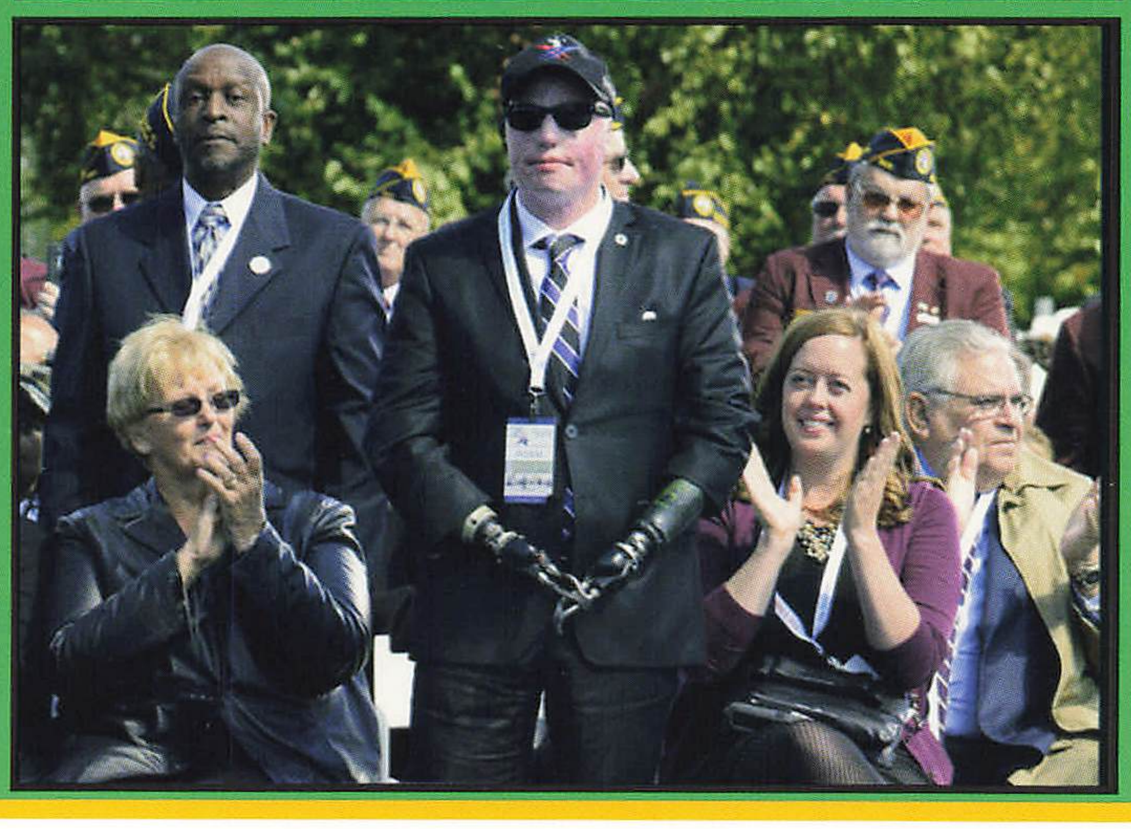
The American Veterans
Disabled for Life Memorial











THE LAST PATROL HILL: 861-A TO LZ MARGO PART 1

By Larry McCartney
ECHO CO 2/26
HILL 861A

The sun broke early and bright on Wednesday, May 28, 2014 as Bill Griffith and I arrived at Philadelphia International Airport for the first leg of our trip to Hà Nội, Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Taking off from Philadelphia at 10:55 AM, just ten minutes after our scheduled departure time and flying east, we had an enjoyable, relaxing, though long flight which I quickly decided would be my last long distance flight in economy class—for any future air travel I will spend the extra money to stretch out in business class, maybe even first class if the cost isn't unreasonable. Hey, its only money and I don't have any children to leave it to anyway, so there's no reason to be as cramped as I was for such a long period of time.

Crossing the International Dateline we 'leapt ahead' during the flight to Doha, Qatar, where we had a long layover in its newly constructed international air terminal, then to Bangkok, Thailand for a brief stopover before flying into Hà Nội, where we landed on time at 3:30 PM on Friday, May 30, 2014—4:30 AM Eastern Daylight Time—after traveling for forty two hours. I can't praise Qatar Airways enough; it was professional and punctual. Unfortunately, upon deplaning we found it was hot and humid, just as we remembered and expected.

For the next three and a half days we did the normal tourist activities in and around Hà Nội, visiting museums, memorials, temples, pagodas, an inland waterway through caves which afforded protection from U. S. bombing during 'The American War,' shopping locales, and sites of ancient as well as historical significance—what's left of the Hà Nội Hilton, etc.—as we acclimated ourselves. Of all we saw, I was most impressed with the growth and modernization of the city—now a blossoming metropolis which, while still impoverished, when compared with my 1995 observations offers an improved quality of life for more residents. My greatest surprise was the many modern retail stores, which are replacing the street vendors and roadside stands.

On Tuesday, June 3rd we flew from Hà Nội to Hue, landing at the exact same Phu Bai airport where I landed in December of 1967 as an eighteen year old Private First Class. We were met by a driver and rode from Phu Bai to Dong Ha, a little over an hour, then checked into a decent hotel which was thankfully larger than the hotel in Hà Nội.

On the afternoon of June 3rd we spoke with a gentleman who is the director for Project Renew, a Quang Tri Province based non-governmental organization (NGO) which deals with unexploded ordnance (UXO) left over from the war—we learned that the Peace Tree Project, which is also responsible for the newly authorized memorial park at Khe Sanh, deals with the UXO issue in and around Khe Sanh, so we got contact information for those people and found out that there is great coordination, thus little duplication of effort, between those and related NGOs.

On June 4th we drove to Khe Sanh, stopping at what was Camp Carroll, as well as the bridge across Route 9 that the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines guarded after leaving Khe Sanh. The current bridge, next to the bridge 2/26 guarded, holds many memories; it was here I last 'fished'—a sport I loved as a boy but haven't done since—using M-26 grenades for 'bait.' It was also from this bridge that Echo Company ran the patrols where Joe 'Cisco' Reyes encountered a large, 'unfriendly' snake and Bill Griffith saw a spider the size of an adult beagle.

After checking into our hotel we visited; 1) the site of the U. S. Army Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei, 2) the Old French Fort, where there's a People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) memorial and cemetery and 3) the mall near Laos from which we could see Co Roc, which evidently is now inside Vietnam. We did not visit Co Roc since it's so close to Laos that we feared an unintentional border crossing and our visas only allowed a single entry, which we used when landing in Hà Nội. Besides, the hotel held our passports, so we had no official identification and could have been stranded at the border.

The schedule for June 5th was a main reason for our trip. We returned to Hill 861 Alpha since we were seeking answers to long nagging questions. We started early, meeting our guides for breakfast; Bill was pleased since they were the same men he used

in 2008. He said they were good and he was right, they really knew their business. They took us by motorcycle up a rutted path from just outside the Khe Sanh Combat Base to the tower on the south side of Hill 861. As we passed Hill 700 ridgeline we saw Americans—Ed Zimmerman, Pete Post and the Joint Pacific Accounting Command (JPAC) site location team looking to find where Corporal Trimble and PFC Pepper were last seen. After exchanging pleasantries and a brief conversation, we continued our journey to Hill 861-Alpha as they found their objective on Hill 700.

Once leaving the rutted road at the tower we went uphill approximately two hundred meters, through tall, thick, elephant grass and 'wait-a-minute' vines, to the east side of Hill 861, where we easily found the trail through the saddle leading to Hill 861-Alpha. The walk over to Hill 861-Alpha was also difficult since the jungle has reclaimed the earth. We found the old Echo Company perimeter, but were very careful since we recalled leaving UXO in the area.

Our visit to Hill 861-Alpha was due the fact we wanted to learn if the PAVN had tried to tunnel up to us in 1968. Bill and I, as well as other Echo Company Marines, had heard and reported sounds of digging, but a senior Marine had told us we were overreacting, so we should just shut-up before we caused other Marines to panic. However, history shows the PAVN had dug their way up to the French lines at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and had tried to do the same at the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

In addition, Reverend Stubbe has mentioned that there were reports of PAVN digging on Hill 861, of which Hill 861-Alpha is a part, so we wanted to learn if Echo Company had avoided something similar. One reason for our search for tunnels was since, when patrolling forward off the wire, Bill distinctly recalls seeing and reporting air vents—perfectly symmetrical holes, evenly spaced horizontally and vertically—coming up the northwest finger toward the Echo Company perimeter. Unfortunately, dense vegetation and suspected UXO prevented a thorough search of Hill 861-Alpha and the guides did not know of any tunnels or caves there, but did know of, and reported being in five such tunnels extending from the vicinity of Hill 558 near the Rho Quan River to the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

As we left the hill we held a brief memorial service for all the men of Echo Company who served there and are no longer with us.

On June 6th we visited the site of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, paying attention to visit where both airstrips were located—Bill explained that the first airstrip was destroyed after we left in 1968 and the second was built to support subsequent operations, such as Lam Son 719 in 1971. We also toured the new museum and coordinated with the director of the Peace Tree Project for possible participation in the memorial that is being constructed.

After leaving Khe Sanh we stopped at a Montagnard village to leave presents—pencils, paper, mirrors, combs, toothbrushes, toys, clothing, etc.—for the children as Bill had done at villages and orphanages in 2004 and 2008. The pencils and paper are necessary since the Montagnards are learning to read and write; something they couldn't previously do and didn't need because their language had no formal structure and they generally lived a nomadic life. We then drove through Camp Carroll to the Mai Loc area, observing the growth—there are no more ramshackle 'hootches' as we knew them, just permanent buildings with electricity, running water and satellite dishes.

We ended the day at Con Thien, the Hill of Angels, where 2/26 served from late May to late July of 1968. June 6th was the forty sixth anniversary of when Echo Company lost much of the 2nd Platoon—fourteen killed and at least fifteen wounded. In 1968 the area was a barren wasteland, but is now a thriving semi-rural community. Needless to say, all remnants of the positions at Con Thien, Yankee Station, C-2, the C-2 bridge/washout, etc. are gone. Much of what was the Con Thien Combat Base is now a plantation, growing coffee and tapioca. Upon leaving, it's now more than lightly populated and we didn't want to draw undue attention to our presence, we held a low-key memorial service for the Echo Company Marines lost in 1968.

On June 7th we prepared for the main focus of our trip, a visit to LZ Margo; referred to as Fire Support Base Margo in some official U. S. Marine Corps references—U. S. Marines in Vietnam: The Defining Year - 1968; page 400. Like our visits elsewhere, our tour guide cleared our visit with the

Ministry of Defense (MOD), the PAVN—we found that while you don't have to have a guide, they can be extremely helpful and this was one such time. So going to LZ Margo was not an issue, despite what we were told by some association members. The only issues were positively identifying the location and finding the easiest, most direct route there.

We visited LZ Margo because of how the September, 1968 events affected us. Bill and I were wounded there, Bill on the 15th when 3rd Platoon, Echo Company engaged the PAVN on the hill northeast of the LZ and I on the LZ on the 16th, during the first barrage when our casualties were heaviest—official reports list twenty one Marines killed and one hundred thirty five wounded. I've long believed that in terms of casualties taken and the lack of known casualties inflicted, that phase of Operation Lancaster II – Trousdale North is one of the worst defeats of the U. S. Marine Corps in Vietnam. Why? Because a reinforced infantry battalion was crammed onto a barren, solid rock, hill; a site barely large enough for an infantry company—an area which prevented us from digging-in.

Reportedly we moved there so B-52 bombers could provide close air support. Yet, a review of official records questions that claim. So why did we move to where we were had to bunch up? We landed three days earlier with various levels of food and water—the 2nd platoon of Echo Company had little more than one day of rations, other platoons had more. Was it for resupply? After all, there is a stream at the base of LZ Margo that we could not use other than to cool off since we were told it had not been tested, but there was a water hole atop the hill. In my opinion 'leadership' at all levels underestimated the enemy, as the French underestimated their enemy during the Indo-China War, so we operated with flawed strategy, tactics and Rules of Engagement (ROE). We visited LZ Margo because, despite 'writer's block' and a lack of objectivity, I've long wanted to write about it. So I had hoped to film the site for a documentary; I can only hope to do half as good as Ken and Betty Rogers so brilliantly did in Bravo Company: Common Men—Uncommon Valor.

Finding LZ Margo was easy enough, we just had find LZ Winchester, then go approximately two thousand meters north. We had done a good map recon, so we took Route 9 to the service road from which that fire support base was resupplied, then remembering the climb up LZ Margo in 1968 we declined to climb that hill, we took the trail skirting it to the east.

Our trip to LZ Margo was an intense experience. So many Marines—our U. S. Navy Corpsmen are Marines—were killed or badly maimed there. The friends I lost, men with whom I shared hopes and dreams for the future, as well as the heroism I saw, too often not recognized, is forever etched in my brain. For whatever reason, their story is untold. It must be told. It will be told.

When concluding our visit to LZ Margo we held yet another memorial service, this to remember all the men from 2/26 killed or wounded there in 1968, as well as those like Eric Smith who have died since. Our particular concern was to pay tribute to Mrs. Anna M. 'Mickey Mom' Roble, formerly of Latrobe, Pennsylvania, a truly grand, very brave, lady who passed away in December of 2011, after she had traveled to Vietnam in August of 2004 to visit the site where her son, Lance Corporal Joseph E. Roble, an Echo Company Marine and a Khe Sanh veteran, died. Unlike the other mothers on that trip with Mrs. Roble, who was over eighty years old at the time, she was denied seeing the location of her son's death, as well as a proper, respectful, memorial service. This time we not only went there, but we also conducted a suitable service

Upon returning to our vehicle parked near Route 9 we were confronted by a rather unfriendly Montagnard village chief, surprisingly a young man in his early to middle thirties, as we were passing back through his village. The chief was extremely irate, so we sat silently as our guide spoke with him. We learned his anger was since we had passed through his village and territory without coordinating with him. That we coordinated with the MOD meant absolutely nothing to him; he was 'the law' in his village and he demanded the 'Rich Americans' compensate him for the insult; he wanted a pig and seven chickens. Our guide managed to negotiate and he settled for 'just' two million dong, approximately one hundred U. S. dollars.

The next day we drove to Hue, where we relaxed for four days after the intensity of the trip to LZ

Margo and to see the sights of the ancient Imperial City and surrounding area. Our tour of Hue included visiting what is left of the Citadel, a sampan ride on the Perfume River and a motorbike tour of the suburbs. While in Hue I first noticed a startling phenomenon; more than a few women were wearing small gold crucifixes around their necks. When I asked them about the crucifixes nearly all said, "I am a Catholic" and those who didn't said, "I am a Christian." I realized the religion was a result of the French influence, but I was surprised it survived so strongly and is now so openly expressed, even tolerated, in a communist country.

Upon leaving Hue we drove to Da Nang through the new vehicle tunnel under the Hai Van Pass—Bill recalled it opened in August or September of 2008. We spent two days there, visiting Marble Mountain and China Beach, still popular tourist attractions and resorts, Marble Mountain and the local markets. We also went to where LZ Baldy and the An Hoa Combat Base had been since I served there in 1970 and 1971. Our trip to the An Hoa Combat Base was an eye opener, it was still an active PAVN base in 1995, but is now demolished and due to become a modern 'supermarket.'

We left Da Nang on June 15th, flying to Ho Chi Minh City/Sài Gòn—it's only called Ho Chi Minh City in official matters, otherwise people still call the city by its prior name, Sài Gòn. We spent the night there and then drove to Mai Tho in the Mekong Delta, where we saw the sights, shopped in the local markets and toured the Mekong.

The half-day visit to the Mekong was interesting. Our guide, a pleasant young lady who spoke excellent English and I have no doubt was, like the other local guides who were either MOD officials or reported on our activities to the MOD—we were followed and our rooms/luggage were checked while we were out—showed us a fish 'farm' in the river. We also visited several villages with tourist-based industries, as well as the inland waterways. In one village locals entertained us with traditional music, than we had lunch in an outdoor restaurant where we were at a table next to a honeymooning Russian couple. Following lunch we visited another local mall, where Bill made friends with a large female boa constrictor. The snake had to be female since she immediately wrapped herself around Bill. I declined the 'invitation' to 'meet' her.

Upon returning to Sài Gòn on Tuesday afternoon we again took in the sights, visiting the new, upgraded, War Museum and seeing the old Presidential Palace, the Cathedral of Notre Dame, the Central Post Office, and many famous landmarks like the Rex Hotel. Interestingly, when we visited the War Museum we were delayed since it closes for an hour-and-a-half for lunch, so we eschewed McDonalds and Burger King and ate at Pizza Hut. The highlight of our Sài Gòn visit was seeing the old U. S. Embassy—now reopened as the U. S. Consulate General—where the Deputy Counsel General give us a personal tour. Of course we spoke with the Marine on duty, a Corporal from New Jersey who, since he is a neighbor, we told to look up 'Big John.'

While we shopped during much of our time in Sài Gòn, I also spent time with friends I had made during my 1995 trip as well as here in the United States. It was good to see them again and get their first-hand reports. Most are doing well and are pleased with the progress in the country since the end of the American War, though they also recognize that much still needs to improve. One observation I made is that despite changing demographics—in 1995 approximately seventy five percent of the population was born after the United States left twenty years earlier and now that number is roughly ninety five percent of the population—the plight of our former allies, the South Vietnamese in general and members of the Army of the Republic of Viet Nam (ARVN) in particular, is unchanged. Sadly, anyone still alive from those days are, if they fought for or served the South and/or its allies, at best second class citizens.

Something I first noted near China Beach, but saw elsewhere in what had been the southern half of Viet Nam during my tours there, was the presence of the U. S. flag. While not 'everywhere' south of what had been the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), I often saw the U. S. flag flying alongside the national colors of Viet Nam. Tactfully speaking with locals, I learned there is little acrimony towards Americans in general or the U. S. military in particular, though some of the educated and articulate admitted an intense dislike for the U. S. anti-war protestors—they called them communists dupes—who subverted their freedom with the support they gave the North.

I also learned that due to ongoing political issues with the People's Republic of China (PRC), Viet Nam seeks stronger ties with the United States. Several told me they hoped the U. S. would send military aide should the PRC attack. On that point I surprisingly kept my big mouth shut.

A particular treat for me was to renew my friendship with 'Nguyen,' a former ARVN Special Forces soldier who I met during a two week liaison assignment in 1995 and have maintained contact with; though a Buddhist, 'Nguyen' gratefully and graciously accepts my small gift every Christmas. 'Nguyen' served a short—less than a year—stint in a reeducation camp in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Republic of Viet Nam in 1975, but could not emigrate since he was a young enlisted soldier and not a commissioned officer. I will not further identify 'Nguyen' for fear of potential repercussions, but will note that he survived and raised his family despite not being able to obtain employment—he works as an unofficial tour guide and is a 'hustler' but refuses to engage in criminal activities. While with him, 'Nguyen' took me anywhere I asked to go, as well as a few places I never thought of, such as the bars he and his friends are welcome to visit. It was fascinating and gratifying to be fully accepted by these men, all of who fought for the Republic of Vietnam and still pay a steep price for their service—of the six children 'Nguyen' and his wife had, five have already died from Agent Orange related issues. The remaining child is crippled and only has a few years left. Sadly, none ever got any government assistance, or significant medical care, since their father fought on the wrong side.

With an international exchange rate of approximately twenty one thousand Viet Nam dollars (VND)—dong—to the U. S. dollar, the trip, once 'in-country,' was fairly inexpensive. In addition, many of the products, merchandise and services are likewise inexpensive. However, Viet Nam is a 'negotiating country' and the price a merchant will accept is below the listed price. There is what I can only call as a multi-tier price scale—prices depend on the nationality of the purchaser, so an American will nearly always expect to pay 'top dollar' for everything. Since we knew this from our previous experiences, as well as our contacts, we resolved to use our guide to make purchases; an idea that worked remarkably well.

Despite the significant modernization that I saw—infrastructure, homes, shops, commercial buildings, communications, etc.—I couldn't help but notice that computer modernization in Vietnam lags behind the rest of the world. Because of U. S. Transportation Security Agency (TSA) policies and procedures, I had intentionally left my laptop @ home knowing I could communicate as needed because of reports from others who have recently traveled to Vietnam. I found that all the hotels we stayed @ had computers with Internet connectivity and nearby Internet Cafes were not only plentiful but inexpensive. However, the equipment and software was seriously outdated. More than a few facilities had ten year old computers and in some cases were still running Windows XP or even Windows 98. So while Internet access was available, it was not as reliable as I am accustomed and it was slow. I mentioned this to a friend, a naturalized U. S. citizen born in Vietnam who left in late April of 1975 but has since returned and he remarked that my observations were not isolated; he reported that despite the significant modernization, Vietnam is still a very poor country so some 'hard choices' have to be made. However, he sees improvement in the coming Years.

During my many conversations with the 'man in the street,' one theme I often heard was how 'the youth of today' were unmotivated; they "did not appreciate what they had." While in shops negotiating with the vendors, I heard a parent call for help and several times the parent would get frustrated, then apologize to me saying; "The kids today don't want to work, they just want to play on the computer." J Again much to my surprise, I kept my big mouth shut.

While I saw many differences, most of which is improvement, in the quality of life from when I served in Vietnam in 1967 and 1968, then again in 1970 and 1971, as well as when I was last there in 1995, I was still stricken by the contrast between the different classes of people; Vietnam is a heterogeneous country with over fifty ethnic minorities, so we saw well-dressed people, expensive hotels, restaurants and luxurious cars such as Mercedes Benzes, Land Rovers, Fiats, Toyotas, etc. However, we also saw a much larger number of people who are lucky to have a small motorcycle, scooter, or bicycle as they struggle to survive, all too often on less than a $1.00

per day outside the urban areas. My experience at this point in my life made me appreciate the many blessings we have here in the United States all the more, as well as wonder how much we really did help the people. According to my friends change is coming, albeit all too slowly.

Just prior to 7:00 PM on Sunday, June 22nd we left Sài Gòn out of Tan Son Nhut International Airport and after a seven hour flight we arrived in Doha at approximately 10:00 PM. After a three hour layover, we boarded our flight to Philadelphia International Airport and arrived in the United States at 7:30 AM on Monday, June 23rd; accounting for zone changes, we were airborne for over twenty one hours during a twenty four hour period. Brutal!!!

All in all it was a GREAT trip, well worth the effort despite all that was involved. We met all our objectives, we; 1) visited Hill 861-Alpha, 2) located and visited LZ Margo, 3) met NGOs to learn what to do to participate in the Peace Park at Khe Sanh—that information has been passed to Colonels Nick Romanetz and John Kaheny, and 4) learned how to get involved with the UXO problem. Our only significant problem involved the failure of the video equipment we took to LZ Margo; a HUGE disappointment, though 'in retrospect'—no pun intended—not unexpected since we intentionally traveled light. Frankly I don't know how I'll handle that issue. Will I make another trip, this time with better equipment and a skilled operator? Will I forgo a video of the site as it now is and just try to make a documentary based on interviews and old photos? Will I even pursue the documentary idea? Only time will tell. Anyone with any ideas is encouraged to contact me.

WEB BRIEFS

STICKS OF GOLD

By Dave Anderson

I saw him coming down the trench with his can of ham and Mothers in hand and a slight grin started forming on my face. Stop grin'n ass**** and give me those smokes now! Growing up, my Father was a two pack a day smoker. I pilfered one of his cigarettes one day and it made me sicker than hell so I never got into smoking. I was a country kid who grew up eating ham and Lima beans and actually liked the buggers. Melt some cheese into a can of ham and Mothers, break up some crackers and stir them in and if you were in possession at the time, a couple shots of Red Rooster and man I was in hog heaven.

I couldn't have been happier if I had gone to a fancy restaurant at the time. Most of my boys were smokers and they also hated that particular C-Rat meal so I was in a strong position when it came to trading my smokes for food. Those smokes were worth more than gold at the time I swear. Under the stressful conditions we were existing under, cigarettes were in demand and almost priceless to some of the guys. Word in the Mike 2 trench-line was, if you need smokes go see Anderson, he's always got some and he likes to trade for Ham and Mothers whenever possible. Like Sticks of Gold I tell ya. Like sticks of gold!

OBJECTIVE # 2 JANUARY 20, 1968

By Robert "Skip" W. Unangst Jr.
India Co 3/26 1st Platoon

After reading the accounts of Corporal Bryan's reconnaissance engagement on January 20, 1968 in "Red Clay", issue 83, memories of the day were stirred as they have been countless times since. At the time I was a twenty two year old corporal and squad leader of Second Squad, Third Platoon, India Company, 3/26. I was also the oldest member of the squad, and had been with India Company since arriving in country in July of 1967. No engagement is an isolated event. That day was no exception. For several weeks prior to January20th, India Company's base of operations was out of the network of trenches and bunkers atop Hill 881 South. After January 20th, these trenches and bunkers and those

of Khe Sanh and other supporting hills would have a commonality with places like Verdun and the Somme.

Hill 881S was an isolated and distant outpost of the Khe Sanh combat base. From atop the hill one could see a vast panorama extending for scores of miles in every direction. To the South, one could see well beyond the combat base. To the West, one could see beyond the immense cliff that is Co Rok Mountain and well into Laos.

To the North, one could see beyond Hill 881 North's ridge line, across the sweeping DMZ valley, and to the distant massive edifice that is Tiger Mountain. To the East, and across another great valley, rose the stretching mountainous ridge line that contained Hills 950 and 1050. These great vistas contained nothing but raw wilderness, except for the tens of thousands of North Vietnamese soldiers occupying them.

This environment was enough to make a lone reinforced rifle company of a little over two hundred Marines on Hill 881 South uneasy. This rifle company was many miles from its closest support base. It is also important, by way of background information, to understand that four months earlier, India Company and the rest of Third Battalion Twenty Sixth Marines, greatly outnumbered, engaged a division of the North Vietnamese Army in a ninety six hour battle between the DMZ and the Con Thien fire base that saw over seventy per cent of the Marines killed or wounded.

On an afternoon, many days before the 20th, a squad on patrol from India Company engaged elements from the North Vietnamese Army approximately a click to the north of Hill 881S. Shortly after, the distant bursts of small arms fire could be heard and the command went out, "Third Platoon saddle up!" Within minutes we were that "spread out", three to five meters apart, serpentine column moving at double time towards the fire. In approximately twenty minutes we were at the site of the fire fight helping wounded Marines. The NVA had broken off the engagement and there was no sign of them. In particular, I remember carrying a Marine, with what appeared to be a severe eye wound, a short distance to an improvised LZ. I remember saying words of encouragement to him as I carried him. However, the moment was of such intensity that I did not realize until I lay him down that the back of his head was gone. We quickly secured the area and headed back to 881S.

On January 19th, in the afternoon while "milling around" on 881S, the spontaneity of small arms fire again erupted, but this time the sound was more distant. This time the sound came from the vicinity of Hill 881 North. Again, the clarion sounded, "Third platoon, saddle up!" Again, our serpentine column of three squads double timed down 881S, and up and down the intervening topography, along the narrow meandering trail, through shoulder high elephant grass, and always wondering, always anticipating, what was around the next bend. It was no secret that the NVA's strategy was to strike when they greatly outnumbered their prey. Political restraints from the "Demilitarized Zone" to "International Borders" created a macabre vastness that was known as our Area of Operation. These restraints created a Happy Hunting Ground for the NVA; we were the bait.

As we crested Hill 881 North, the just ambushed bodies of Marines from a reconnaissance squad laid in the hot sun. Some Marines from that squad were lucky to have been extracted by rescue helicopter. Not these. To this day, I have vivid memories of that scene. One Marine had deep blue eyes, as deep as the sky above. He had a bright gold wedding band that radiated in the sun light, and his body, split in half all the way to his upper chest, was framed in bright red; this, perhaps, the result of a Soviet RPG.

The next memory I have was of a tree line less than one hundred meters away. Only elephant grass separated us. A maelstrom from Hell could have erupted from that tree line at any second. We "secured" the area, and all of us, the dead and the living, were helicoptered back to 881S or the Khe Sanh combat base. The NVA, again, chose not to engage us.

On the evening of January 19th, 1968, I and the other squad leaders of third platoon were called to Third Platoon's command bunker by our Platoon Commander, Lieutenant Thomas Brindly. Lieutenant Brindly had returned from the Company

Command bunker where our Company Commander, Captain William Dabney, had informed his platoon commanders of what Lieutenant Brindly was about to inform us.

India Company, shortly after day break, would depart Hill 881S on a company size patrol to Hill 881 North. There were several sequential objectives to be met along the way. The company would be split into two groups. First and Second Platoons would take one route, and third platoon would take a different route. This must have appeared as a two pronged advance toward Hill 881 North from Hill 881S. A reconnaissance squad would be attached to Third Platoon. This was Corporal Bryan's squad. Corporal Bryan's squad would peel off of our column and become "inserted" to commence its own reconnaissance mission. Lieutenant Brindley also informed us that a primary mission of the patrol would be the recovery of the radio the reconnaissance squad lost when they were ambushed the day before.

As it became light, Third Platoon "saddled up" and began to depart the perimeter of Hill 881S. My squad was second in the order of the march. First squad, led by Sergeant Knowles, was before us. Directly behind us were Lieutenant Brindley and the platoon command group, which included his radio man. Sergeant Johnson's third squad followed, and behind them was Corporal Bryan's reconnaissance squad so placed for insertion. I remember talking to Lance Corporal Collins of first squad just before we departed. He would be walking point for the platoon, and this would be his last patrol before completing his second tour in country. I believe he was from the Midwest.

I remember him talking about husking corn and corn country. He was a solid, alert, squared away Marine; the kind of guy you wanted walking point for you. He was also told he did not have to walk point or even be on this patrol because he was a day away from heading home. However, he felt strongly that he was more qualified than anyone else, and he therefore insisted on walking point. I remember telling him to be careful. As we left our perimeter and headed toward Objective #1, we moved down into the early morning mountain fog that blanketed the hills. The sky above the fog was so blue that we knew this would become a hot sunny day. Our forty something man column descended many hundreds of feet to the base of Hill 881S and up again to the crest of the adjacent hill, Objective #1. We continued to move north to Objective#2, Hill 800, which was a foot hill of Hill 881N.

As the point crested Objective #2 around midmorning, the silence was consumed by the explosion of small arms fire a few meters before me. I dropped to the ground, and a short time later, I remember looking up to see members of the first squad crawling back down. Several grenades were being thrown after them. In the middle of the group was their squad leader, Sergeant Knowles, with his lower jaw hanging below his throat, and in a strained voice with his tongue pressed against his pallet he was saying, "Help me, help me."

The first thought in my mind was, "Drop back and call in air support," but then another Marine, crawling back down the path said, "Collins is still up there." I then remember instinctively saying, "Second Squad Up." Up there" was probably no more than thirty five to sixty feet away. Just then, grenade floated through the air and landed five or six feet from me; I reflexively curled up and turned away from it. I thought, "This is it," and waited for a second for hot shrapnel to sear through me. Boom- unbelievable- nothing, nothing at all! I was untouched!

My first fire team, led by Lance Corporal Rudy "Dunker" Gomez, was before me, and I had them form a 'wedge." I called out, "Machine gun up." Two machine gunners, John Maceous, and Critchfield, instantly appeared. I said, "Give me a base of fire." Critchfield said, "where do you want it." I said, A few degrees to the left and right of where I throw this grenade." I pulled the pin, held it for a second, and lobbed it up to where one had been-lobbed down to us. I watched it, descend into the green elephant grass, and explode. In almost continuous rhythm, I saw what appeared to be an arm attached to quadrant of shoulder rise barely above the elephant grass.

The machine gunners put down a base of fire. I then had my second fire team, lead by Lance Corporal Roy Comstock, form a wedge to the left; and my third fire team, lead by Lance Corporal Tobin, form a wedge to my right. This movement

created a squad wedge and took a very brief time to form. The squad then moved five to eight meters forward when I heard Gomez's point, PFC Barrett, aka All Cap, say "We got him."

The fire team brought Lance Corporal Collins fifty or so meters down to the base of Hill 800 where third platoon was regrouping. I spoke with Lieutenant Brindley and members of my squad. I remember concluding that probably Collins and others had inadvertently walked inside a NVA perimeter on Hill 800. I doubt either side saw the other one coming.

Seeing a NVA soldier, Collins fired and another NVA soldier behind him shot Collins in the back with the bullet exiting his abdomen. A brief but intense fire fight then ensued. As I walked past Collins at the base of Objective #2, I observed the Corpsman attending to him with serum albumin. I asked my first fire team what he said when they got to him. They told me he said, "Leave me alone, I am dying." A few minutes later he died.

We were told at about this time that First and Second Platoons, on their way to 881N, had engaged the NVA at almost the same time we did.

My understanding of things at this time is that Lieutenant Brindley Informed Captain Dabney of our engagement. The word that went around at this time is that Captain Dabney informed Lieutenant Brindley, "I want that hill." I have always assumed that the hill was Hill 800 as Hill 881N was still a good distance away.

In about an hour, we regrouped and redistributed ammunition at the base of Hill 800 while helicopters removed the dead and the wounded. There was also a brief meeting with Lieutenant Brindley in which he informed the remaining squad leaders that the platoon would get "on line," " fix bayonets," and "take, seize, and secure" Objective #2. As I recall, my squad (second squad), made up the left flank of the line because first squad had had been decimated. Its remaining members were integrated into second and third squads. Third squad, which was led by Sargent Johnson was to our right, and the reconnaissance squad, led by Corporal Bryan, was on the far right of the line. While we were regrouping a 106mm recoilless rifle on Hill 881S blasted away at the top of Hill 800. I believe this gun crew was led by Lieutenant Richard Dworsky, and its mission was obviously to "soften" the target before our assault.

On command, the platoon moved out on line through the open elephant grass. This may have been one of the last on line fixed bayonet assaults in United States military history. It is important to note that the distance from where we began the assault to the top of Hill 800 was no more than 200 feet, and the increase in elevation was probably less than fifty feet. It is also important to note that on the other side of Hill 800 the land descended again, but then rose up to the topographic fingers of Hill 881 North; fingers that were higher in elevation than Hill 800. At this time I believe we were about to have much in common with other assaults in history. These include: Marye's Heights in December of 1862 at Fredericksburg, Pickett at the High Water Mark in July of 1863, the Normandy Beach in June of 1944, and the Iwo Jima beaches in February of 1945. As we moved out on line, we slowly fired our M16s on semiautomatic. This was considered suppressive fire.

In 1965, a friend of mine, Tom Costello, a student from Villanova, off for the summer, and working his summer job, got press pass tickets from Bob Murphy to a New York Mets game. We got to sit right behind home plate. From that vantage point I was in awe of the speed and energy in Willie Mays' swing.

More than half way up that hill I felt as if Willie Mays' swing had connected with my neck. My strapped on helmet and eye glasses went flying. The thundering noise of a fire fight turned into silence. A white mist surrounded me, and I felt myself levitating and looking down on the verdant hills and mountains of Viet Nam. The world had gone Kafkaesque. I thought that what had to happen had happened. I was no longer of this earth. Many of us who had been in country for the past seven months came to believe that getting out alive was unrealistic. Although it took me some time to piece it together, I had been shot through the neck.

This dream gave way to a cruel epiphany. I began to register the crackling of gun fire. I came to realize that I was staggering around in the middle of a fire fight. I was not dead! Fool, get down.

As I hugged the ground, I realized I was lying next to my M79 man, Joe Ramierez. I remember telling Joe to have the others face outboard. What I did not know was that Lieutenant Brindley was dead, shot through the heart. His last words were (I was told), "Sergeant Johnson, it's your boat."

After learning Lieutenant Brindley was shot, Second Lieutenant Thomas came up the short distance from the base of Hill 800. Apparently, he and other members from Second Platoon were sent over to reinforce us. I was told that as he moved up to the crest of Hill 800 he said, "Lets show them what second platoon's got." At this time he was probably no more than thirty feet from me. Other marines later told me that as he got to the top of Hill 800 he rose to a kneeling position to make observations, and just as he did, a bullet entered one hip and exited the other hip, and then exited his canteen. As his head hit the ground, a bullet went through it.

Lieutenant Folly, who was India Companies Executive Officer, next appeared on top of Hill 800. As I lay alongside of Joe Ramierez, I asked him how I was. He said, "Not bad Skip." Folly, who was not far from him, also asked him how I was. He said, "Pretty bad sir." Then I remember my head being about twelve inches from Joe's utility pants pocket as we clung to that hill. A puff of cloth caught the pocket. Joe immediately grabbed and patted his leg. After a pause, He said "I'm OK." I still maintain that bullets have a unique sound when they pass within inches of your head; perhaps a sonic boom. Earlier in the march, Joe found a corpsman's scissors on the trail and put them in his utility pant's pocket. Five or so weeks, later when Joe and I were back at Khe Sanh, he showed me the scissors and the severe bend the bullet had made in them.

At this time, those of us on top of Hill 800 were hanging on. The North Vietnamese army was positioned on the fingers of Hill 881 North above us. From there they could rake our position from several angles. We were receiving protective fire from our company positions back on Hill 881 South. They were able to support us with that 106 mm recoilless rifle. It was not enough. This time the NVA would not break off the fight. This time they would not melt back into the vast wilderness. This time they sensed their prey was greatly weakened and greatly outnumbered. This time they began an assault to finish us off. Those of us remaining, and in the more forward part of our small perimeter atop Hill 800, heard them moving towards us. This situation could not have been greatly different from that experienced by George Armstrong Custer at the Battle of Little Big Horn and his troops ninety two years earlier.

But then two A-4 Skyhawks at near supersonic speed descended out of the blue and pounced on that which had taken the bait. As I looked up, two memories would remain with me. The first was that of releasing napalm canisters. Canisters falling so close that I felt I might have been able to touch them. Canisters that broiled all that which was advancing before us into holocaust. The second memory is of my head and chest exploding with one thought, life, life, life; I am not going to die today.

Corporal Bryan and his reconnaissance squad, who were on our right flank, took casualties that were as severe as ours. I was informed that after he was shot multiple times, and before he died, he held his squad together and contributed to the coordination of air strikes that saved the survivors lives.

The Skyhawks secured our position, and for the second time that day we evacuated the dead and the wounded. The wounded were flown to Charlie Med at Khe Sanh. From there, I was flown to NSA Da Nang where a doctor examined the entrance and the exit wounds on my neck. He then informed me in his Texas accent, "Another quarter of inch more boy and that would have snapped your neck just where we hanged a man." The next day, I was flown to the USS Sanctuary where I would convalesce for the next nineteen or twenty days. At that time I would make my way back to Dong Ha, the siege at Khe Sanh, and finally Hill 881S. This return took several days as landing zones along the way were relentlessly being hammered by Soviet artillery, rockets, and mortars.

After returning to 881S, I would daily look North from third platoon's trench line to Hill 881N and Hill 800. This was real estate we had paid a dear price for only to give it back. A couple of months later, Marines would take it again only to give it back again. This was not a World War II type of war fought to be won. This was a war with a "Demilitarized Zone," allowing massive numbers of ground troops to move south, but forbidding other ground troops to move north. This was a war with "Rules of Engagement" and international boundaries. This was a war designed, directed, and executed by the theory of "Containment." This war also devolved into one that many Americans and most of the media desperately did not want won.

By June my tour had ended and I was going back to "the world." What we as survivors did not know was that the "siege" would continue for decades. I was made aware of this many times. Not the least of which was in the early 1980's. While applying for a social studies teaching position at the Fifth Avenue School in Northport, New York, the interview committee asked me, "Are you going to use napalm and machine guns on children?" Needless to say I would not be hired there or in any surrounding districts where a system of winks and nodes and a code of "omerta" blacklisted Vietnam survivors. As has been said before and in the words of a Beatles song, "Boy, you're going to carry that weight a long time."

In a country now, filled with "sun shine patriots," wearing shiny red, white ,and blue lapel pins, I occasionally reflect back to Parris Island in 1966 and the prescient words of my and Platoon 201S's Senior Drill Instructor, Staff Sergeant J.J. Hegerty. At the end of one those hot July days that drill instructors love and recruits fear and in the middle of our misery he admonished, "Don't tell me how bad you think you have it now, because a day will come privates when you will be holding a hill with other marines and everybody else in the world will be coming at you trying to kill you."

Semper Fi,
India 3 Bravo Actual

DISCIPLINE

By Craig Tourte
HQ Btry 1/13

Discipline
"Training to Ensure Proper Behavior"

Nine weeks of Boot Camp at the San Diego Marine Corps Recruit Depot was a difficult introduction into military life. I was thankful my cycle was not the usual twelve weeks, but the war was heating up and more Marines (Men) were needed, so the training was on a war time accelerated schedule. Upon graduation we were informed that we were now Marines. I certainly looked like a Marine in my new uniform and I was even told that I could even call myself a Marine. I had taken all of the instruction that was provided by the tough Drill Instructors and survived the rigorous physical and mental training.

I knew that additional training was forthcoming in the Infantry Training Regiment (ITR) at Camp Pendleton but I found solace knowing that the worst was over and now that we were recognized as legitimate Marines we would be treated as such with only physical training difficulties ahead, but I was wrong. Our Training Regiment consisted of the usual testy and slightly crazed and salty of which I was one. Our ITR Sergeant was now called a Troop Handler. A short little guy with a slight lisp, it was difficult to take him seriously when he yelled at us in his rather high pitched voice, we were all a bit taken back when he continued to treat us as recruits. At formation he made the announcement that he wanted the biggest looser to step forward (my words, not his) and he pointed out one individual - I observed that the Troop Handler had made the correct choice. His next instruction was "When he says something, I want you to act as if his orders to you came directly from me." Not suffering fools or idiots lightly, I of course had a slight problem with him which resulted in a minor physical altercation. Out of a hundred or so men in the company why did I have to stick my nose into this other than the fact I may have been an idiot myself or perhaps just a little hardheaded and not yet sufficiently disciplined.

After this minor issue of disobedience on my part, the Troop Handler called me into his office where he ordered me to stand at attention. He then stood directly in front of me and hit me in the chest which his fist knocking me to floor. He then took a posi-

tion over the top of me and pointing his finger at me stated in his now commanding voice, "I told you that when he told you to do something you were to consider it coming directly from me, do you understand?" This incident and lesson in discipline is something I have never forgotten - It was truly "Training to Ensure Proper Behavior" a process I continued to understand explicitly.

MARK OWEN 60 MINUTES INTERVIEW
By Craig Tourte

If you happened to have watched the television show "60 Minutes" on Sunday (November 2, 2014) you'll recall the segment interview of former Navy Seal Mark Owen. The interview focused on the book he had written regarding "The Mission That Killed Osama Bin Laden" titled "No Easy Day" and it's authorization by the government. I met Mark in 2013 - see story below - and will be donating to the auction the book he personally signed to Khe Sanh Veterans.

"No Easy Day" - Signed by author to "Khe Sanh Veterans" September 12, 2013
By Craig W. Tourte

It was an honor and privilege, a few weeks ago, to have had the opportunity to have dinner with Mark Owen - author of "No Easy Day…the firsthand account of the mission that killed Osama Bin Laden." Mark was the team leader and second in line of the squad of Navy Seal Team 6 members who entered the house and climbed the stairs, confronted Bin Laden in the doorway of his bedroom and dispatched him to his reward of 77 virgins. Mark was the guest speaker at the dinner and provided a wonderful PowerPoint presentation of his extensive training - mentioning that he actually had to live in a tent and eat MRE's for a month (an inside joke for Khe Sanh Veterans) - the rescue of Captain Richard Phillips - an about to be released movie staring Tom Hanks in "Captain Phillips" - and a first hand account of his participating in the actual search, training for and dispatch of Bin Laden. His presentation was compelling, inspiring and even at times humorous. I was able to spend a few private minutes with Mark and presented him with a Khe Sanh Challenge Coin and the Fall Winter 2012, Issue 81 of Red Clay Magazine. On the inside cover I wrote - "On behalf of all Khe Sanh Veterans, thank you for your service and sacrifice - Craig W. Tourte."

Mark inscribed a couple of his books for me with a personal note and he was also kind enough to write in one of the books the following: "Khe Sanh Veterans - Thank you for YOUR sacrifice to this country! I'm honored to follow in your footsteps and serve as will!" "One Team, One Fight" "Mark Owen." I'll donate this book, addressed to Khe Sanh Veterans, at the silent auction next year at our reunion in San Diego. "No Easy Day" was a compelling read of which I thoroughly enjoyed and of course once again, it was an honor and privilege to have met Mr. Owen.

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS
Steven Orr
HQ CO RLT 26 COMM

Steven Orr was a young Marine stationed on a plateau in Vietnam surrounded by enemy troops who marched shells, rockets and mortars across his company's position every day like clockwork.

In the years since the spring of 1968 when the 19-year-old left Khe Sanh Combat Base, which the U.S. abandoned after suffering more than 9,000 casualties. Orr has reflected on the men and women who for part of their lives wore a uniform to show devotion and service to their country.

"Veterans Day is a day for everyone to display their patriotism and their love of our flag and our country," Orr said. It's a day to express "appreciation to veterans and to those currently serving in the military for their service and for their sacrifices."

Orr, Lewiston's police chief, is the grand marshal of this year's Veterans Day parade, scheduled for 11:11 a.m. Saturday in downtown Lewiston. The parade's aim this year is to honor Vietnam-era veterans. The parade, which was revived in 2011 after a long absence, has routinely had between 85 and 100 entries.

"The parade is an opportunity for everyone to recognize and to celebrate our veteran-rich region," Orr said. An estimated 6,000 veterans reside in the area, Orr said.

"Our veterans serve stateside and abroad, they serve in times of war and in times of peace, in combat and support roles," said Ron Gray, commander of the Valley Veterans Council, an event organizer.

Saturday's parade took place Tuesday prior to a ceremony at the Idaho State Veterans Home, 821 21st Ave., Lewiston. John Brown of Clarkston, a retired U.S. Navy chief petty officer and Vietnam veteran, will give the address at that event.

The ceremony includes placing of the ceremonial wreath by veterans of the 148th

"We'll be honoring all veterans and all branches," said retired Command Sgt. Maj. Major Boyd L. Pedersen.

Retired U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Kay Kalbfleisch and former Army Staff Sgt. Howard Osterberg, a Korean War veteran, will receive the U.S. Sen. Mike Crapo Spirit of Freedom Award during the event, Gray said.

The ceremony will include representatives from local Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion posts, the Marine Corps League, the Disabled American Veterans and Fleet Reserve and Idaho Army National Guard color detail.

TRIBUTE TO OUR CORPSMAN
Larry McCartney E CO 2/26

Got this AGAIN today and it AGAIN brought tears to my eyes as I think of all the GREAT Corpsmen I had the honor and privilege to serve with through the years; in particular I though of those who were KIA--'Doc' Chuck 'Super Squid' Langenfeld, 'Doc' Jim Delaplane and 'Doc' Joe Lopez--but I also thought of some tremendous FRIENDS now gone, men like Commander John 'Doc' Lancaster and Bob 'Double Doc' Topmiller, as well as Medal of Honor recipient Colonel Don 'Doc' Ballard.
For those of us who heard and used the term 'Corpsman Up' it is a term that remains everlasting in both our hearts and our minds. The truth is that we ask and expect far too much from these young men and women who are called Corpsmen and who like most young Marines were first exposed to the horrors of war in ways most will never forget. Those assigned to the Fleet Marine Forces (FMF) lived the way we did and that of the units to which assigned; they endured and participated in every hardship and disappointment, as well as the praise and glory awarded their units.

The truth is many in Vietnam were eighteen (18) years old and upwards and were just as fearful of being hurt or killed as the rest were and like the rest failed to receive mail for extended periods of time. Like every other Marine in the ground combat units, Corpsmen dug their foxholes with other Marines, ate the same C-rations as the rest, felt the stings of ants, leeches, bees, and scorpions and they also dug their own toilets like the rest of us and they also buried their cans, papers, etc., after cooking and eating their meals. They were just as tired as the rest and at times just as afraid of the unknown as was anyone else. However, Corpsmen still had to check on the sanitation of our locations, as well as tending to the minor and major injuries and ailments suffered sooner or later by all—those aliments and injuries ran the gamut from diarrhea to coughs and colds, from Elephant grass cuts which usually festered into very large and ugly sores, to the usual heat related issues such as heatstroke and on to more serious mental and physical issues to include VD and other issues of that nature.

Our Navy Corpsmen did all that while still carrying the gear needed to care for a platoon or company sized unit as well as carrying their own gear and weapons. Often times they were told to help out the locals with their illnesses, injuries, or wounds and that in turn meant using up precious bandages and medications, which the Corpsman had carried in his pack and medical bags for his fellow Marines. That then caused the Corpsman to pray or ask help from somewhere that he would not run short of needed medications and supplies and just in case and when the next firefight, or mine explosion, or enemy mortars or artillery might happen upon his unit.

To ask the above of a young eighteen (18) to twenty two (22) year old FMF Corpsman is asking much more than many in the field ever realized until much

later and after the fact. After all, that Corpsman is thought by many to be an 'expert' on wounds, or how to handle other major injuries, in addition to which medication might be needed and requested to be used for everything from fleas or hair lice to trench foot or crotch rot or pink eye. While every Corpsman that our units had in Vietnam might not have been quite as astute, courageous, gifted, and the logically-minded individuals as we make them all out to be, I would love to have just one (1) more time to shake their hands and hug them all and to thank them all for they did for so many over the years and especially for those units I was honored to be a part of.

THANKS 'DOC' FOR YOUR SERVICE, BRAVERY AND CARING—A TRIBUTE TO THE FMF CORPSMAN.

BLURB FROM THE WEB SERVICE CONNECTION FOR BRAIN CANCER

By Mack

All:
Just heard yesterday that a friend who I helped gather evidence for a disability claim with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been rated one hundred (100) percent service connected disabled for Glioblastoma Multiform—brain cancer—that is the result of Agent Orange exposure.

When gathering the evidence I was frequently told Glioblastoma Multiform, or any other brain cancer for that matter, can not be service connected for Agent Orange exposure since it is not on 'the list of diseases' connected to Agent Orange exposure. I disagreed, telling them that the illnesses on that list are only those that are currently presumed to be due to Agent Orange exposure, so if the claimant served in Viet Nam and has one (1) of those disease then he/she doesn't have to prove it occurred as a result of military service. However, a veteran can still be service connected for a disease if the claimant proves the nexus—connection—to military service.

The key here was in the diagnosis and testimony of the civilian doctors. In this case we found a Court of Veterans Appeal case—Citation Number 1201988, Decision Date January 19, 2012, Archive Date January 30, 2012, Docket Number 08-31 874, appeal from the VA Regional Office (RO) in Boise, Idaho—which set the precedent for service connection for Glioblastoma Multiform—brain cancer. In addition, we found a professional medical journal article written by doctors in Australia that substantiated the connection between Glioblastoma Multiform and Agent Orange exposure. The doctors examined the prior court decision, the medical evidence, including the medical evidence from Australia, as well as the current case, and wrote that the illness was "most likely" the result of exposure to Agent Orange.

After learning of the decision I learned that Glioblastoma Multiform, as well as several other forms of brain cancer, are on the VA 'watch list' that MAY be added to the presumptive list @ some point in the future

The important point here is that if you have a disease, any disease, make sure your doctors know you are a Viet Nam veteran and ask them if they think the disease is connected to Agent Orange exposure. If you need to provide them with medical evidence then do so. If they believe there is a connection then file a claim, which would include the strongest possible diagnosis the doctors can legitimately make, and force the VA to make a decision. Who knows, that decision just MAY go your way without any problems because of the accumulation of evidence from other claims, or your case just MAY be a part of that accumulation of evidence

Good luck, God Bless and Semper Fidelis!!!

VIETNAM STRIKES GOLD: THERE'S NO LOOKING BACK, AS THE VIETNAMESE CHARGE INTO THE 21ST CENTURY.

October 5, 2014

By Jeff Browne

I got in a little hometown jam, so they put a rifle in my hands, sent me off to Vietnam, to go and kill the yellow man.

American singer Bruce Springsteen

You think yellow, I say gold; it's the color of my real skin.

Vietnamese singer Pham Quyen Anh

When President Barack Obama took a moment in his first inaugural address to honor our war veterans, he cited four battles: Concord, Gettysburg, Normandy and Khe Sanh.

Khe Sanh? That's a village in central Vietnam where U.S. Marines repelled a furious assault early in 1968. The victory cost thousands of lives and obliterated the countryside. You might say we Americans won the battle there but lost the war. Or did we? If our purpose was to stop communism, you have to wonder.

In Khe Sanh, coffee plants have risen from the ashes. And today, amazingly, Vietnam is the world's second-largest exporter of coffee, thanks to hundreds of thousands of determined farmers.

Thirty years ago, Vietnam was starving. Today, it is feeding the world as a leading exporter of cashews, whitefish, tapioca, pepper, fruit and rice.

Vietnam makes shoes for Nike, chips for Intel, cameras for Canon, motorcycles for Honda and smartphones for Samsung. Vietnamese are customers of Briggs & Stratton motors, Harley-Davidson motorcycles, Manpower staffing services, General Electric medical devices and Kohler sinks.

Vietnamese consumers shop at the Gap, Banana Republic and Coach. They drink Pepsi, Coke, Miller beer and Starbucks coffee — and within a month after McDonald's opened there this spring, the Vietnamese had ordered 61,980 Big Macs.

McDonald's is an emblem of the triumph of capitalism over communism. The franchise owner is a Vietnamese-American named Henry Nguyen of Chicago. He is married to the CEO of an investment bank and the daughter of Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, who oversees the Communist Party's determined, and sometimes crude, efforts to stay in control. Vietnam's pre-eminent corporate power couple and its communist government are family.

In some ways, Vietnam's youthful, ingenious entrepreneurs overshadow corporate royalty. Consider Flappy Bird. A few months ago, this maddening game was the most downloaded smartphone game worldwide, the creation of a software engineer named Dong Nguyen who lives with his parents in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam.

Mr. Nguyen was bringing in $50,000 a day in ad revenue, but withdrew Flappy Bird from the market because he had grown weary of the notoriety. He wanted to get his life back.

Vietnam is full of Dong Nguyens — hundreds of thousands of modest, brainy entrepreneurs transforming their country.

That's what Google software engineer Neil Fraser discovered on a recent visit. He found that Vietnamese 11th-graders could pass Google's notoriously difficult interview test, and third-graders knew how to use Microsoft Word — in English. Over the next generation, these kids will showcase their potential. A recent report noted Vietnam's transition from col-

lectivism to capitalism produced 170 people worth more than $30 million. What's interesting is who reported it: the official newspaper of the Communist Party, which apparently deems capitalism as important as ideology in a country with bold global aspirations.

Vietnam is an entrepreneurial frontier. It's the 13th most-populous nation — larger than every country in Europe except Russia. Theoretically, Vietnam has the potential to be the Japan of the 21st century, which eventually could make an investment in Vietnam grow 10,000 percent. So far this year, Vietnam's stock market is up about 20 percent.

Even so, while global investors see gold, many American still see yellow — the color of peril, caution and cowardice. In Vietnamese culture, yellow and gold are the same — the color of power, prosperity and success.

Vietnam is a golden opportunity. The promise arises from a confident, forward-looking and optimistic culture — a curious blend of Buddhist, Confucian, Christian and communist values. That cultural complexity is embodied in a young man named Huan.

I encountered Huan one afternoon in Hanoi. As I was sitting on a park bench, he approached me to practice his English. I invited him to sit down, and we talked.

His story was familiar. Huan grew up on a rice farm in the rural north of Vietnam, and he studied hard to earn admission to a university in Hanoi. Sometimes he walked to the old quarter to get an odd job at a shop or a restaurant to earn money for food and incidentals.

As we were talking, a frail, elderly woman limped up to us and held out her hand. I barely noticed her, but Huan gave her his complete attention. He asked her a question and then pulled out his wallet and gave the woman its contents, a single note of Vietnamese currency worth about a dollar.

As she moved on, I asked him why he gave her his only money, and he said, "Because she needs it more than I do."

He realized I was puzzled and added, "In Vietnam, we have great respect for old people, poor people, the less fortunate."

A few minutes later, as we parted ways, I handed Huan about $3 for dinner.

He seemed confused and said, "I cannot accept that."

I said, "Why not? You need it more than I do."
He replied, "My father taught me never to accept money that I did not earn."

Then Huan walked into the streets of Hanoi with attributes many Vietnamese possess in abundance: pride, confidence and an empty wallet.

Culturally, Vietnamese also seem to have a short memory. Not long ago, I joined an educator from Ho Chi Minh City on a tour of Wisconsin's Capitol building in Madison. After visiting the legislative chambers, we walked outside on the deck at the top of the rotunda.

There, we faced three flags blowing in the wind: American, Wisconsin and POW/MIA. He had never seen the black flag, so I explained it was a reminder that some Americans who fought in Vietnam are still missing.

"In Vietnam," he said, "we do not dwell on the past."

And he added, wryly, "I just learned the Wisconsin motto."

Forward.

Jeff Browne is president of Vietnomics LLC, an investment consultancy, and co-founder of templehillsonline.com, a social enterprise helping Vietnamese farmers develop specialty coffee. He's based in Elm Grove, Wisconsin.

ANOTHER SMALL WORLD STORY

By Craig Tourte

"As attractive and charismatic as he was, there was a side of my husband that surfaced night after night in his sleep. He was plagued with the terrible nightmares about his time in the Marines…Many nights I was up changing the sheets wet with sweat, which poured from memories he forced himself to turn off while awake. Like many damaged war heroes…he had received the Purple Heart…he clung to the pride of having been a Marine. Then he drank to forget what the war had done to him."

Who amongst us here hasn't experienced at least some of the above described symptoms. Difficult to explain to others and certainly not discussed with outsiders, after all it has been so along ago you'd think "we'd just get over it" as the too often repeated and insulting phrase is directed towards us during casual conversations by the ignorant. I was impressed that the young wife making this statement understood and recognized the demons her newly married husband was experiencing and that she attempted to understand and was able to offer support for a condition, which at that time was not recognized nor discussed but rather ignored and most often misunderstood. Perhaps understandable, since the quote was made by the caring wife who describes her World War II Veteran husband and his condition in 1951.

I was reminded a few POST down that Lee Marvin had been a Marine, this little quote above was written by Lee's first wife Betty Ebeling in her book "Tales of a Hollywood Housewife" and notes the many struggles Lee had with PTSD, although there was not a name for this condition until many years later. Lee Marvin served in the Marine Corps from 1942-1945 with the 24th Marine Corps Regiment and was wounded during the battle of Saipan. Her statement about Lee's condition, those many years ago, is synonymous with the condition presently experience by so many veterans, regardless of when or where the served.

ARRIVING AT KHE SANH

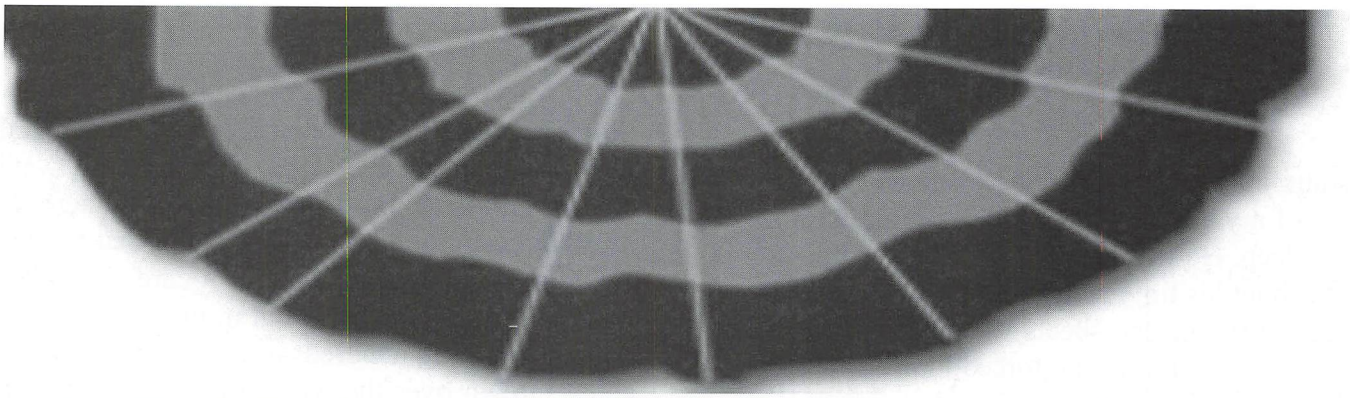
By Doc Jim Thomas

So 47 years ago, I arrived at Khe Sanh! I remember looking around at the GREEN mountains, waving elephant grass, and a few tents here and there. I remember seeing a helium filled Santa tied to the razor wire floating high without a care. I wondered why the enemy didn't snipe at it, just to irritate us! I remember seeing hundreds of fruit cakes from home being thrown over the wire to the enemy, but they probably didn't eat them either!

I remember the word of the day as more info came to us, attack probable, attack expected, start building bunkers! Fill sandbags. I've got a Doctorate in filling Sandbags! A Corpsman named Nick, & I drove all over the base on our mule, looking for bunker material! I remember walking around with jars of malaria pills, handing them out. Marines, thinking they could out fox the Doc would act like they took them, but I would force the issue, and an old Gunny watching me, said Good job Doc! That still makes me smile! I remember watching the fog roll in, like trying to see through a wad of cotton. A spotter plane missed the approach, circled around and approached again, setting down, and then the fog covering him just that fast!

I was so green, and scared that I wouldn't survive! I hung on every word of the Corpsman who had been in country for seven, eight months. Their war stories both intrigued, and frightened me. A warning from a Corpsman to stay away from Rockets, & Machine gunners would in fact create a friendship that last to this day! The hardships of Khe Sanh brought more than heartache! It brought friendships with Tommy, Big John, Russ, David, Kutz, Dennis, Mike, John, and many other men who are honorable warriors that I have such love and respect for! So on this date in December of 2014, I wish you a very Merry Christmas!

Doc Jim Thomas



THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
CPL Carlos Marcono USMC K CO 3/4 KIA 19 Apr 68 KSCB	Daniel F. King K CO 3/4
LCPL Louis Lowe USMC K CO 3/4 KIA 14 May 65 Hill 689	Daniel F. King K CO 3/4
LCPL Randall Davis USMC K CO 3/4 KIA 04 Jun 68 Hill 861	Daniel F. King K CO 3/4
Robert Crabb USMC Golf Co 2/26 Passed Away	Dermott Barry Golf CO 2/26
All Those Special Forces Who Served At Lang Vei	Lawrence Cooper C CO 5Th S/F
PFC Phillip A, Van Deusen USMC A Btry 1/13 KIA 07 Jun 67	Thomas Soerensen A Btry 1/13
PFC Gale E. Gotti USMC A Btry 1/13 KIA 07 Jun 67	Thomas Soerensen A Btry 1/13
2 Lt John P. Bobo USMC I CO 3/9 KIA 30 Mar 67	Thomas Soerensen A Btry 1/13
Ron Wilson USMC Whiskey Btry 1/13 Passed Away 19 Nov 14	Willie Roe Yates Whiskey Btry 1/13
Billy Ray Moffett USMC Whiskey Btry 1/13 Hill 861 Passed Away	Willie Roe Yates Whiskey Btry 1/13
LCPL David E. Hornby USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 03 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
SGT Molimau A. Tela USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 13 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
LCPL Jose Pacheco USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 13 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
LCPL Alexander McGlothlin USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 13 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
SGT Robert Vaden USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 14 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
CPL Daniel B. Duffy Jr. USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 24 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
PFC Victor Morales USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 01 Aug 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
LCPL Bobby L. Eaton USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 07 Aug 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
PFC Charles L. Roberts USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 09 Nov 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
PFC Ronnie Bintliff USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 09 Nov 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
PVT William Devore USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 28 Nov 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
PVT Richard Brandt USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 07 Dec 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
LCPL Michael Baronowski USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 29 Nov 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
LCPL Tom MacMillan USMC Kilo CO 3/26 KIA 06 Mar 68	Charles Lemke Kilo CO 3/26
LCPL Ken Stanciu USMC Kilo CO 3/26 KIA 06 Mar 68	Charles Lemke Kilo CO 3/26
Capt.Walter J. Egger USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44 Arty Quads-Fifties
GySgt John J. Grohman USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44 Arty Quads-Fifties
1Lt Paul W. Bush USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44 Arty Quads-Fifties
LCPL Stephen C. Shannon USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44 Arty Quads-Fifties
PFC Bennie J. Sisson USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44 Arty Quads-Fifties
Sgt Arnold J. Ferrari USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 31 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44 Arty Quads-Fifties
Capt Robert Lee Sevell USMC HMM-262 KIA 28 Feb 68	Col William Barba HMM-262 , VMO-6

GOD BLESS THEM ALL

OBIT

KHE SANH VETERAN
REV. WILLIAM R. HAMPTON STS
CAPTAIN,UNITED STATES
NAVAL RESERVE
CHAPLAIN 3/26
8 OCTOBER 1935 - 12 NOVEMBER 2014

SERVICE OF MORNING PRAYER WAS HELD SATURDAY 6 DECEMBER 2014 AT GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH 2108 N. EUCLIDAVE. UPLAND, CA 91784.

William Ray Hampton, known to many as 'Pastor Hampton', 'PrH', or 'Bill', was many things to many people-son, brother, Principal, Chaplain, Pastor, swim-instructor, YMCA Director, organist, mission fundraiser, mentor, and friend - all of it done in the service of the Lord.

Born October 8, 1935 to Hazel and Merle Hampton he grew up in Inglewood, CA. He was introduced to the Lutheran Church when h is mother enrolled him at Chapel of Peace Lutheran School because the local public schools did not teach phonics at the time. From there he attended Inglewood High School ('53) where he learned to play the organ. After high school he attended USC, graduating with a BS in Education ('57). While at USC he earned his keep by playing the organ at the Culver City Roller Rink, playing the catchy skate-tunes of the era while simultaneously studying for his classes.

This life long Trojan then went on to Pacific Lutheran Seminary at Berkeley ('61). While at seminary he attended Naval Officer-Candidate School and was commissioned an Ensign in the Chaplain Corps, USNR in 1959. He was ordained a Lutheran Pastor in 1961 (ALC), taking his first call as the assistant-pastor/principal at First Lutheran School, Pomona (1961-67).

He was then called to active duty to serve as a Chaplain, first assigned to the 3rd Bn 26Th Marines, with duty in Vietnam (siege of Khe Sanh, and in Quang Tri province), and then as the Chaplain for the Officer Candidate School, Newport, RI (1967-70). At the completion of his active duty he returned to Southern California as a graduate student at Cal Poly, Pomona (1970-72).In 1970 he became the Interim Pastor at Hope Lutheran Church, Mojave. In the 1980's he added two more preaching stations to his Sunday schedule with stops in Boron and Lake Los Angeles driving his ubiquitous Lincoln Continental or the "other" black car every Sunday morning, making the 225 mile round-trip for over forty years. Leading services in the liturgical tradition, PrH rarely missed a Sunday in those 44 years of serving his flock in the desert, conducting his last service on 19 October, 2014.

Pastor Hampton became the founding Principal of Lutheran High School in La Verne in 1972. He personally recruited the freshman and sophomore classes that began with the school in the fall of 1973. Pastor Hampton was instrumental in developing the curriculum that included the Naval Junior Officer Reserve Training Corp program in an addition to establishing the swimming and lifesaving class as a requirement for all students. Under his direction, in the fall of 1976, the new campus was constructed and the school moved to its permanent home in La Verne. In 1984 he oversaw the building of the new gymnasium.

Throughout his years at Lutheran High School he provided strong and caring direction to the many graduates and teachers.

In 1985 he became the General Director of the Pomona Valley YMCA. Through his steady leadership the YMCA grew and once again became an integral part of youth development in the valley through the programs of the Pomona YMCA. While serving as the General Director he also developed the Boy's and Girl's Gym Swim Club and the Young Men's Fitness Club. Through his community fund raising efforts he was able to provide sponsored membershi ps to many of the local youth that enabled them to participate in the aquatics and youth programs of the YMCA. Pastor Hampton retired from the YM CA in 1998 but was far from being retired.

In "retirement," Pastor continued to make his trips to the desert for church services each Sunday. He also began to travel extensively for mission trips and church conferences. He continued in his role as teacher, mentor, tutor, pastor and friend. He volu nteered his time to teach Greek and Latin (and the organ) to students at a local Lutheran School and to those who made the Sunday trip with him to the de-

sert. His passion for music and playing the organ continued through his invitations to friends to join him at his home for organ concerts followed by dessert. He played and recorded the hymns for his weekly church services on his Johannus organ. He also volunteered as chaplain for the local Civil Air Patrol.

Affectionately known as the "desert father," Pr. Hampton was a tireless evangelist for the Society of the Holy Trinity. Hardly a California chapter retreat took place without his bringing one or more guests-sometimes a Lutheran pastor he sensed might be blessed by the Society, often an ecumenical visitor. His dry sense of humor and his wisdom were a blessing to the California chapter.

Pastor organized financial support for a number of Lutheran ministries in Indonesia that provided life-saving medical care, scholarships, and pastoral care to needy Indonesian children and their families, an effort that culminated in the establishment of an official presence of the St. Louis-based Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod in Indonesia.

In another part of the world, Pastor Hampton led the effort to provide the headquarters/cathedral of the Lutheran Church in Kenya with a first class organ, hymnals for the congregation, and vestments for the pastors, so that they might be a beacon of liturgical worship in Africa.

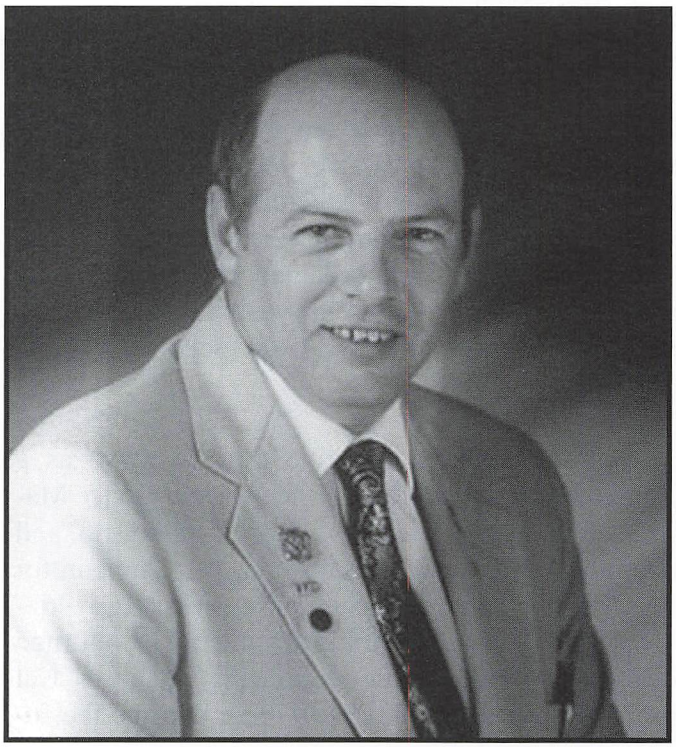
He served 30 years of commissioned service in the USNR, retiring in 1989 with the rank of Navy Captain. His reserve duty was usually completed on Wednesday afternoons, putting on his Khakis and driving to El Toro MCAS or Camp Pendleton to visit "his" Marines while also taking along one of his protege's - a few of who ended up joining the U.S. Marine Corps or Navy. Pastor Hampton's personal decorations include a Bronze Star (w/ Valor) and a Purple Heart.

OBIT

KENNETH D. WILSON
USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN
WHISKEY BTRY 1/13 4.2 MORTARS

Kenneth Du-Wayne Wilson, age 66 years old passed away November 19, 2014 at home in San Antonio, Texas surrounded by his family. He was born at Jacksonville, Illinois, August 04, 1948, second oldest son to Ellis and Lucille Wilson of Macomb, ILL. He was married to Jeni Comstock December 19, 1970. He is survived by his wife Jeni, children Maggie (husband John) Shaffer of Wasilla, AK, Mandy Walpole of San Antonio, and Steve (wife Jennifer) Wilson of San Antonio. And by his six grandchildren, Elizabeth, Ian, Kaeden, Benjamin, Garren and Clara. Then by his Sister Bev Lawyer of Industry and Brother Ray Wilson of Quincy. Also surviving are his nieces and nephews Carol, Abbey, Samantha, Jeremy, Tyler, and Colin. He was preceded in death by his parents Ellis and Lucille Wilson and brother, Eugene. He proudly served in the United States Marine Corps. Prior to moving to Texas was a salesman for Frito Lay in the Macomb area.

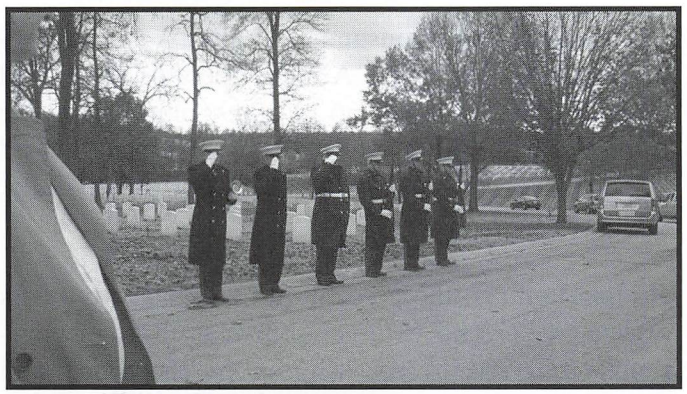
A memorial service was held Sunday November 23, 2014 at 3 p.m. at Mission Park North Funeral Homewith Chaplain John Edwards officiating.



OBIT

PATRICK J. HOPKINS "HOPPIE" USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN H&S CO 1/26 81MM

Hopkins, Patrick J. 68, Creve Coeur, MO, November 16, 2014. Beloved son of June Hopkins nee O'Dowd and the late James W. Hopkins. Dear brother of James D. (Chris) Hopkins and Sharon (Patrick) Holden. A proud war Veteran, Patrick served in Vietnam as a radio operator with Alpha



Company, 1st Battalion, 26 Marine Regiment. He was a participant in the largest battle of the war, the 77 Day Siege of Khe Sanh, serving with the 81mm mortar section. Military honors include the Combat Infantry Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnamese Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal and a Rifle Marksman Badge. He was a member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association where he was a generous contributor to the Khe Sanh Veterans Scholarship Fund. Services: Graveside service on Monday, November 24, 2014, 1:30 p.m. at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to KSV Scholarship Fund c/o Tom Eichler, President Khe Sanh Vets, 3221 N. Opal Ave. Chicago, IL 60634

PATRICK "HOPPIE" HOPKINS, GENEROUS TO THE END

By Dennis Mannion

TRIBUTES

Ten days before the reunion I received a phone call from Pat who was a patient at the VA hospital at Jefferson Barracks His speech was slow, deliberate, and emotional. He and I had never met in person, but we connected because of this Message Board and Red Clay. He was calling to ask if I was going to San Diego (I was), and he asked if I'd do him a favor. He had planned to attend this reunion -- a first for him -- but had been diagnosed with lung cancer some months back. Despite extensive medical treatments the cancer had spread to other parts of his body, and he was pretty sure that he might not ever be able to attend any future reunions. He wanted me to take his bank/credit card information with me in order to facilitate a contribution of $500.00 to the KS Vets Scholarship fund.

He said it was his way of giving a little of himself back to the organization which had given him so much pride and comradeship. I brought all his Master Card information and was able to make a transfer of funds right at the Registration Desk. One second the $500.00 was in Pat's bank in St. Louis and the next second it was in our account. I called Pat's mobile from SD to tell him the news but it went to voice mail. I did the same upon my return home with the same results.

Joan and I got back to CT Sunday night and Monday eve his sister called me to say that Pat had passed away over the weekend. Details about the funeral are pending -- I helped her with the wording

about his USMC info for the obit -- but he will be buried in Jefferson Barracks Cemetery in the coming days. No wake, no service, just the Military Burial. Pat was never married and had no children.

He was part of the 81mm mortar section with the late Jack Corbett. A few years back Pat sent me a CD that had a 10 minute video on it. During the siege, someone sent him an 8mm movie camera and he had all that film transferred to a digital format. Amazing images of his section of the base: living conditions, the trash & debris, wreckage of aircraft, incredible air strikes (following the bombs down) as well as napalm drops, etc. In one short sequence he pans past Jack's Dickens Ave sign propped up on sandbags.

Pat, to his regret, never made to a reunion, but he has moved on to the greatest reunion of them all. I hope he rests in the peace and happiness he so justly earned. S/F. Dennis

RECENT NEWS ARTICLE PATRICK HOPKINS

VA chaplains part of 'remarkable work' being done for patients

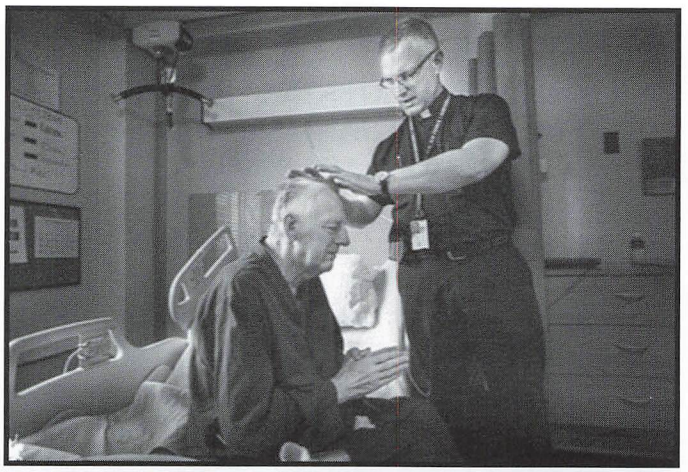
By Joseph Kenny , St Louis Review

Forty-six years ago Patrick J. Hopkins served in Vietnam as a U.S. Marine hunkered down during the siege of the Khe Sanh base. His recall of the horror he experienced there led in recent years to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Hopkins was being treated for cancer and for the symptoms of PTSD at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care System's Jefferson Barracks Division in south St. Louis County. A big help for him was visits from Father Stuart King. As the nation celebrates Veterans Day on Tuesday, Nov. 11, Father King and other Catholic chaplains at the VA hospitals in St. Louis make a difference in the lives of veterans such as Hopkins brutal battle

BRUTAL BATTLE

On Jan. 21, 1968, the North Vietnamese Army launched an attack, and the siege of Khe Sanh began. Fighting continued nonstop for the next 77 days in one of the most brutal battles of the war, marked by a massive artillery bombardment. Steady



Father King Prays With Patrick Hopkins

shellfire every day brought new casualties and tension as about 20,000 enemy soldiers surrounded the base.

Hopkins' regiment of U.S. Marines held its position, and the U.S. "won that battle," he said, noting that "very bad things happened there." He showed emotion discussing a patrol of 38 men that went out and only a handful returned. Five weeks went by before the bodies could be recovered.

He recalled the thousands of airstrikes, artillery mortars fired and more. A radio operator, he served in the Marines from 1966 to 1969, returning home from Vietnam in November of 1968. "I was lucky," he said. "I was never wounded, shot or anything. Shelled a lot."

He had tinnitus, the perception of sound in the ears or head where no external source is present, commonly referred to as "ringing in the ears" and caused by exposure to excessively loud sound. He traced his cancer to exposure to Agent Orange. The PTSD happened later in his life, perhaps triggered by documentaries he saw on the war, his cancer or the health concerns and deaths of those with whom he served in the war. "I didn't lose an arm or a leg. Sometimes I feel guilty for that." Later, he noted: "I'm just a guy who did his job."

DOCTOR OF THE GOLDEN GATE

Father King prayed for Hopkins. They said the "Our Father," and the priest asked that Hopkins find peace, healing and a sense of God's presence. Father King also expressed thanks for the feelings Hopkins shared.

The patient nicknamed Father King, "the Doctor of the Golden Gate." Father King and other chaplains have "buoyed my spirits quite a bit," he said. "How wonderful it's been to have priests come to see me here and at (the other VA hospital) John Cochran. And laypeople from parishes have come out and given me Communion."

Hopkins also mentioned Father James Gray, a hospital chaplain who visited him while he was at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, where he had surgery. Hopkins was a member of St. Monica Parish in Creve Coeur,. where, as a child, he was an altar server. He ran a restaurant in Creve Coeur from 1975-91. He then was a car salesman before retiring in 2009. He had been caring for his 97-year-old mother, a devout Catholic, since then.

He had surgery for a brain tumor about seven weeks ago, but the cancer returned. He was at John Cochran before coming to Jefferson Barracks and said that the staff of the VA have "done amazing things and give so much of themselves. You'd think they're related to me." His approach was to "put his faith in the Lord and try to come back from this," he said.

SUPPORT

As Father King entered the building to see Hopkins, a World War II veteran was getting a ride home after being discharged from the hospital. The man turned to the chaplain, thanked him for his visits and said, "I'll never forget you."

Earlier, a Vietnam veteran, Larry Rice, praised the priest and another Catholic chaplain. "Father has been there supporting me, praying for me," said Rice, a U.S. Army vet from Wichita, Kan. "When you need help, they're there for you."

Rice had surgery on his spine. He said he is recovering well and said the VA has done "remarkable work." After Father King prayed with him and gave him a blessing, Rice smiled and said, "That's my daily jump-start."

Father King, a lieutenant colonel and wing chaplain in the Air Force Reserve with the 932 Airlift Wing at Scott Air Force Base, is the only full-time Catholic chaplain at the Jefferson Barracks and Chochran hospitals. Four priests of the Archdiocese of St. Louis serve part-time: Father George Brennan at John Cochran, Father John Schneider at Jefferson Barracks and Msgr. Kevin Callahan and Father Richard Rath at both hospitals. They serve with the endorsement of Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services.

"Being a priest at our VA hospitals is demanding, but extremely rewarding, particularly as we offer the sacraments of penance, anointing and the Eucharist to veterans at the end of their lives," Father King said. "We also sit with them and provide comfort and reassurance, as they prepare to die, and as they recover from various illnesses and other medical conditions. We celebrate Masses for veterans, their families and staff members six days each week in one of the two hospitals."

Fourteen Catholic volunteers, including several from St. Francis Xavier (College Church) Parish, assist as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Another volunteer transports patients who use wheelchairs to Mass at Jefferson Barracks. The volunteers have extensive training and get credentials with the VA every year.

Father King, who grew up in Michigan, was ordained in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, La., in May 2012. He is married and a convert, having first served in the Army and Air Force as a Protestant chaplain, beginning in 1994. He was the first married man to be co-sponsored by the military archdiocese as part of their co-sponsorship program for seminarians. (There have been married Roman Catholic priests since 1980, when the Church said that Protestant clergymen who became Catholic priests could stay married to their wives.) He lives in Queen of All Saints Parish in Oakville with his wife, Bettina, and three children, ages 10, 4 and 9 months.

SPIRITUALITY IMPORTANT

Rev. Robert Collingwood, chief of chaplain services for the VA St. Louis Health Care System, said that in the past 10 years a shift has been made to a holistic approach to patient care.

"Particularly with veterans, it's important that you look at their whole life," said Rev. Collingwood, a

United Methodist clergyman. "The VA has taken the approach that one's spirituality is a part of that whole person. So they look at the physical, mental, psychological and spiritual as well. We are not here to convert anyone but to help them to tap into and use the spiritual resources they have."

Some veterans have what's called a "moral injury" when they are required in combat to do something that goes against their moral upbringing, or witness such acts. Chaplains are particularly helpful in dealing with those situations and helping the veteran heal.

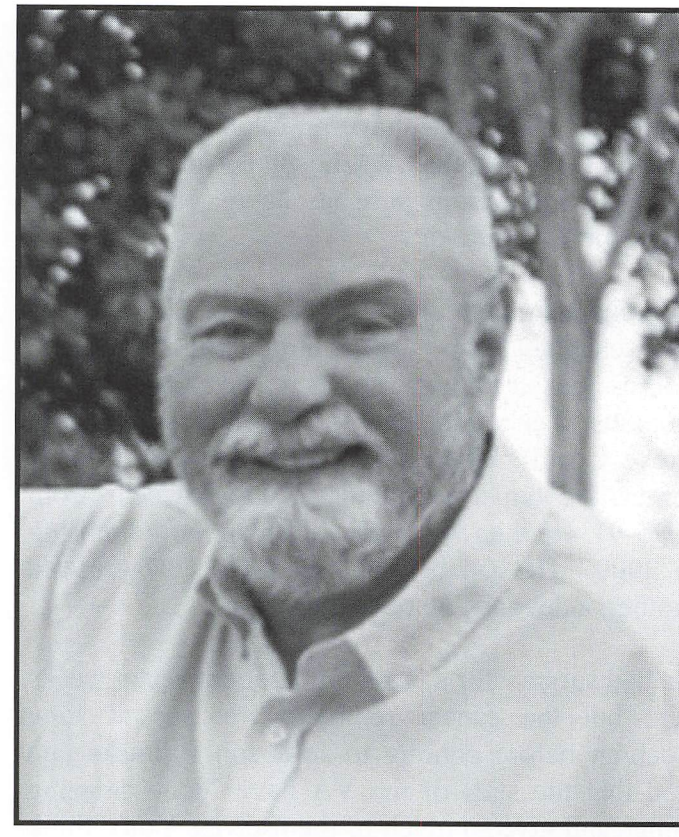
Some veterans have attended chapel services and it brings a memory of a safe place, close to God. "We have people who return to church after coming to the chapel for the first time in years," he said. "We're a bridge for them, getting them connected with spiritual or religious resources in the community."

OBIT

BILLY R. MOFFETT
USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN
WHISKEY BTRY 1/13
4.2 MORTARS HILL 861

Billy Ray Moffett, 70 year old, Checotah resident, passed away on Sunday, December 7, 2014 in Eufaula. He was born on Saturday, August 12, 1944 in Henryetta, Oklahoma to William Eugene and Venie J. (Parker) Moffett. Billy was raised in Henryetta where he graduated from High School. He entered the United States Marines on Friday, January 3, 1966. While in the Marines, Billy Ray earned the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Vietnam Service Medal Rifle Expert Badge and the presidential Unit Citation.

He was honorably discharged on Friday, January 3, 1969. After being discharged, Billy worked in Tulsa at Harding Glass, delivered Tulsa newspapers and was a certified security guard thru Pinkerton and worked as security guard at Wabash Metals in Checotah. There was a book written about him and his fellow warriors titled, "Last Stand At The Khe Sanh." He loved fishing, drinking coffee with his

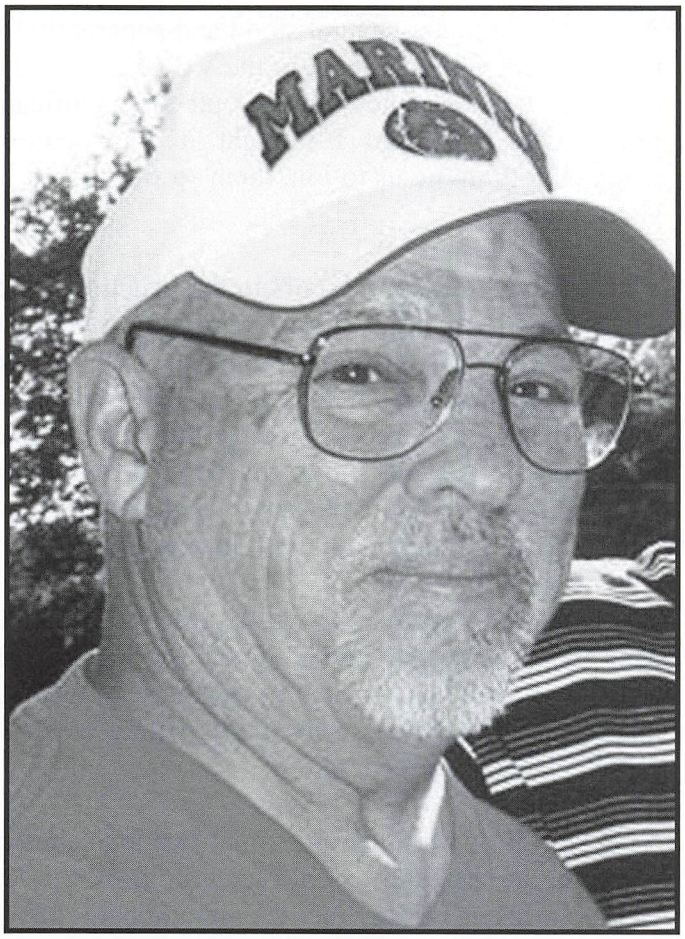


buddies at Our Place Café, scenic drives, time at home and loved the Florida beaches, but the biggest smile on Billy's face was when he entered the city of New Orleans on our vacations. Billy was preceded in death by his parents, brothers, Tommy and Jimmy Moffett, 2 infant children and his wife Connie who passed away on Wednesday, December 12, 2009. He is lovingly survived by his fiance' Brenda Rafael of the home; daughters, Carrie Jean Moffett and Kateryna Moffett Kunytska and her husband Alexander of Ukrain; grandchildren, Brittany Wright of Tulsa and Nash Wright of Claremore and Nicholas Kunytska of Ukrain . He is also survived by his sister, Carol Thompson of Henryetta; brother -in-law, Dennis Elledge and his wife Elizabeth of Warner and sister-in-law, Pat Lee of Tulsa.

OBIT

LAWRENCE E. BOSWORTH CWO-4 USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN C/O CAC-OSCAR –3

Larry (aka "Boz" & "Gunner") was assigned early in 1967 to Oscar Company at Khe Sanh as part of the "Plank Crew." He proceeded to help establish Oscar Co., and was the squad leader of two of its CAPs, serving as NCOIC of O-3 until Oct. 1967.

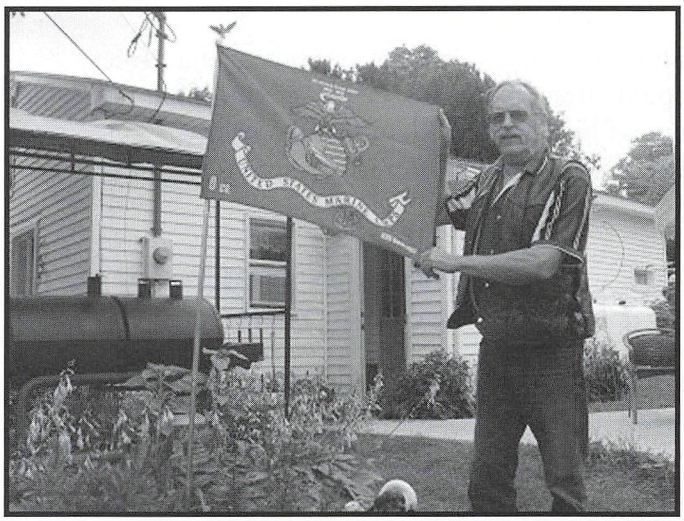


27 June, 1967, Oscar Company was ordered by the Marine command at Khe Sanh to send a patrol to investigate suspected rocket and mortar launch sites spotted earlier by an aerial observer that were believed to be the origin of an NVA rocket and mortar attack on the Khe Sanh base which had occurred just after midnight of the night before. This patrol resulted in the ambush of our patrol on Hill 689 and the deaths of most of the patrol. (See CAC Oscar History)

Larry was a good NCO who cared a great deal for his men's welfare. He told me in various Es and phone conversations that he greatly regretted sending that patrol out, as he knew it was a mistake at the time, as they all knew the area was "hot" and that the CAP unit was not big enough or well enough supported to make a combat patrol of that type, which was better suited to an infantry company. However, while LT Sermeus agreed, he was also under orders.

OBIT

STEVE GREEN USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, CAP -OSCAR 2



Steve A. Green joined the Marines in 1965, and was assigned to SU #5 in February 1967, thus becoming one of the "plank crew" of Combined Action Company Oscar. He was assigned to O-2 at Khe Sanh, and served under SGT Spellman, leaving in August 1967, prior to the Tet assault and Siege.

Steve finished his tour in the Marines in 1970.

Unfortunately, due to the years and his illness, Steve didn't remember a lot about his tour, though he recalled the Bru fondly, as most of us do.

He did remember some incidents, such as setting fire to the plantation by accident during a fire-fight in May 1967, when a fellow CAP Marine named Peter (he was unsure of the last name but it may have been "Pate") popped a flare that started a blaze. He also recalled a party thrown by a Bru chief to celebrate the curing of his malaria-stricken daughter by our medics.

Steve contracted cancer and took a full course of treatment for it, stemming the first assault, but was unfortunately struck again in 2014 by a much more aggressive and broader attack. Given the slender options, and with little to no chance for successful treatment, Steve decided to forego the debilitating treatment, and instead got his affairs in order. I spoke to Steve by phone on several occasions as his illness progressed (including a few days before his death) and he remained stoical, brave, and composed right up to the end. Despite his advancing illness and its severity, Steve survived for one more Marine Corps Birthday. He will be missed, but remembered, at the next Birthday, and I hope all of you will join me in raising a glass to his memory.

Steve enjoyed working on bikes and trikes, and could often be found in his garage tinkering with one of his "projects" like the one below
He is survived by his wife Carolyn.

A REUNION STORY
By Craig Tourte

I don't know how it started but some of us had heard those attending the graduation ceremony at MCRD would be offered VIP seating in the stands next to the Officer/VIP reviewing stand located in the very center of the grandstand area. Only the most important and those being recognized would be invited to sit in this area as it was the most advantageous location to view all the pageantry. Many loaded up in the busses at the hotel that would transport them to MCRD for this very auspicious occasion. Tom Horchler, who has some issues with mobility and was not sure if he wanted to sit and stay for an expected length of time thought it best that he just drive his own vehicle and asked if I would like to accompany him.

With our Khe Sanh shirts and reunion identification tag handing around our neck we found our way to the rear gate of the recruit depot and were waive through as we showed our identification and told the guard we were simply going to the museum. I told Tom that I thought it was a good place to park as it had several disabled parking places. The hundreds of vehicles heading to the parking area on the grinder for the graduation parade were waived to the long line of vehicles being inspected to a lane on the right while we simple followed behind a delivery truck in our own lane on the left.

We parked next to the museum and walked across the grinder to the middle of the grandstand area through a small opening monitored by what appeared to be drill instructors and sat in the grandstand to the left (north) of the VIP area where we assumed the K/S membership had been assigned seating, especially since not one person asked us who we were or directed us to sit at any other location. Looking around there were a few other Khe Sanh Veterans in their shirts sitting in the area but certainly not as many as those attending the reunion. After a few minutes several stood and apparently by invitation moved over to sit in the VIP area with the colonels, generals and other people of significant importance. Tom and I thought it was nice of whomever to invite us to join them so we walked in and sat down.

As I was walking up the stairs to the bench I was to sit on I spotted a rather attractive lady in a military uniform which displayed one gold star. I went up to her and thanked her for inviting us and told her it was an honor to be recognized for our service. She stood up, smiled and shook my hand. I was quite impressed with myself but sorry at that moment I didn't have a challenge coin to present to her.

The location of our seating was a perfect location to hear and observe the ceremony and the band stood right in front of us while they performed. We felt the Khe Sanh Veterans were really getting well deserved respect and recognition

After all the introductions, pontification, music, marching around and verbal recognition by the Lt. Colonel Master Of Ceremonies the graduation concluded and Tom and I walked towards the area where we observed the busses parked. As we reached the busses we learned that the Khe Sanh Veterans had in fact been seated at the very end of the grandstand and their view was less than ideal.

I want you to know that Tom Horchler and I duly represented all of you while we sat with the other VIP's, the general, colonels and the many others of importance and completely enjoyed

A CORPSMAN AT KHE SANH

By LCDR David C. Kleinberg
Former HM-3 K CO 3/9
Marine Corps Gazette Oct 2004

An intense firefight against the North Vietnamese at Khe Sanh as seen through the eyes of a corpsman.

On 24 June 1969, I was just doing my job as a grunt hospital corpsman 3d class (HM3) assigned to Company K, 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, 3d Marine Division in the hills near Khe Sanh. I provided medical care to the Marines in my company. This particular day was somewhat different. Another day of humping the bush had finally ended. The rumor going around the hill was that we had been here before, and from the looks of the hill, it was probably true. Fighting holes were located near the top of this hill, but if you looked a bit closer, there was higher ground to be had within 200 meters to the north.

Photo of Author HM-3 David C. Kleinberg (Wearing Helmet)

This was one of very few company-sized movements that I can remember. 1st Platoon was on the west side, 3d Platoon stretched from the north to the east, and 2d platoon was on the east side of the hill. The foothills could be seen on the east side of our position.

We arrived on target around 2 hours before dark, which didn't leave much time for social life, such as it was in the bush. The Marines were working furiously re-digging fighting positions about 100 meters down the hill from the original holes because the company commander, 1stLt J.R. Wasson, wanted to take no chances being locked into an inescapable situation. 1stLt Wasson was an experienced combat leader. Lucky for us that he was because just after nightfall some of the Marines became aware of movement on the east and north sides of the hill.

We had gotten two new corpsmen that day-HM3 Fred Kurtze, who went to 1st Platoon, and another guy, who was sent to 3d Platoon. I had recently moved from 1st Platoon to 2d Platoon after the previous corpsman had been wounded and medevaced. Our platoon leader, 2dLt Arthur Johnson, was no stranger to the bush and neither were the men of 2d Platoon. 2dLt Johnson carefully checked all of the holes before returning to the top of the hill where the radioman and I were located-in one of the old fighting holes. The radioman told 2dLt Johnson and 2dLt Walter Smith (1st Platoon) that the company commander wanted to see them, so they went over to the command post. 2dLt Thomas Tighe (3d Platoon) was on the other side of the hill.

The moon was brilliant and full that night. With adequate night vision you could see almost as well as in the daylight, so a shadow was no surprise even in the dark of the mountains. Not long after the moon was at its zenith, "Buzz," one of our M60 gunners, came over to me and said, "You may want to keep your head down for a bit, doc. We're gonna make the gun talk a little." Buzz wasn't kidding. During the next 20 minutes or so you could hear a rhythmic clicking of sticks being tapped together by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). It was their method of coordinating their assault movement in the dark. The Marines knew they were coming, and so we waited. Shortly thereafter, the guns started to talk. Only a few M16s could be heard, but within several minutes things got wild and crazy.

I was suddenly aware of someone lying on the hill, out in plain sight, and he seemed to be making noise. Not wanting to attract attention to myself amid the green tracers going over my head, I low-crawled to his location. He kept making this indistinct noise, and I kept trying to tell him to be quiet but to no avail. As I got closer, I realized that he was still completely wrapped up in his snoopy blanket. It made no sense for someone to be sleeping in the middle of the hill, particularly in the middle of a rather intense battle, but there he was with the

snoopy blanket covering his face. By the time I got to him, I realized that he was not listening to my pleas for silence, so I proceeded to try to put my hand over his mouth. Finding nothing where his mouth used to be, I recoiled in some shock. This was the first dead Marine I had encountered.

I decided to venture back up the hill toward the area where Buzz had told me to stay low and in so doing encountered another Marine. This time, it was obvious. Cpl Rod Janetta was quite dead. He had a bullet wound in the thigh, and there wasn't much left of his head. My first thought was to start writing a tag. All of a sudden I heard "KACHUUUMP" to my left accompanied by lots of sparks and the appearance of three bodies being hurled out into the air just like you see on television. The cries for help followed from the same direction, so I left this patient and low-crawled again to the next location. When I reached the hole, I found "Little Joe" Loeffelman, Gator, and one other Marine in rough shape. Unfortunately for me, I also realized there was another NVA soldier approaching me, and I had no weapon with which to fight. A quick scan of the hole revealed one frag grenade at the bottom of the hole, so I threw that and ducked, hoping it wouldn't blow me up instead. The NVA guy was gone, but another showed up in his place. This guy had his helmet hanging over his AK-47. You could see him ready to shoot.

In no time, LCpl Dave Bartosek fired his weapon and neutralized the threat so I could work. Little Joe was in bad shape-shrapnel everywhere. Gator was OK, but he had the perfect Marine Corps wound-his butt was littered with shrapnel. The other guy (whose name escapes me after all these years) was hurt, but not too badly. None of them were in any shape to walk or even crawl so I pushed the first two up the hill and dragged the third with my leg. Once we got to the area of the old fighting holes, I did what I could to stabilize all three. The noise had diminished somewhat, so I got careless and stood up in front of Pancho, the radioman. In the flash of an instant there were a million firefly-like sparks coming out of the ground in what looked like an inverted funnel in front of me, but I don't recall any sound. Then I heard Pancho start to scream that he was hit. But he was behind me! That thing went off in front of me! I quickly got back on the ground and attended to Pancho, who had the classic sucking chest wound that I had heard so much about in my training at Camp Pendleton. I had the presence of mind to stuff the plastic wrapper of the battle dressing into the wound and tie the dressing around his chest and place him with the wound side down. He was as stable as I could get him in the dark.

A few minutes later it seemed that things had become quieter. It stayed quiet for about 15 minutes, and then we heard screaming. One of the Marines in 1st Platoon, PFC Jesus Perez, had been captured by the NVA while he was on an ambush. The corpsman (HM3 Mike Wild) had been separated from the group as well, but made it back to the lines safely. We heard another gunshot and heard Perez scream again, followed by more NVA voices telling us to surrender, I guess. This went on for what seemed an interminable amount of time-shot, scream-shot, scream. Finally, it stopped, and we surmised that Perez was dead. I guess we hoped he was so that he wouldn't feel any more pain. It was a long night for everyone after that.

The sun finally came up on yet another sweltering, humid day in the foothills of the mountains of Northern I Corps. We were now faced with the job of assessing the damages. There were three Marines killed in action, many wounded, and a lot of NVA bodies to count. I really don't remember how many NVA there were, but I had to go with the detail that was sent to detonate the explosive in the bomb crater where the bodies had been collected. There were a lot of young bodies in that crater.

I remember being numb from the entire firefight and wondering why no one came to take us out of there. A little later that morning, a general came to the hill by helicopter with a reporter on board. The general brought us several large boxes of ice cream. The flavor of the day was chocolate. While I was helping carry the body of Cpl Janetta to the landing zone, the reporter jumped out in front of me and yelled, "Smile, Doc!" I was in no mood to smile when he snapped the picture of me that was later published in the New York Daily News.

I never heard much about that whole event afterward, and it would be 34 years before I discussed it with anyone except the battalion executive officer (XO). One day after the 9th Marines was redeployed to Okinawa, I was summoned to the office

of the battalion XO. During the short interview for which I was ordered to stand at attention, the XO opened the discussion by saying, "So you think you deserve the Bronze Star?" I replied by asking him, "What is a Bronze Star?" He said it was a medal. Since I had never been given a medal, I told him that I didn't know anything about it. His reply was, "What happened [as if I knew what he was talking about] was just 'doing your job,' and we don't give medals to corpsmen just for doing their job-now get out of here." So, my part in the long night was appreciated by at least one of my leaders, but I never found out which one. Needless to say, no one ever gave me a medal. I was, however, glad to know someone knew what happened that night, even if I was only just doing my job.

THROWBACK THURSDAY: CORPSMAN MONUMENT GETS A NEW LOOK AT BASE NAVAL HOSPITAL

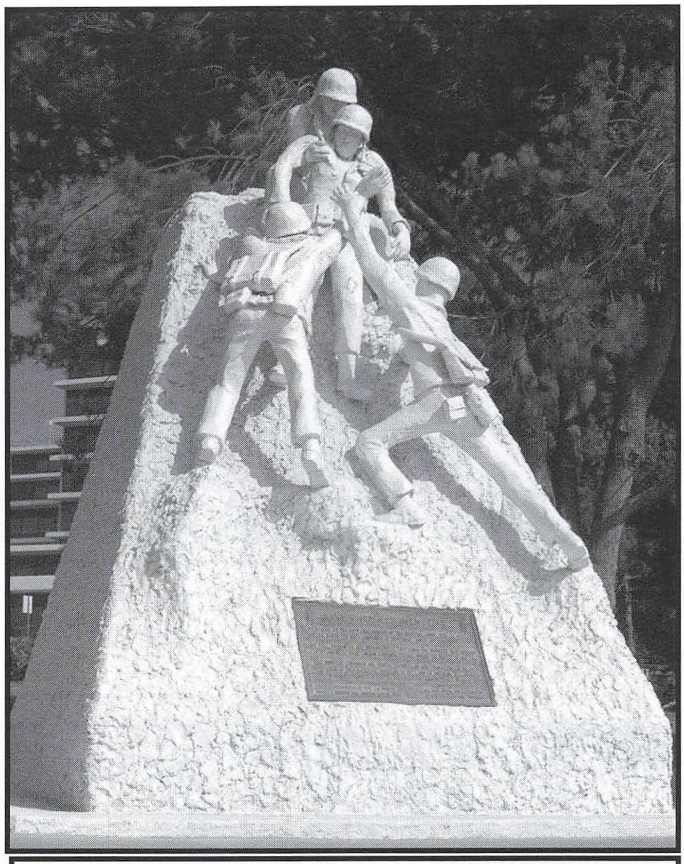
It was just three days into Raul Avina's first combat experience, the Battle of Iwo Jima during World War II, when shrapnel blasted through his back, arms and legs.

As he lay there, several corpsmen ran up the hill to help him and another fallen Marine. Without their help, Avina later told his family, he wouldn't have survived. In the 36-day battle that ended with Marines raising the American flag at the top of Mt. Suribachi 4,000 Marines were killed and 15,000 were injured.

Nearly 40 years later on June 17, 1983, Avina, then 73, unveiled a sculpture he crafted from rebar, concrete and heavy mesh at what was then Naval Regional Medical Center Camp Pendleton. Top Marine and Navy officials attended the ceremony for the Hospital Corpsman Combat Memorial.

Avina, known for his artworks, designed and built the sculpture depicting three Navy hospital corpsmen running to a Marine on the side of a mountain in his Oceanside garage. It took him two years.

For 31 years, Avina's monument stood in front of the hospital. A year ago this week, a new four-story, 500,000-square-foot replacement hospital opened at Camp Pendleton and Navy officials planned to relocate Avina's 17-foot-monument. During the move, the sculpture broke apart.



Hospital Corpsman Memorial built by Raul Avina Sr. It was dedicated at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton on June 17. 1983. The monument was built by retired Marine Raul Avina, who was rescued by corpsmen after being wounded in the Battle for Iwo Jima.

On June 17, 1983, veteran Raul Avina unveiled his Hospital Corpsman Combat Memorial in front of Camp Pendleton's hospital, which was then called Naval Regional Medical Center Camp Pendleton. Avina, then 73, created the piece as a way to acknowledge corpsmen past, present and future

Raul Avina stands in front of his sculpture during the dedication ceremony on June 17, 1983, at Camp Pendleton

Raul Avina with his wife, Quirina, embrace before he deployed to Iwo Jima. Avina was 31 when he became a Marine. He and Quirina were married 67 years. They are buried together at the Veteran's National Cemetery in Cave Creek, Arizona.

Part of Avina's original pieces were salvaged. Contractors used photographs, renderings and its old footprint to re-create a new one.

On Friday, Navy and Camp Pendleton officials including at least 20 of Avina's family will dedicate the new monument. Improvements include new texture of Mt. Suribachi on the island of Iwo Jima. Avina's original cement figures were re-cast in bronze with patina applied to protect against the weather and sun.

For Dan Avina, one of Avina's sons, the unveiling will continue a legacy his father had hoped to create when he began building the first monument in his garage in Oceanside.

"He built it in sections and suspended them from joists in the garage and almost pulled the whole garage down." Dan Avina said. "When he finished it, he transported it in pieces out to the lawn at Camp Pendleton. I don't know how he assembled it. It was truly garage art."

That garage art later would become the inspiration for the hospital's logo. Its image is incorporated into the hospital's logo and is seen at the hospital's entry and is printed in hospital linens and scrubs.

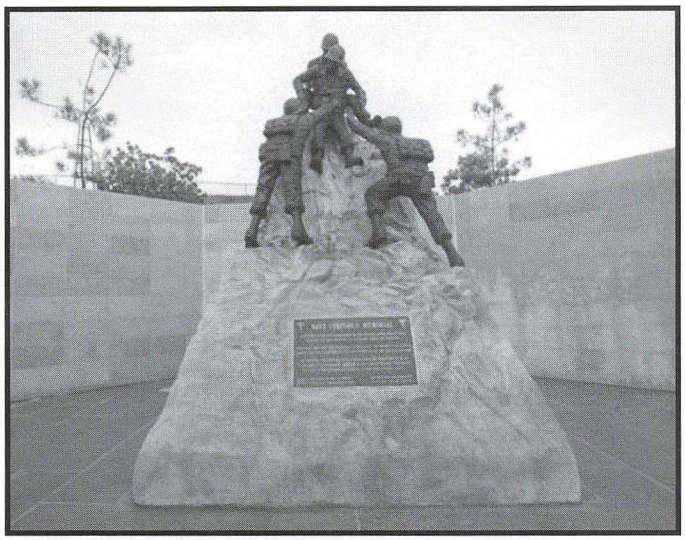
Raul Avina died in 2003, at the age of 93.

"At the ceremony, I will look up into the heavens and give him a good 'thumbs-up,' and say 'Pops, you did something that will last,'" Dan Avina said.

CORPSMAN MONUMENT REDEDICATED

Raul Avina's Hospital Corpsman Combat Monument was re-dedicated Friday during a ceremony at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton.

The 17-foot-high sculpture was originally built by Raul Avina, a Marine injured in the Battle of Iwo Jima. Avina, forever grateful to the corpsmen who saved his life, created the monument at the age of 73. It took him two years to complete the cement, rebar and mesh sculpture in his Oceanside garage. It was first dedicated at Camp Pendleton at the old Naval Hospital in 1983.



Raul Avina created a corpsmen monument in 1983. The monument was in front of the Naval Regional Medical Center Camp Pendleton for 31 years. Last year a new Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton opened on the base. Attempts to move Avina's sculpture didn't go well and a new monument was created from Avina's original. An unveiling was held Friday at the base. Many of Avina's family members were on hand for the event. Corpsman are the Marines "docs" in combat and have saved countless lives over the decades.

Efforts to move the monument last year when the base's new Naval Hospital was opened were unsuccessful. The monument began breaking apart. So Clark Construction/McCarthy, builders of the new hospital, used photographs, renderings and pieces from the original structure to rebuild the monument and relocate it at the new Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, completed in 2013.

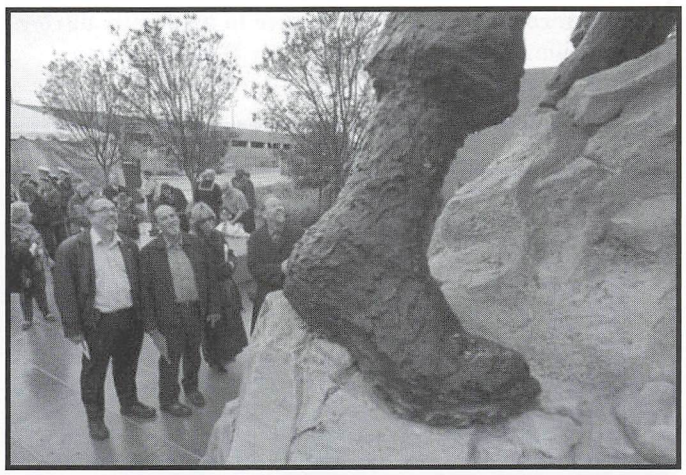
Avina's original cement figures were re-cast in bronze with patina applied to protect against the weather and sun. The monument stands at the end of the hospital's Medal of Honor Mall.

Navy Capt. Mark Kobelja, commanding officer, Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton hosted the re-dedication. Speakers included Maj. Gen. Lawrence D. Nicholson, commanding general, 1st Marine Division; Rear Adm. C. Forrest Faison, deputy surgeon general of the Navy; and Richard Heim, president and CEO, Western Region, Clark Construction Group.

The very fact that a United States Marine, wounded in combat and under the care of hospital corpsmen during one of the Marine Corps most storied battles

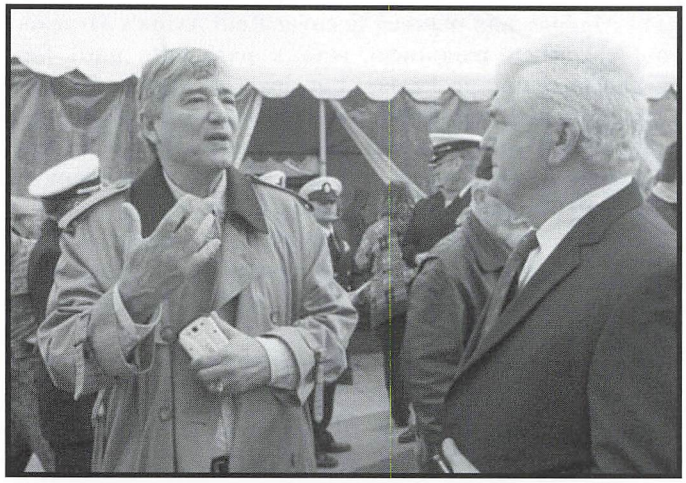
The Marines had planned to cover Raul Avina's 31-year-old corpsmen monument with a parachute until the grand unveiling on Friday, but, instead, Mother Nature came into play and coated the sculpture with a blanket of rain. Guest speaker Lieutenant General David Berger, commanding general of the first Marine expeditionary force, delivered stirring accounts of corpsman bravery and, on queue, the rain let up as he concluded, which afforded the masses to emerge from their tented event shelter and see the finished work outside Navy Hospital Camp Pendleton on Friday.

would personally design and construct with his own hands a representation of that image is profound, said Navy Command Master Chief Christopher Thorne.

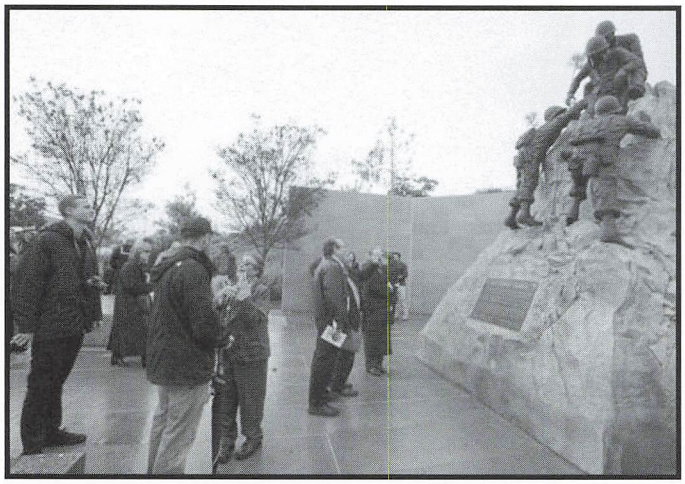


Raul Avina's great nephew, Tom Ehmann, left, son, Dan Avina, grandson, Kyle Avina and his wife, Cheryl, admire the resurrection of the corpsman monument Avina created 31-years ago. Last year a new Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton opened on the base. Attempts to move Avina's sculpture didn't go well and a new monument was created from Avina's original. An unveiling was held Friday at the base. Many of Avina's family members were on hand for the event. Corpsman are the Marines "docs" in combat and have saved countless lives over the decades.

There is a bond between Marines and hospital corpsmen. A Marine will press forward in combat through mortal peril buttressed by the knowledge that if they should fall, a hospital corpsman will be only steps behind to aid them, while the fight continues around them. A corpsman will run onto the field of battle through fire with the sole purpose of reaching and aiding a fallen Marine, even if it means sacrificing his own life to do so. They will do this because each and every one of them know that their Marines will protect them with their very lives as well, he added.



Raul Avina's nephew, Ray Ramirez, left, chats with Richard Heim of Clark Construction about the significance of his uncle's sculpture to his family during an unveiling ceremony outside Navy Hospital Camp Pendleton on Friday.



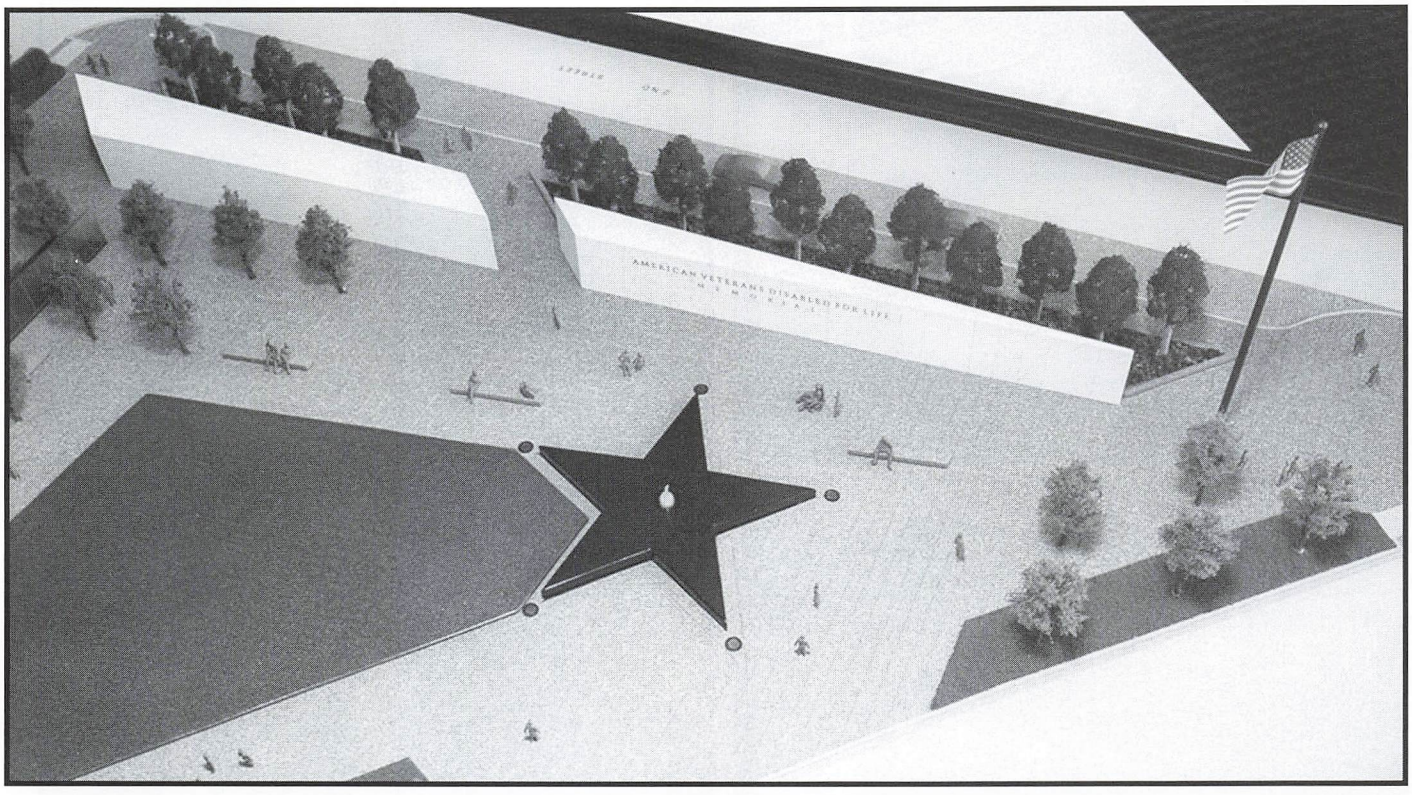
Guests admire the new installation of Raul Avina's corpsman monument outside Navy Hospital Camp Pendleton on Friday.

Van and Kathleen Avina, right, Raul Avina's son and daughter, thank artisan Richard Winget for his work on the new, permanent rock structure that their father built. It is now affixed outside the Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton.

"For Raul Avina to shape this memorial with his own hands and share that bond between Marine and hospital corpsman gives more meaning than any words of thanks or gratitude," he said. "It represents heartfelt love."

The Hospital Corps is the only enlisted corps and the largest corps in the U.S. Navy with 26,980 currently serving around the world on the sea, under the sea, on land and in the air. Twenty-two Hospital Corpsmen have received the Medal of Honor, 178 have received Navy Crosses including the recent award of Chief Petty Officer Justin Wilson on Nov. 25. Thirty have received the Distinguished Service Medal and 956 have received the Silver Star Medal. Seventeen U.S. Navy ships have been named in honor of Hospital Corpsmen.

NEW MEMORIAL HONORING DISABLED VETERANS UNVEILED IN DC



A new memorial honoring disabled veterans was unveiled in Washington on Sunday. "It was awesome. I cried the whole time," Bill McKinley, a Vietnam veteran told WUSA9 about the unveiling.

The new memorial is called 'The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial' and is the first of its kind to recognize all Veterans with both physical injuries and the "invisible" ones such as PTSD.

McKinley said that the memorial means "everything," to the Veterans who were their for its unveiling on Sunday: "It's finally an honor of our duty and service."

he project was a long-time coming. It started in 1998 when philanthropist Lois Pope, former U.S. Secretary of Veteran Affairs Jim Brown and the National Adjutant of Disabled American Veteran Art Wilson recognized a need for this type of memorial. Over the years they then followed suit with approval from Congress and 14 years of fundraising.

"This is something that's long overdue and I'm glad it's finally here," said Vietnam veteran Chester Wisnesky.

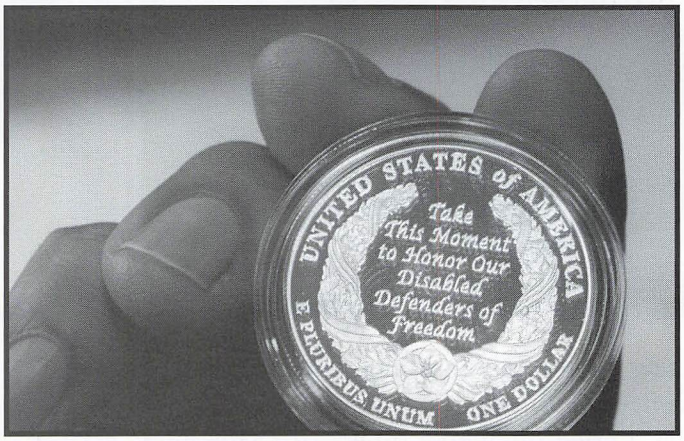
The structure itself symbolizes the people it represents. Architects used granite and glass to convey strength and vulnerability. A reflection pool shows a star with a single flame in the middle and a grove of trees stands to show the persistence in hope.

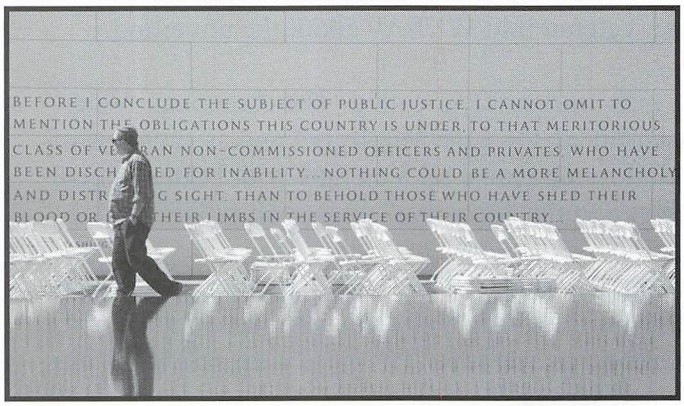
Some veterans say if there's no visible scar, many think there's no injury.

"They don't really see what's going on or what we've been though and so they just automatically assume that we should be fine," said Judy Brown, an Iraq War veteran. Brown says she's thankful every visitor will get a chance to see and understand what our service men and women really go though. "This helps us heal those wounds and stuff and know that we're not forgotten," said Martin Lathrop, another Veteran of Iraq.

The memorial officially opens to the public on Monday. For more on the memorial and the non-profit behind it, visit: http://www.avdlm.org/.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS ON INSIDE BACK COVER OF MAGAZINE





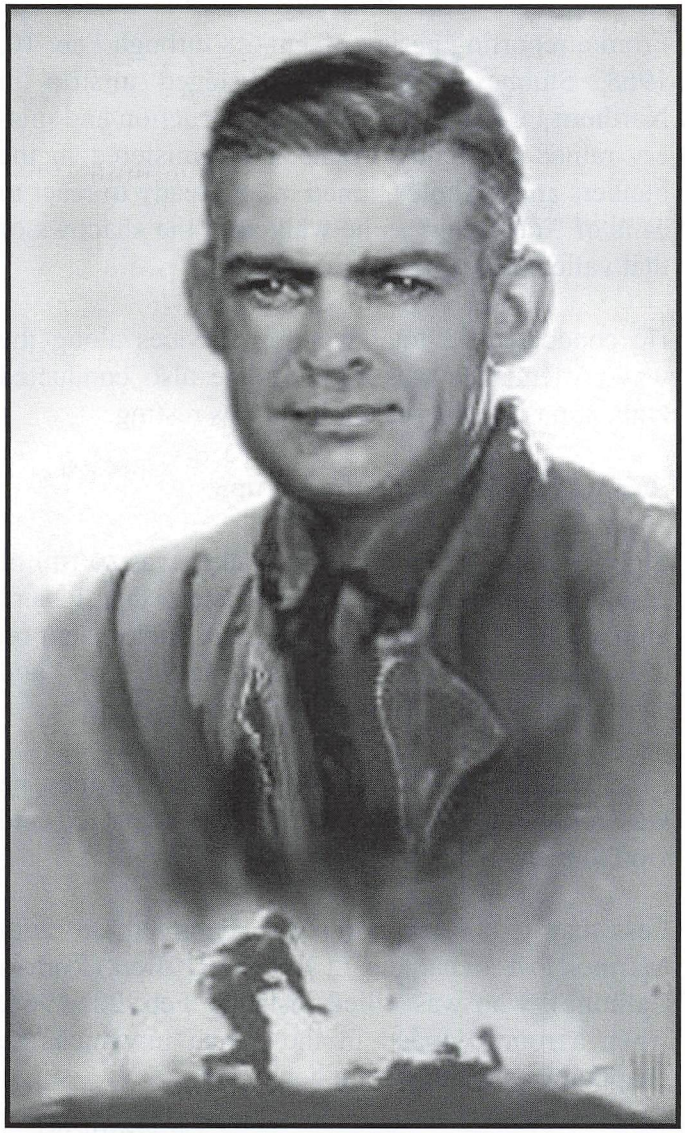
WITH FAITH AND DEVOTION

By Herb Richardson
Originally Published April 1997

It was late in the afternoon on Monday, Sept. 4, 1967, when two platoons of Company M, 3d Battalion, Fifth Marine Regiment, First Marine Division got into a vicious firefight with a strong enemy force.

Lieutenant Vincent R. Capodanno, a Navy chaplain and Roman Catholic priest, died in the firefight on that day on a hillside south of Da Nang, at a place where he didn't *have* to be.

The story of how he got there and what he did on the day of his death is incredible to most of us, but



understandable to many of the more than 700 chaplains who served with Marines in Vietnam over nine years, beginning April 12, 1962.

This was an old job in a new place.

Chaplains were first assigned to Marines full time in 1914, when a chaplain was stationed with the Marine Expeditionary Force of the Atlantic Fleet.

Chaplains were sent to the Fifth and Sixth Marine Regiments in 1917 and served with those units overseas during World War I.

Six chaplains went ashore with the troops at Guadalcanal. They were the first to see combat with the Marines on the offensive in World War II, but not the last.

Chaplains were with the Marines when they hit the Solomon Islands, the Gilberts, the Marshalls and the Marianas. When the leathernecks went ashore at Okinawa, the last island operation of the war, they had their chaplains with them.

Capodanno probably knew very little of these things. When he signed on for duty, he thought he was joining the Marines.

He was born in Richmond County, N.Y., in 1929, ordained in 1957 and served as a missionary in Taiwan and Hong Kong from 1958 until 1965.

It was in 1965, after the Vietnam conflict grew to a full-bore war, that the priest volunteered to serve in-country with the Marines.

Another Roman Catholic chaplain, Lt Conon J. Meehan, wrote that when Capodanno applied for military service as a chaplain he went to the Marine recruiting office in Hong Kong because he wanted to serve with the Marines.

It wasn't until he got back to the States for training that Capodanno learned that he had actually joined the Navy.

It didn't make any difference.

The chaplain joined the Marines anyway-the 5th Marines in Vietnam. He served a year, extended for six months and was killed in action four months into that extension.

On the day following his death, a letter was deliv-

ered to the 5th Marines commanding officer. It said in part, "I am due to go home in late November or early December. I humbly request that I stay over Christmas and New Year's with my men. I am willing to relinquish my 30 days leave."

Chaplain David J. Casazza said in his memorial remarks at the dedication of the Capodanno Memorial Chapel at the Naval Chaplains School in Newport, R.I., that Capodanno was pushed by a need to spend as much time as he could with his Marines.

"He was a hungry man. Hungry to be with his troops. Hungry for more time to seek out the lonely Marine, more time to sit with the scared boy, more time to explain things to the confused platoon leader."

Capodanno, like other Vietnam-era chaplains, adopted to the quick-mobility, small-services demands of this conflict. The chaplains assigned with the grunts in Vietnam had to find comfort in their Bibles and in their work.

They found little worldly comfort with their Marines who moved out fast, moved again and lived mostly in the dirt.

Services tended to be small, personal and frequent.

Ray Stubbe is a reverend in Wauwatosa, Wis., today. He was chaplain for members of the 1st Bn, 26th Marine Regiment during early 1968.

That's when the unit was being hammered day and night by NVA rockets and artillery at Khe Sanh Combat Base, near the Demilitarized Zone.

Stubbe understood the need for small, frequent services.

In a letter to former *Leatherneck* magazine managing editor, the late Tom Bartlett, Stubbe wrote, "The remarkable thing was not only the number of worship services but the fact of the 'one minute sermon!' In many ways I felt that just being with the men in their bunker or in their trench communicated far more than words ever would! I had been told not to gather more than three or four at a time since NVA forward observers on the ridge overlooking the base might very well regard that as a lucrative target and decide to provide background percussive music to our worship!"

Stubbe said sometimes there were too many Marines at one time, but the service would be over so fast that enemy observers would have problems calling in ordnance.

Stubbe's services lasted from five to seven minutes. There would be a prayer of invocation, often stressing that, "Wherever two or three are gathered" and "Lo, I am with you always."

A reading of scripture would follow. A one-minute sermon came after that, followed by words of institution, distribution with wafers and wine in a common cup and Aaronic Benediction.

From a reporting period of Jan. 28 through Feb. 10, 1968, Stubbe covered that besieged airstrip in Northern I Corps, where death, destruction and misery rained down in torrents. He ministered in the bunkers and foxholes, tuned in and ready to react to calls of "incoming" as he walked in the shadows of that valley of death.

He conducted 53 total worship services along the way. Attendance was 435. Stubbe also conducted eight counseling cases while he was resting.

Rest was a hard thing to find at times.

Stubbe wrote, "One night my bunker was so full of casualties that couldn't be evacuated, that I slept atop a 3 foot x 3 foot field desk, the doctor slept on the deck inside with his feet outside the 'door' and five Marines fell asleep sitting up on my rack."

Like the other chaplains assigned to the Marines, he was following his duty "to bring men to God and God to men."

Less than two weeks after that report 2d Bn, 26th Marines lost a chaplain-Lt Robert R. Brett (Roman Catholic), who was killed instantly Feb. 22, 1968, when a round landed in the trench in which the chaplain was waiting for a helicopter.

Brett was trying to return to battalion headquarters after one of his frequent trips to outposts.

Khe Sanh was deadly for chaplain's assistants, too.

Lance Corporal Alexander Chin, Brett's assistant, died in the same blast that killed the chaplain.

Lt William Hampton, assigned to 3/26, lost his clerk.

Stubbe had Private First Class Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer transferred to help him out because Spicer was a mild-mannered, caring, papers-filed conscientious objector.

Spicer also worked as a stretcher bearer with a habit of throwing his body over the wounded when there was incoming.

He was killed by incoming ordnance while evacuating casualties. Notch up a Navy Cross for the conscientious objector.

Rockets and artillery were as much a part of the war in Northern I Corps as were booby traps, mines and ambushes farther south. All-out attacks could come any time, any place.

Capodanno probably saw more of the Southern I Corps style of conflict in his part of Vietnam, especially on the day he earned the Medal of Honor.

It started out as a relatively small encounter when a platoon of M/3/5 drew some sniper fire. A second platoon set up a blocking position, then moved forward to help clear out the snipers.

As the two platoons advanced up a hill all hell broke loose.

Hell was a hail of mortar rounds, with machine guns, small arms and heavy weapons fire strong enough to halt the advance. The chaplain had been at the relatively safe command post until he heard a radio report that two platoons of Marines were in pitched battle and in danger of being overrun and wiped out.

While the order was being given for the Marines to fall back and form a defensive perimeter, Capodanno was on his way to the fighting, to take care of his Marines.

He took care of a Marine radio operator, who was forced into the dirt by a burst of automatic weapons fire. The chaplain grabbed a strap on the radio and helped the lance corporal up the hill. They had to eat dirt twice along the way as automatic weapons fire churned up the ground ahead of them.

The radio operator said he would never have made it up that hillside alive without Capodanno's help.

At one point the chaplain gave up his gas mask when the beleaguered troops popped tear gas to try to stifle the enemy fire. He continued through the gas ministering to the wounded and dying.

As he was moving ahead on the battleground, shrapnel from a mortar round that impacted about 20 yards from Capodanno, according to the Medal of Honor citation, "severed a portion of his right hand and inflicted painful, multiple wounds to his arms and legs." He carried his arm stiffly, but did not break stride until he reached a fallen sergeant. Capodanno prayed with the sergeant just before the Marine died.
He refused medical aid and continued to move about the area, encouraging and inspiring his Marines.

Capodanno reached a sergeant who had been hit five times and was lying near interlocking bands of fire from automatic weapons. The chaplain got him and delivered him to his comrades. The sergeant recovered fully from his wounds.

Outside of the defensive perimeter a lance corporal was trying to block the flow of blood from the thigh artery of a stricken corpsman in danger of bleeding to death.

The Marine saw the NVA charge their position, and he saw an enemy machine-gunner set up his weapon about 15 meters away. The Marine's rifle jammed as he tried to open fire, and he ran for cover.

Then he saw Capodanno, who heard the weapon, and could probably see its position, leave the perimeter to gather the corpsman into his arms and position his body between the corpsman and the enemy machine-gunner.

The chaplain died as he was trying to stem the flow

of the wounded man's blood. One account says he was hit 27 times.

Then-Lieutenant Commander Eli Takesian knew Capodanno. Takesian said, "He [Capodanno] just wanted to be with the 'grunts.' He was more Marine than anything else."

Lt Bryant R. Nobles Jr., a Southern Baptist, had only been in the field a couple of weeks when he found himself in a foxhole near the Rockpile, a well -known landmark and battleground in Northern I Corps, with the 3d Bn, 3d Marines.

He recalled that his faith was challenged about midnight, Sept. 17, 1969, when he was suddenly awakened by the sound of rifle fire. That's when he jumped into the foxhole he had dug earlier.

A couple of other people-the commanding officer and the radio operator-jumped in shortly thereafter. The ensuing fight lasted for five hours, with Nobles moving among the men giving encouragement, first aid and, he wrote, "doing whatever I could while praying without ceasing."

The enemy were gone by sunrise, leaving 48 of their dead behind. American losses were 25 Marines killed, 47 wounded. Nobles was decorated for his actions. He wrote of a higher reward:

"Just before turning in for the night the Commanding Officer requested that I pray with him. 'Chaplain, I can't even remember your name, but I thank God you were with us last night.' This reward far exceeded the medal I later received. The rewards are many for the chaplain who will give of himself for the spiritual needs of the men."

Through the Vietnam era the chaplain business was often a grim one-last rites, memorial services, comforting the physically and spiritually injured Marines-many of whom had seen and felt rigors that no young man should endure.

But there were joys, too. The Marines accepted and appreciated the chaplains. The Marines gathered in the fields and in the bunkers for services, and they built chapels, elaborate and makeshift, as the situations dictated. The chapel at Camp J. J. Carroll was named in honor of the fallen Chaplain Brett.

The Marines often admired and praised these men of God.

A regimental executive officer wrote about his chaplain, "His conduct under fire was notably courageous and that of a very brave man. On numerous occasions this officer was observed running across exposed paddies and areas to be at the side of a Marine. With no apparent regard for his personal safety, thinking only of the wounded or dead Marine, he carried his inspiration and prayer to those who needed his help. He had the confidence and deep respect of the men and healed the scars which the loss of a friend frequently caused in those who survived."

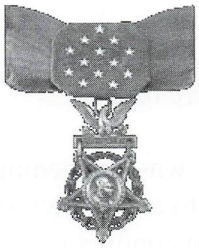
The feelings were mutual. Chaplain John Lepote, 3d Bn, 5th Marines, once reported, "The 'grunt' as he stands in dirty, muddy majesty, is as fine a fighting man as the United States has ever produced. He is young, tough, intelligent. He understands why he is here and he believes in the purpose that put him here. And, that is something, because if you take a 'grunt' out of his water filled bunker; remove his helmet, his flak jacket, and his field uniform, and take away his rifle, clean him up and dress him in a sport shirt, slacks and loafers, you've got the kid who was playing on last year's high school football team. He is a national asset to be cherished."

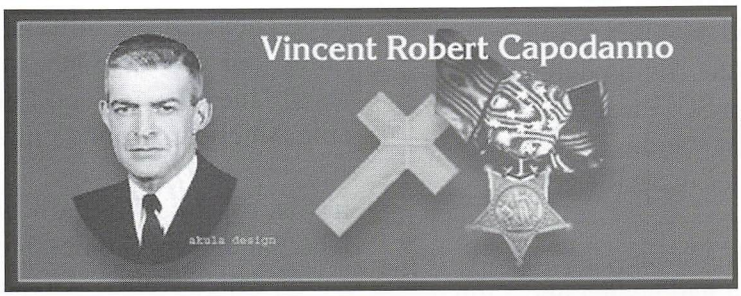
So, in Vietnam, as in other wars, there was mutual respect and admiration. There was a sharing of hardships of a sort unique to Vietnam.

Because of lessons learned and advances in technology there may never be another conflict like that in Vietnam.

But you may be sure that no matter what the type of conflict, if Marines take the field, they will be blessed by U.S. Navy chaplains.

Author's Note: I cheerfully confess that I used quotes freely and with great joy from the book of my friend, Commander Herbert L. Bergsma, CHC, U.S. Navy. That labor of love is titled 'Chaplains With Marines in Vietnam 1962-1971.' It's 240 pages, with pictures, of detailed and cross-checked history, presented with love, heart and understanding, published in 1985 by the History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C.



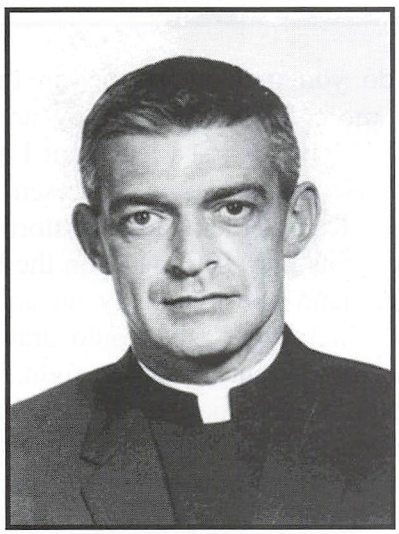


MEDAL OF HONOR

CAPODANNO, VINCENT R. Lt, USN, Chaplain Corps, 3d Btln, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division (Rein), FMF. Action: Quang Tin Province, Republic of Vietnam, 4 Sep 1967. Inducted: Staten Island, N.Y. DOB 13 Feb 1929, Staten Island, N.Y

CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as Chaplain of the 3d Battalion, in connection with operations against enemy forces. In response to reports that the 2d Platoon of M Company was in danger of being overrun by a massed enemy assaulting force, Lt. Capodanno left the relative safety of the company command post and ran through an open area raked with fire, directly to the beleaguered platoon. Disregarding the intense enemy small-arms, automatic-weapons, and mortar fire, he moved about the battlefield administering last rites to the dying and giving medical aid to the wounded. When an exploding mortar round inflicted painful multiple wounds to his arms and legs, and severed a portion of his right hand, he steadfastly refused all medical aid. Instead, he directed the corpsmen to help their wounded comrades and, with calm vigor, continued to move about the battlefield as he provided encouragement by voice and example to the valiant marines. Upon encountering a wounded corpsman in the direct line of fire of an enemy machine gunner positioned approximately 15 yards away, Lt. Capodanno rushed a daring attempt to aid and assist the mortally wounded corpsman. At that instant, only inches from his goal, he was struck down by a burst of machine gun fire. By his heroic conduct on the battlefield, and his inspiring example, Lt. Capodanno upheld the finest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the cause of freedom.



Capt. Strichker, Lt. Dunnigan, and Father Capadonno
(picture courtesy of JD Murray)

THE LAST STAND OF RECON TEAM KANSAS

Outnumbered worse than the Alamo defenders, here's the story of a SOG team's desperate last stand.

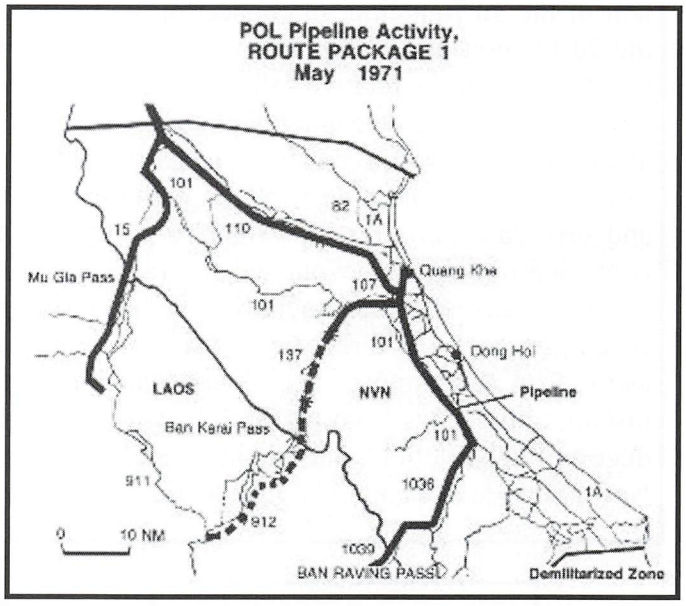
By Maj. John L. Plaster, USAR (Ret.)

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

"Recon Team Leader Loren Hagen shortly before his final mission." (Photo by Tony Andersen)

In late July 1971, U.S. intelligence began tracking a large enemy force shifting 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, a mission assigned to a shadowy organization called "SOG." Created to conduct covert missions deep behind enemy lines in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam, the top secret Studies and Observations Group had shifted most of its operations in-country by 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 eventually became a prisoner snatch assigned to Recon Team Kansas, an 11-man, Special Forces-led element, which included eight Montagnard tribesmen.



But how do you grab a prisoner in the midst of 10,000 or more NVA? Headed by an easygoing, lanky Midwesterner, First Lieutenant 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. Except 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 prison-

er and come out.

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

Landing at last light on 6 August 1971, Lt. Hagen surveyed the scrub brush and bomb craters below them and split his defense into three elements to cover the hilltop's 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, and Hagen reckoned to be ready.

A FOREBODING NIGHT

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

"Lt. Loren Hagen (right, rear) and Bruce Berg pose with five indigenous teammates. Both Hagen and Berg would die on the small hilltop, along with six of their Montagnard soldiers." (Photo by Tony Andersen)

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

"The NVA were laying a Soviet-made tactical fuel pipeline, like this one, near RT Kansas' hilltop, the first ever extended into South Vietnam. It would be of strategic value a few months later during the Easter 1972 Offensive." (Def. Intell. Agency)

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 above RT Kansas in 30 minutes.

As darkness gave way to light, Lt. Hagen detected glimpses of NVA on one slope; then on another slope pithe helmets appeared, bobbing in the fog. When his men reported NVA on the third slope, too, Hagen realized the hill was completely encircled by NVA -- but that would require a whole regiment, at least a thousand men!

The NVA regimental commander understood he had to dispatch the Americans quickly. They'd inadvertently landed almost within sight of the Hanoi High Command's most critical new venture, the first six-inch fuel pipeline laid across the DMZ, absolutely essential in a few months when entire tank

battalions rolled through here for the war's largest offensive. Already the 304th NVA Division was massing here, plus a regiment of the 308th Division, preparing for the 1972 Easter Offensive.

A fourth battalion moved into place; then, concealed in the ground fog, a fifth battalion arrived. Later, SOG's commander, Colonel John Sadler, would learn an entire regiment had stormed the hill, supported by a second regiment, a mass assault by approximately 2000 enemy infantry.

A HUMAN WAVE

As the clearing ground fog disclosed that 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. Then they came.

A well-aimed RPG rocket smashed into Bruce Berg's bunker, collapsing it and signaling the attack -- fire went from nothing to ten thousand rounds per second! Andersen could see dozens of NVA rushing in lines up his slope, meeting them with his M-60 machinegun. Hagen hollered that he was going to check Berg, and ran directly into a ferocious maelstrom, with bullets ricocheting and slamming the earth in front of, behind, and beneath his dashing feet. He 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 Tony 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. It was up to Andersen now, the senior man

THE LAST STAND

Small arms fire rattled closer on all sides and grenades lobbed up from below the hillcrest where 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 ran 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, then he tossed back another grenade but it went off in front of him, nearly blinding him, yet he kept shooting. More shrapnel tore into him, then an AK round slammed through his webgear 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, and saw he, too, was dead from a head wound. All around him he heard, "zzzsss, zzssss, zzssss," as bullets flashed past his ears.

He dragged Bingham back to where Bill Queen lay, wounded. Only Rimondi wasn't yet hit and still fired 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 little further than the length of his CAR-15 muzzle, and 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 sparkled 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's bodies as he could to the first Huey, then helped the wounded Queen and others aboard the second.

"3 months before RT Kansas fought the most one-sided fight in American history, the USAF already had plotted three enemy pipelines running out of North Vietnam but these extended into Laos. The most critical pipeline was secretly being laid across the DMZ into South Vietnam." (USAF)

A TERRIBLE TOLL

In one hellacious half-hour, nine of Recon Team Kansas fourteen 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 two 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 lost 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 sparse 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."

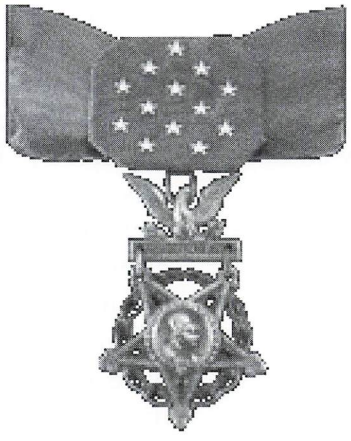
That would be borne out a few months later when the intelligence generated by RT Kansas' spirited defense helped U.S. analysts read enemy intentions, enabling American airpower to counter the NVA's Easter Offensive.

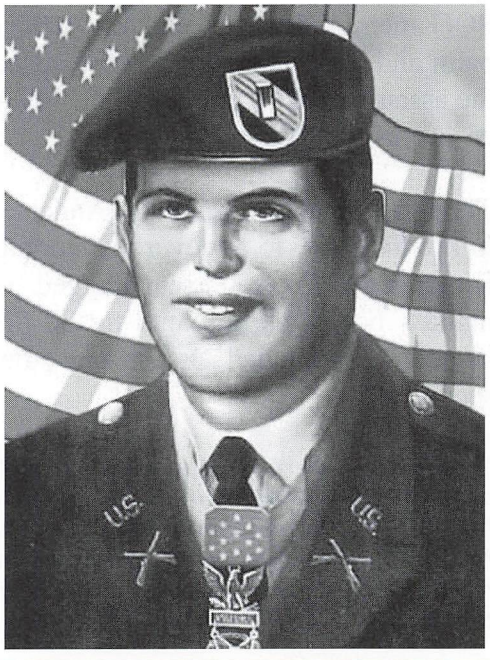
And though details of this incredible fight would remain classified for decades, enough was disclosed that First Lieutenant Loren Hagen's family was presented the U.S. Army's final Vietnam War Medal of Honor; Tony Andersen, who held together what remained of RT Kansas through those final mass assaults, received the Distinguished Service Cross, while Queen, Rimondi, Berg and Bingham were awarded Silver Stars.

And now, today, with full disclosure, we can appreciate the significance of their fight:

At the Alamo, 188 Americans had stood against 3000 Mexicans, a ratio of 16-to-1; at Custer's Last Stand, 211 cavalrymen succumbed to 3,500 Sioux warriors, or 16.5-to-1; at the 1877 Battle of Rorke's Drift, the most heralded action in British military history resulting in -- 11 Victoria Crosses -- 140 British troops withstood assaults by 4000 Zulus, or 28-to-1. Lt. Hagen's 14 men had held on despite being outnumbered 107-to-one, four times as disadvantagous as Rorke's Drift and seven times worse than the Alamo, one of the most remarkable feats of arms in American history.

This article is derived from Maj. Plaster's book, SOG: The Secret Wars of America's Commandos in Vietnam, published by Simon & Schuster.





HAGEN, LOREN D.

Rank and organization: First Lieutenant, U.S. Army, Infantry, U.S. Army Training Advisory Group. Place and date: Republic of Vietnam, 7 August 1971. Entered service at: Fargo, North Dakota. Born: 25 February 1946, Fargo, North 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 August 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 resupplying 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 destroy one 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 U.S. Army.

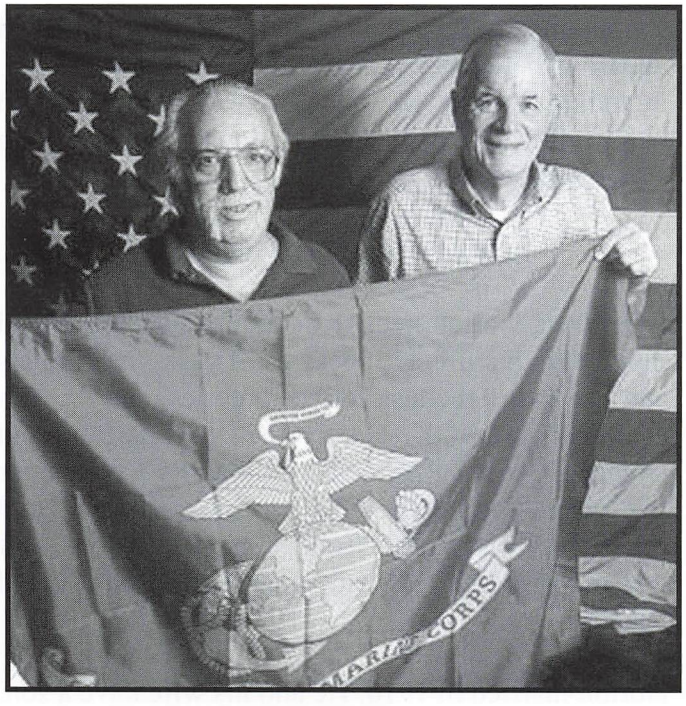
KHE SANH VETERANS REMEMBER FELLOW MARINES AT VIETNAM WAR'S BLOODIEST BATTLE

Posted: Nov 10, 2014 9:43 PM CST
Updated: Dec 10, 2014 9:43 PM CST

CHARLOTTE, NC (Joe DePriest/The Charlotte Observer) -

They met on a hill in a far corner of Vietnam.

Especially on Veterans Day, David "Randy" Norton of Charlotte and Larry McCartney of Black Mountain remember that time in early 1968 at Khe Sanh, the Vietnam War's longest and bloodiest battle.



Faces of other Marines who survived the horrors of Hill 861 Alpha stand out in their minds, along with faces of those who, like Norton's best friend, didn't make it off the hill alive.

At a 2007 reunion of Khe Sanh veterans, Norton and McCartney crossed paths again and became friends.

Both are mentioned in a new book that examines the battle from the viewpoint of those who did the actual fighting. The author, former foreign correspondent and Pulitzer Prize finalist Gregg Jones, interviewed nearly 90 Khe Sanh veterans, including Norton and McCartney.

A cloud of controversy still hangs over a battle where both sides claimed victory. But many Khe Sanh survivors, like veterans of other wars, look beyond military and political arguments. They look out for each other.

"Over the years, we've become a close group," said Norton, 66. "Veterans Day really is a personal day. I guess, for me, it's a time to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice. It's almost like there's an obligation to respect their memory."

Jones' book, "Last Stand at Khe Sanh," revisits a story that once gripped the world's attention. For 77 days, a North Vietnamese Army force of 20,000 besieged an outnumbered U.S. combat base in the northernmost province of South Vietnam near near the Laotian border.

Shells rained down daily on the base and surrounding hills held by the Marines. It turned into a deadly zone not only for those stuck there, but for aircraft bringing in food, water and ammunition. Flying out with the wounded was just as dangerous.

For his book, Jones focused on the four months from January through April 1968, when the siege was broken. He devotes a full chapter to the Feb. 5 assault on Hill 861 Alpha, where Norton lost his best friend, Joe Molettiere of South Philadelphia.

"You would have been hard-pressed to find two guys with more different backgrounds and temperaments, but Dave loved Joe to his core, and his sense of loss over Joe's death moved me deeply," Jones said. "Dave helped bring Joe alive for me as I wrote the story of the Feb. 5, 1968, assault on 861 Alpha." In the Khe Sanh book, Jones said he wanted to "capture the experience for audiences today. It's a universal experience of bravery, fear and camaraderie. I wanted people to understand the human experience of war."

YOUNG SOLDIERS

Norton and McCartney went to war as teenagers.
The full story of what happened to him on the hill in Vietnam is one Norton hasn't told his two children. He's given them copies of Jones' book to read, if they want to.

In his senior year at South Mecklenburg High School, Norton joined the Marine Corps with two friends.

"It was something we felt we needed to do," he said. "And we did."

On June 3, 1966, he graduated in a ceremony held at Ovens Auditorium. A year later, he arrived in Vietnam, a rifleman with First Platoon, Echo Company, 26th Marines, based out of a place called Phu Bai.

His war experience had begun. Norton got to know his fellow Marines, including Martin Rimson from Detroit who liked to sing Motown soul music. But Norton became especially close to the 18-year-old Molettiere, who talked a lot about the baby his wife was expecting.

In January 1968, Norton returned to Phu Bai after a week of R&R in Bangkok to find that his company had been transferred. He caught up with Molettiere and his other friends in the field outside Khe Sanh Combat Base.

Echo Company had the usual duty at first – going on patrols and ambushes. But an order came down to fortify one of several hills surrounding the combat base.

HILL 861A

Jungle and razor-sharp elephant grass covered Hill 861 Alpha, elevation 2,800 feet. The Marines climbed at night.

"It was absolutely brutal," Norton said. "We were hacking our way up, and I've never been so tired in all my life."

The hilltop became their world – a swirl of hot days, cool nights and mornings wrapped in heavy fog and mist.

All day, the Marines dug trenches in the red clay and filled sandbags. At night, they pulled guard duty or tried to sleep.

Often, supplies of C-rations and water ran low.
For two weeks, the North Vietnamese left the Americans alone. Then, in the predawn of Feb. 5, they hit – and hit hard. The hill erupted in explosions and gunfire.

Norton could see rifle flashes split the darkness as North Vietnamese soldiers blasted away. At one point, he and Molettiere recognized the voice of Rimson calling for help. They ran to him and saw that a mortar had almost blown off one of his legs.

As they helped the young Marine, a mortar round exploded nearby. Molettiere was killed and Norton knocked unconscious. When he came to, he couldn't feel his right arm. His M-16 rifle was shattered, so he held onto a knife with his good hand for protection and crawled into the grass.

By sunup, the fight had ended. Norton was loaded aboard a helicopter along with the other wounded, including Rimson. But the Marine from Detroit died before the chopper touched down at Khe Sanh Combat Base.

A WATERSHED MOMENT

Even then, Norton knew Khe Sanh was a watershed moment in his life. He spent 1 1/2 years in hospitals and had many reconstructive surgeries, and his arm eventually was OK. He returned to Charlotte and attended Central Piedmont Community College for two years. People knew he was an ex-Marine, and he sensed resentment from some instructors. But that didn't matter. He had support from family and friends.

Norton married in 1970. He and his wife have a son, daughter and four grandchildren.

About two years ago, while exploring the Internet, he learned about a veterans group combing cemeteries for unmarked graves of people who'd served in the military. One grave they found using a list of war casualties belonged to Norton's Detroit friend, Rimson, who was killed at Khe Sanh. The cemetery rock identified him as No. 27.

Norton was angry and contacted the veterans group, offering to pay for a marker. But he learned the group was already in touch with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs about getting a free marker for the grave.

Meanwhile, Norton met up with McCartney again at a reunion of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association in Washington, D.C.

McCartney, 65, spent 30 years in the Marine Corps, including two tours in Vietnam and tours in the Persian Gulf, Haiti and Bosnia. He saw some bad things but said "there was nothing like Khe Sanh. Absolutely nothing."

Yet he feels the experience helped him. On Hill 861 Alpha, fellow Marines "covered my back and taught me what I needed to do to grow up," McCartney said. "They taught me to survive – and in a very short period. I matured on the hill."

HELPING VETERANS

McCartney is concerned about veterans, helping them navigate bureaucracy at the VA when they're seeking mental health counseling, regular health services or other benefits.

He said the Khe Sanh association is providing scholarships and financial support for veterans' children and grandchildren.

Recently, McCartney replaced a damaged headstone of a Khe Sanh veteran buried in a Philadelphia cemetery. He'd survived Hill 861 Alpha only to die in another battle.

In June, McCartney made the trip of a lifetime. He returned to Khe Sanh, where war tourism now pumps cash into the local economy. Instead of a hole in the ground, he spent the night in an air-conditioned hotel.

Then he went to the hill and walked to the top.

"It was a step back in time," McCartney said. "A flood of memories came back, mostly about the people who helped me stay alive. And memories of the people we lost."

OBIT
NAVY CROSS RECIPIENT WHO BATTLED MILITARY FAKERS LAID TO REST

By Jeff Schogol, Staff writer
Military Times

A Navy Cross recipient who dedicated his life to protecting the integrity of valor awards has been interred at Arlington National Cemetery with his fellow heroes.

Retired Marine Lt. Col. Thomas Richards was given full military honors at a Tuesday ceremony that was attended by Medal of Honor recipient Barney Barnum and Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. John M. Paxton Jr.

In June 1969, Richards fended off enemy attacks in Vietnam so that wounded Marines could be evacuated. He killed eight enemy troops and prevented the Marine perimeter from collapsing. After retiring, Richards helped Marine Corps Times uncover at least 40 instances in which Marine Corps Associ-

ation members lied about receiving valor awards, including the Medal of Honor. He died of cancer in June.

On Tuesday, seven white horses pulled a flag-draped caisson in front of the funeral procession which marched to a drumbeat cadence to keep them in rhythm. Half of the Marine escort team marched in front of the colors and the other half behind. When the procession came to a stop, one Marine brought the urn with Richards' remains near the gravesite.

Diane Richards did not expect so many Marines to be there for her husband's interment.

"I was shocked by the entire tribute," she told Marine Corps Times after the ceremony. "I had no idea that they would be there. I was told there may be a few Marines from 8th and I, and had expected one or two representing the Marine Corps. When I walked out and saw this sea of Marines, I was overwhelmed."

After a bugler blew Taps and Richards was presented with a folded flag, Paxton knelt in front of her and embraced her.

"He and Tom were close," she said. "He continually offered his love and support, respect for Tom, what Tom stood for, the work that Tom did for the Marine Corps and for the country; and that the Marine Corps family will forever be mine."

It's fitting that her husband is now at rest in Arlington, she said.

"Tom was humble," she said. "I think to him, certainly he is among comrades. He is among comrades who shared his values and he's also among history, which was his love. His being at Arlington is also an opportunity for his legacy to be continued, something he would hold dear to his heart."

PATRIOTS POINT

Immerse Yourself into the Vietnam Experience Exhibit, a hero's welcome home.

Using state-of-the-art technology the Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum is bringing the history of the Vietnam War to life in a new two and one-half acre Vietnam Experience Exhibit. It features more than a dozen components that simulate life during wartime in a "Brown Water Navy" support base and a U.S. Marine Corps artillery fire base during the Tet Offensive and the Battle of Khe Sanh in 1968. The primary mission of the "Brown Water Navy" was to block the movement of insurgents and their supplies into South Vietnam.

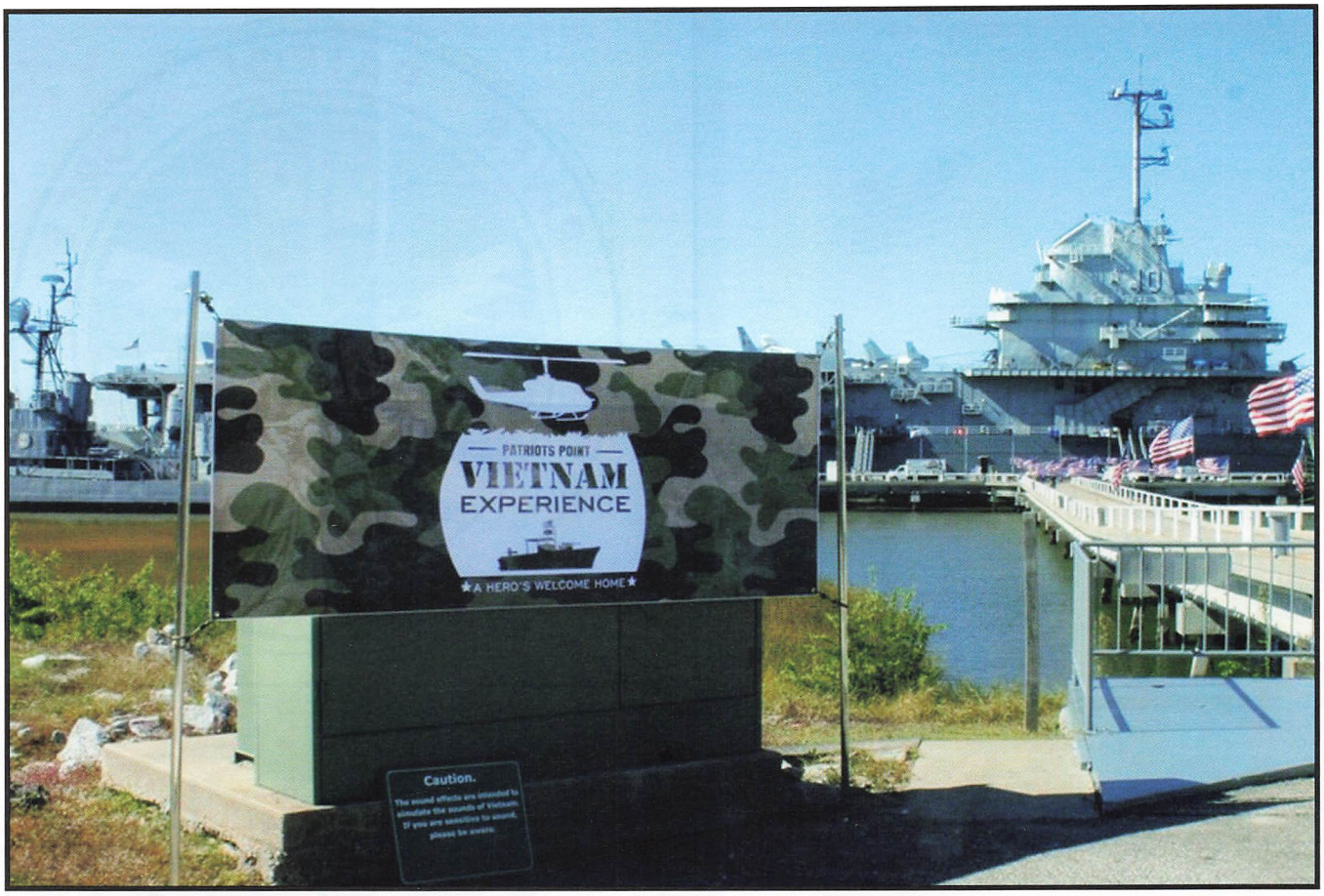
This immersive exhibit incorporates various facilities such as a fire control bunker and mess hall with various Vietnam-era artifacts including a rare MK1 River Patrol Boat (PBR) dedicated to Medal of Honor recipient James Elliot Williams (see Medal of Honor Museum). It also includes a 105 Howitzer gun, Wilys M725 ambulance, and three different Vietnam-era helicopters: CH-46 Sea Knight, UH-1M Huey and UH-34 Sea Horse. In addition to the artifacts, guests can climb onto an observation tower and hear the sounds of jet aircraft and helicopters flying over their heads. Holograms bring Marine officers to life in an exciting 3-D production.

The Vietnam Experience Exhibit also serves as a place for the two million Vietnam veterans in the United States to reflect and reconnect with their experiences during their years of service..

The Vietnam Experience is a permanent two and one-half acre exhibit and is included in the normal museum admission price. Construction of the exhibit was made possible by contributions from Charleston County Council, Bennett Hospitality and the Charleston Harbor Benefactors Society.

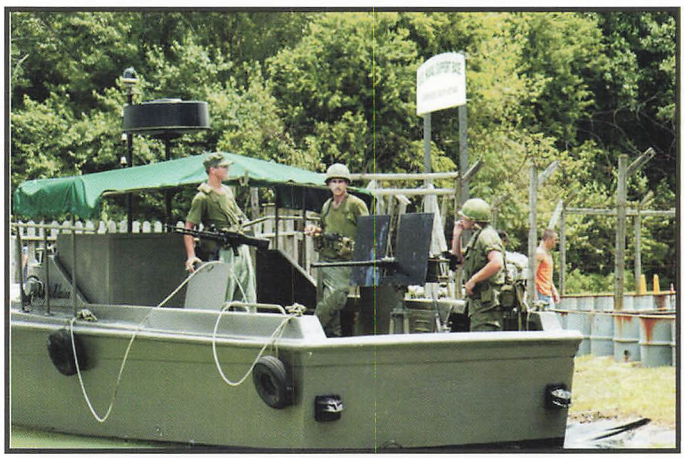
Accommodations for handicapped and special needs guests.

To assist visitors with physical challenges, an elevator is available to reach the USS YORKTOWN hangar deck level. The ship itself has an elevator for handicapped and special needs guests. special needs at the Information Desk.



The Vietnam Experience at Patriots Point offers a fresh look at history.

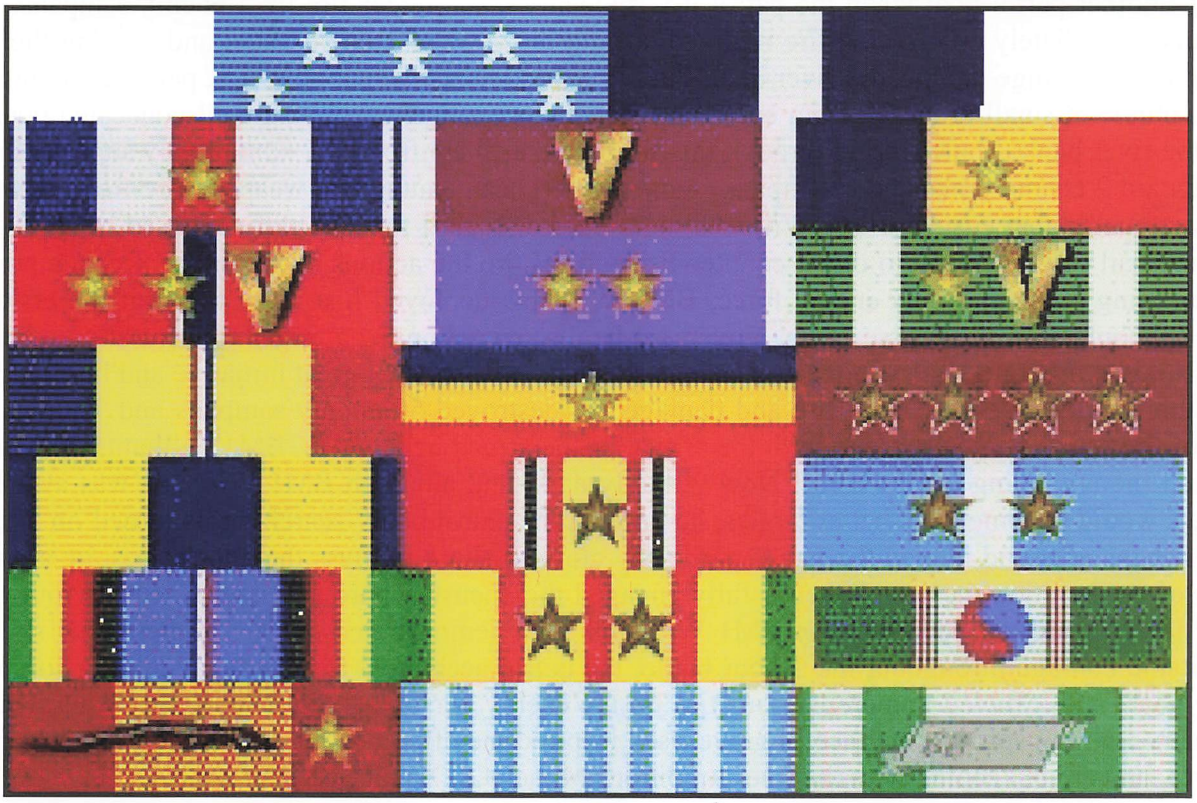
RIVER PATROL FORCE
TF-116



105

U.S. NAVAL SUPPORT BASE
SOMEWHERE, SOUTH VIETNAM

This photo of Williams was taken during one of his numerous patrols on board the "Elaine." He is holding an M-60 machine gun.



WILLIAMS, JAMES E.

Rank and organization: Boatswain's Mate First Class (PO1c.), United States Navy, River Section 531, My Tho, RVN, Place and date: Mekong River, Republic of Vietnam, October 31, 1966.
Entered service at: Columbia, S.C. Born: June 13, 1930, Rock Hill, S.C.

Citation:
For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. BM1 Williams was serving as Boat Captain and Patrol Officer aboard River Patrol Boat (PBR) 105 accompanied by another patrol boat when the patrol was suddenly taken under fire by 2 enemy sampans. BM1 Williams immediately ordered the fire returned, killing the crew of 1 enemy boat and causing the other sampan to take refuge in a nearby river inlet. Pursuing the fleeing sampan, the U.S. patrol encountered a heavy volume of small-arms fire from enemy forces, at close range, occupying well-concealed positions along the river bank. Maneuvering through this fire, the patrol confronted a numerically superior enemy force aboard 2 enemy junks and 8 sampans augmented by heavy automatic weapons fire from ashore. In the savage battle that ensued, BM1 Williams, with utter disregard for his safety exposed himself to the withering hail of enemy fire to direct counter-fire and inspire the actions of his patrol. Recognizing the overwhelming strength of the enemy force, BM1 Williams deployed his patrol to await the arrival of armed helicopters. In the course of his movement he discovered an even larger concentration of enemy boats. Not waiting for the arrival of the armed helicopters, he displayed great initiative and boldly led the patrol through the intense enemy fire and damaged or destroyed 50 enemy sampans and 7 junks. This phase of the action completed, and with the arrival of the armed helicopters, BM1 Williams directed the attack on the remaining enemy force. Now virtually dark, and although BM1 Williams was aware that his boats would become even better targets, he ordered the patrol boats' search lights turned on to better illuminate the area and moved the patrol perilously close to shore to press the attack. Despite a waning supply of ammunition the patrol successfully engaged the enemy ashore and completed the rout of the enemy force. Under the leadership of BM1 Williams, who demonstrated unusual professional skill and indomitable courage throughout the 3 hour battle, the patrol accounted for the destruction or loss of 65 enemy boats and inflicted numerous casualties on the enemy personnel. His extraordinary heroism and exemplary fighting spirit in the face of grave risks inspired the efforts of his men to defeat a larger enemy force, and are in keeping with the finest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service.

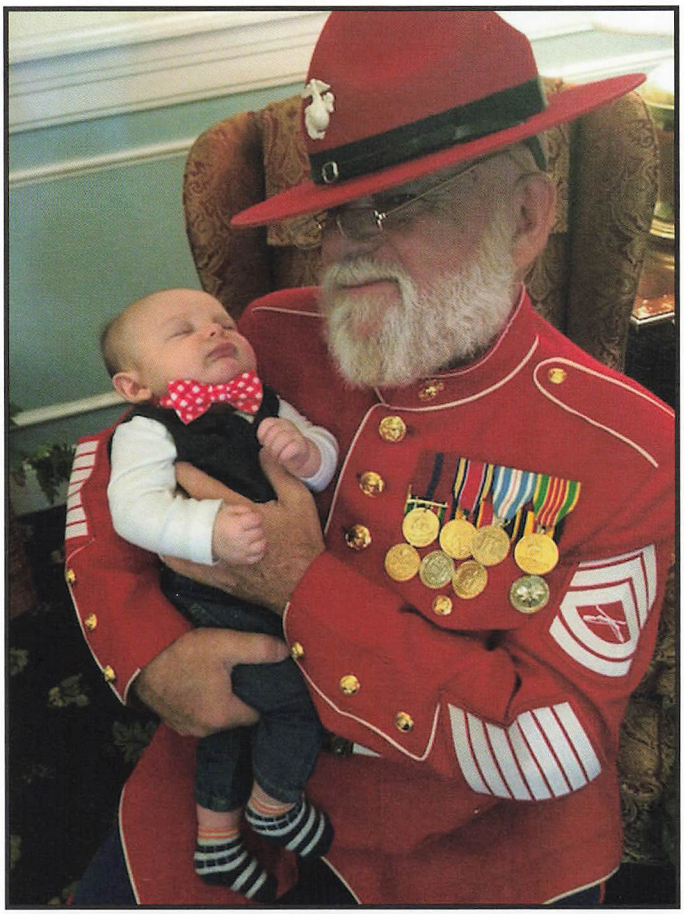
WHO IN THEWORLD IS 'GUNNY CLAUS?'

December 22, 2014, in Featured, Military Life by Raleigh Duttweiler

Macy's has the Real Santa. 1st Civ. Div. has a mall stand-in. But here in the Marine Corps, we have Gunny Claus.

That's right, Gunny Claus. 1st Reindeer Division, Marine Corps Base North Pole.
I'm not even kidding.

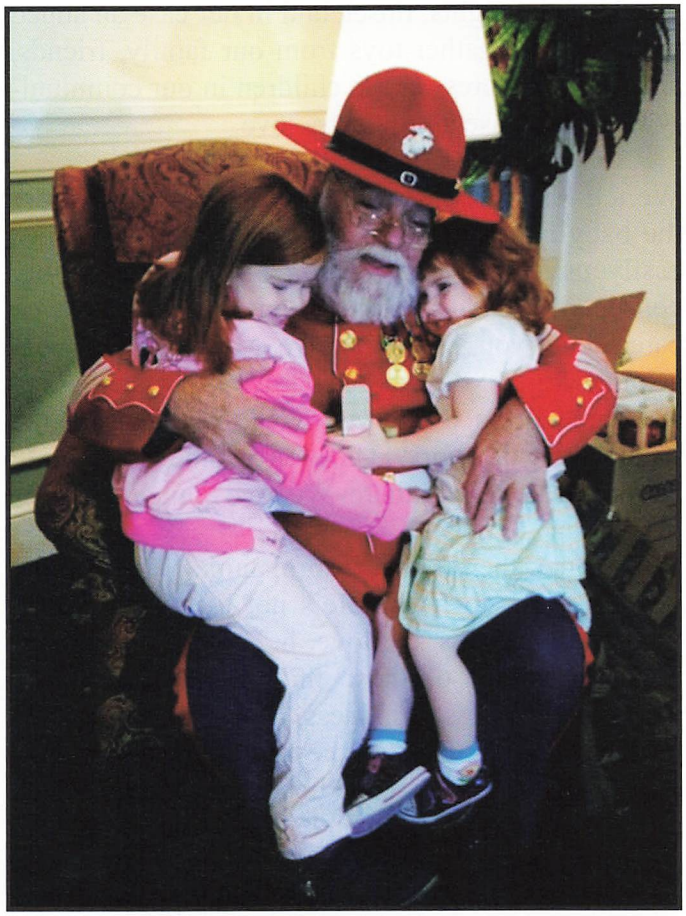
Who is Gunny Claus? Now, if you're a Marine Corps family, or a Navy family lucky enough to be stationed with some fabulous devil dogs, Gunny Claus is nothing new to you. You'd know him a mile away. His eyes – how they twinkle! His demeanor – so merry! His face is so jolly and his uniform's cherry! The beard on his chin is all salty and



white and to ring in the season is his USMC right.

He's a part of all things holiday in the Corps, and rumor has it, it's been that way for awhile. According to legend, Gunny Claus first made his appearance in the forests of Argonne, France during World War I, but Marine kids today know you can find him at bases far and wide during the holiday season. A battalion holiday party is incomplete without him, and you really can't call it Christmas until you've had your picture taken with the big man himself. Since 2002, he's visited over 46,650 devil pups and adds to that list every year with a new generation of Marine Corps kids lucky enough to make his acquaintance.

But the thing about Gunny Claus is he's not just a big, jolly old elf Marine. Much like Saint Nick stands for all the lessons we try to teach about Christmas, Gunny Claus embodies all that's magical



about Christmas in the Marine Corps.
And the Corps is really something at the holidays. Gunny Claus says it best:

Marines gather toys across the Nation each year only to give them back to less fortunate children. We help families of deployed Marines, Veterans, handicap children, and homeless Veterans at Christmas. We do this without the need of reward or recognition; this is Honor.

While others celebrate this festive time of the year, we serve on the battlefield far away from our loved ones surrounded by adversities unknown to most. We call this Courage since valor is simply one of our assets.

Marines at Christmas are deployed at hundreds of locations around the world, protecting the interest of this great Nation at Embassies, on board ships, in the air, and on distant battlefields. Standing our post at Christmas is not duty, we define it as Commitment.

This is the Marine Christmas.

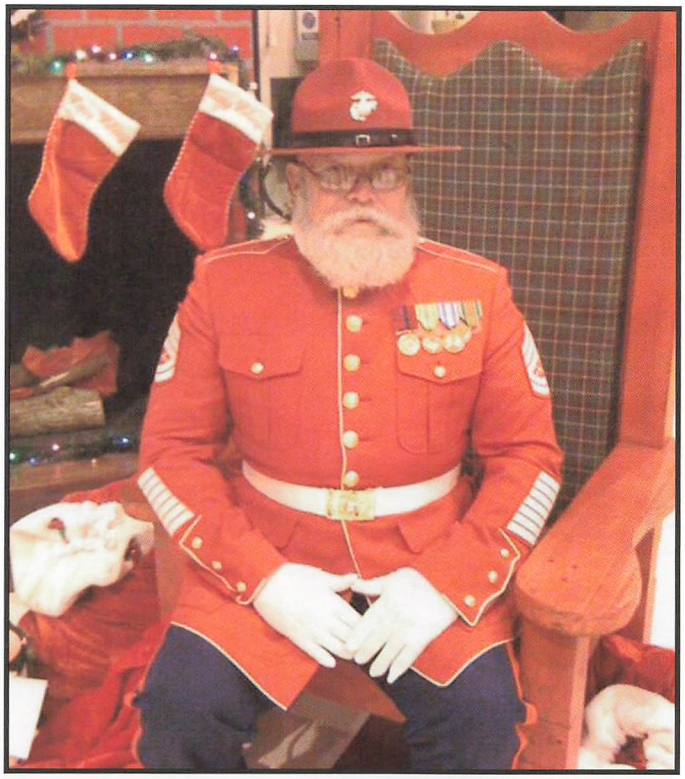
In this house, Marine Christmas is marked by the usual holiday lights, tinsel, and in our case an added menorah. We gather toys from our family, friends, and big box stores for the children in our community who could use a little extra love.

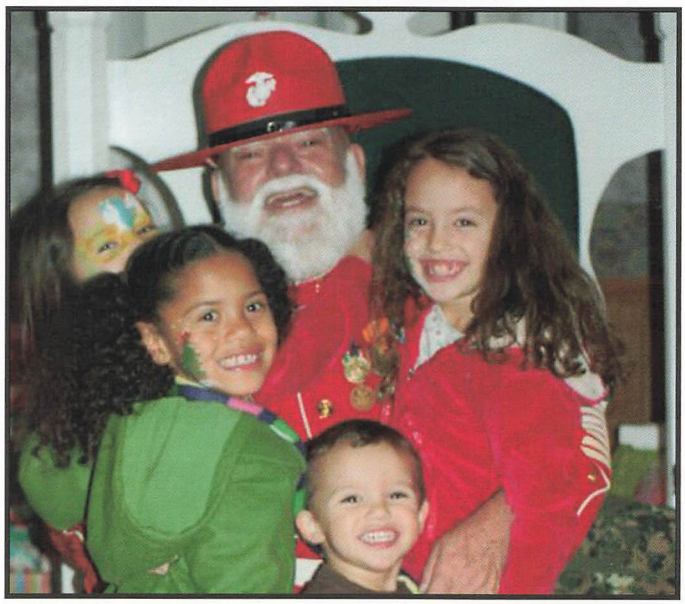
We tell our own children about the miracles, about the baby in the manger, and about Santa, the most easily understandable version of all of those big concepts for small children. Santa is someone who cares about you, remembers you, looks out for you, acknowledges you, and rewards your goodness – and someone in whom you have to believe for the whole thing to work. Those are some great basic lessons of faith right there. We love Santa.

With Santa, there's that leap of faith. With Gunny, you just have to listen. He's not just a symbol of faith and goodness and love, he's the real deal embodiment of all of those things, proof that hard work, selflessness, kindness, and Semper Fidelis mean something. He's all the toys collected for children in need, the face of hope and determination that keeps us going through hard winters away from our loved ones, the promise that none of us will be left behind or forgotten. And like our spouses themselves, he's a warrior for what's good and honorable.
Again, Gunny:

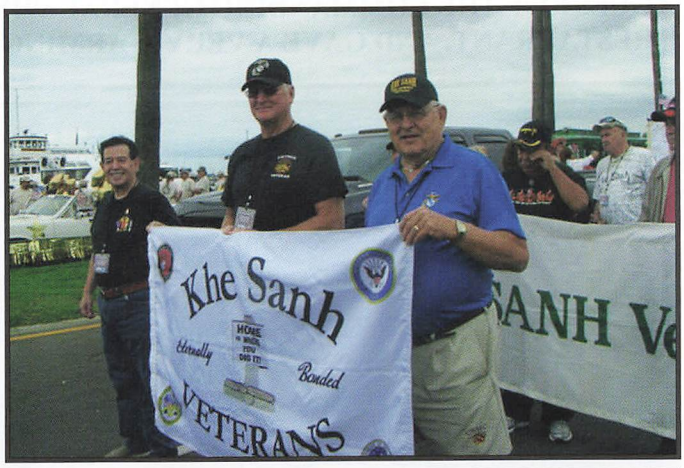
There are many gifts you can give at Christmas. If you are not deployed, protect the families and kids of those serving abroad as they are your family. If you see a Vet, thank him and wish* him a Merry Christmas; take *particular care of Kids, they are our future. We have Marines in medical facilities across the Nation; let us never forget any of them. If you have a moment or a free day, stop by and say Merry Christmas to any one of them; this in itself is a reward.

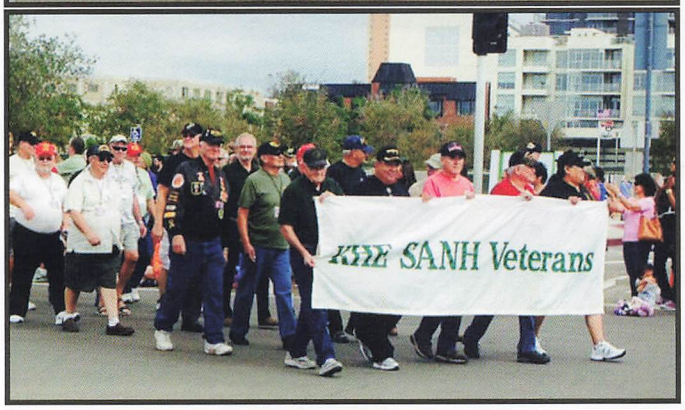
The gift you need to give to your fellow Marines and their families is simply to wish them a Merry Christmas. This gift requires no wrapping and is the greatest gift of all. Never question if you or your family make a difference, as the answer is clear.

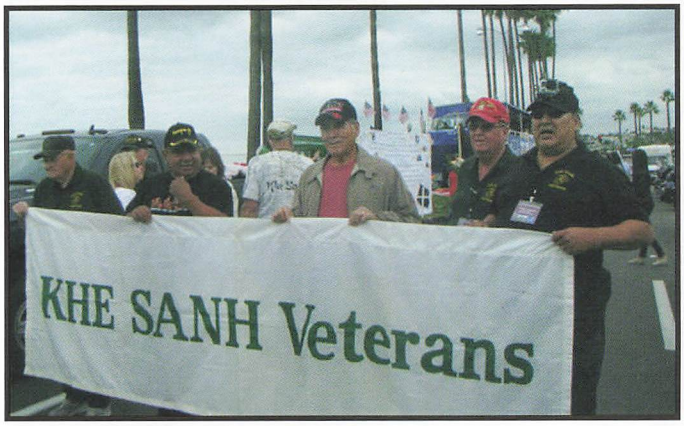




A FEW KHE SANH VETERANS MARCHED IN THE VETERANS DAY PARADE IN DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO, WHILE AT THE REUNION







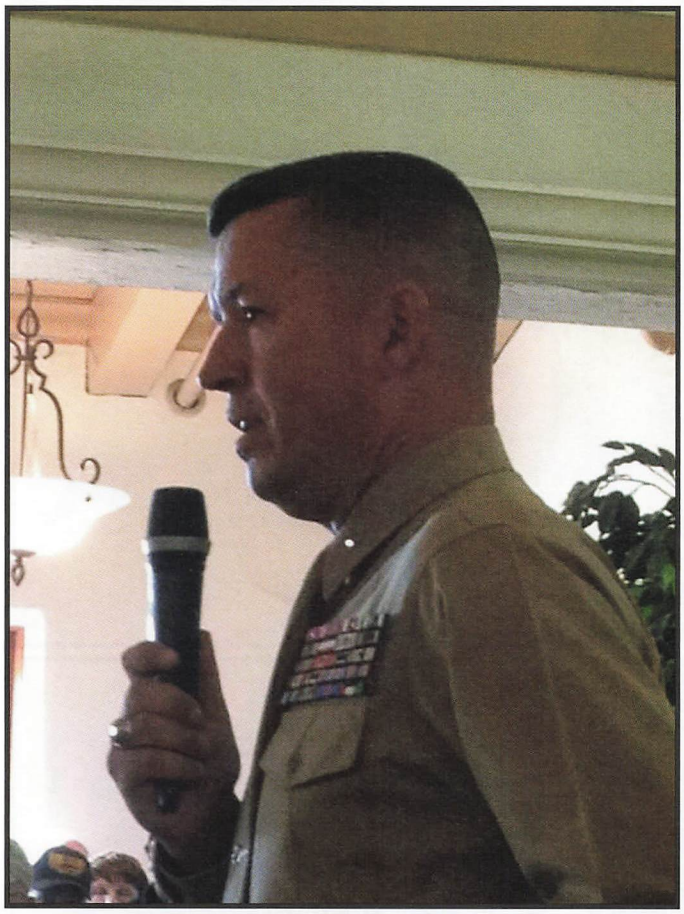
ON FRIDAY, 14 NOVEMBER, 2014 THE KHE SANH VETERANS ATTENDED THE GRADUATION AT THE MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT, SAN DIEGO CALIFORNIA. WE WERE HONORED GUEST OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL WHO ATTENDED OUR LUNCHEON AT THE BASE RESTAURANT, AND GAVE A VERY WARMING WELCOME SPEECH TO THE MEMBERSHIP

DRILL INSTRUCTOR SCHOOL
MCRD SAN DIEGO

USMC

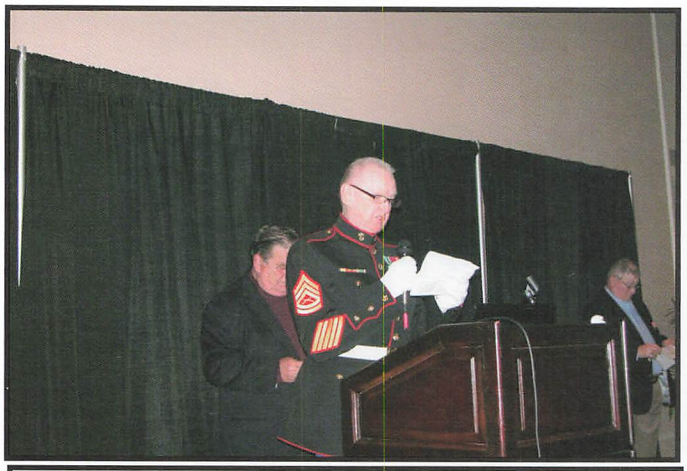
MCRD San Diego
2D BN
1ST BN
3D BN
SUPT BN
Recruit Training Regiment

KHE SANH VETERAN MARINES REMEMBERING THEIR GRADUATION DAY



BGENERAL JAMES W. BIERMAN JR.
COMMANDING GENERAL
MCRD, WELOMES KSV AT LUNCHEON

OUR LOVELY KHE SANH LADIES ENJOYING THEIR REUNION LUNCHEON



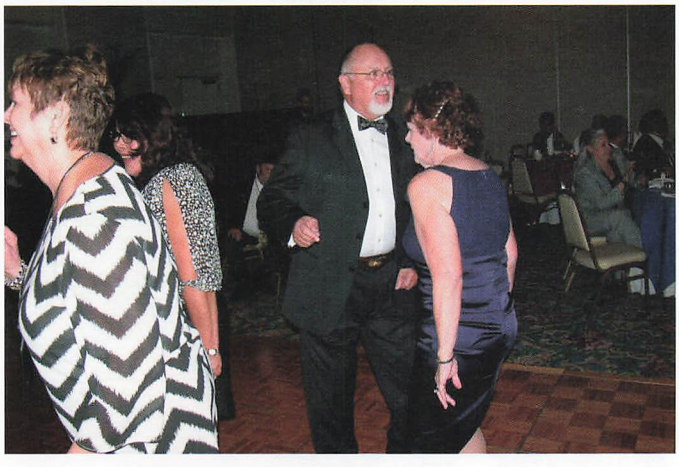
GYSGT BILLY MARTIN HQ BTRY 1/13 READING COMMANDANTS BIRTHDAY MESSAGE. MGYSGT ED TUSO, B/1/1, 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT BN, OKINAWA 1958, READ GEN LEJEUNE BIRTHDAY LETTER

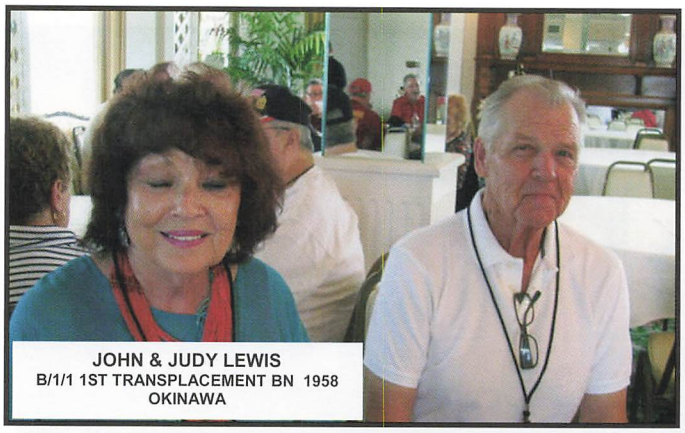
YOUNGEST & OLDEST MARINES LAUREN REYES & GYSGT ERNIE HAMNER

LAUREN REYES & DAUGHTER PRESLEY SHARE BIRTHDAY CAKE

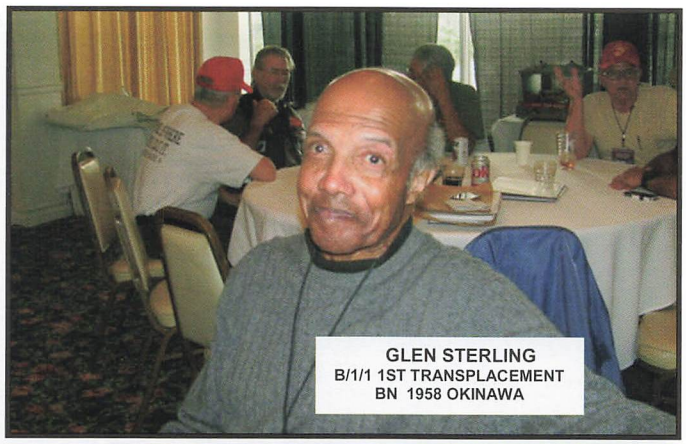
SENIOR NCO, GYSGT BILLY MARTIN, PREPARES TO CUT CAKE FOR OUR HONORED GUEST, COLONEL THOMAS JOHNSON, USAF & YOUNGEST & OLDEST MARINES LAUREN REYES & GYSGT ERNIE HAMNER

GREGORY GIBBONS, H&S CO 1/26, LIGHTS MIA CANDLE

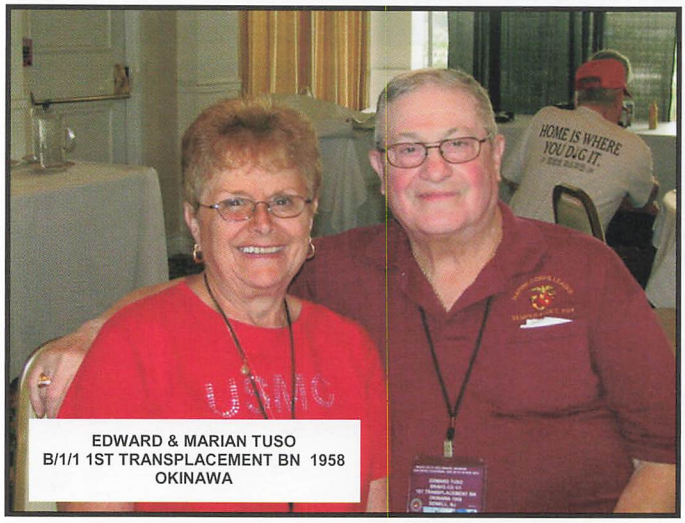




JOHN & JUDY LEWIS
B/1/1 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT BN 1958
OKINAWA

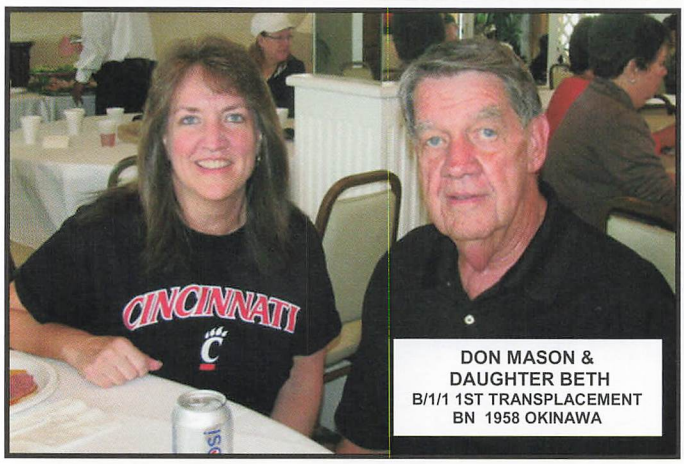


GLEN STERLING
B/1/1 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT
BN 1958 OKINAWA

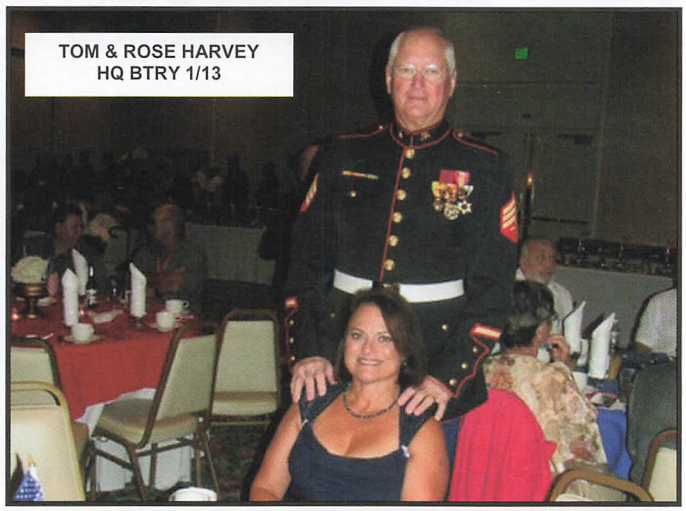


EDWARD & MARIAN TUSO
B/1/1 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT BN 1958
OKINAWA

DENNIS MANNION K CO 3/26 F/O (TOP)
DICK & SALLEY DWORSKY
INDIA CO 3/26



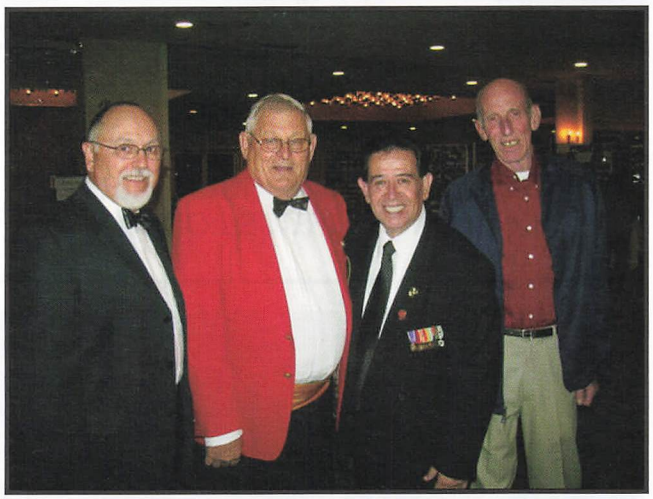
DON MASON &
DAUGHTER BETH
B/1/1 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT
BN 1958 OKINAWA

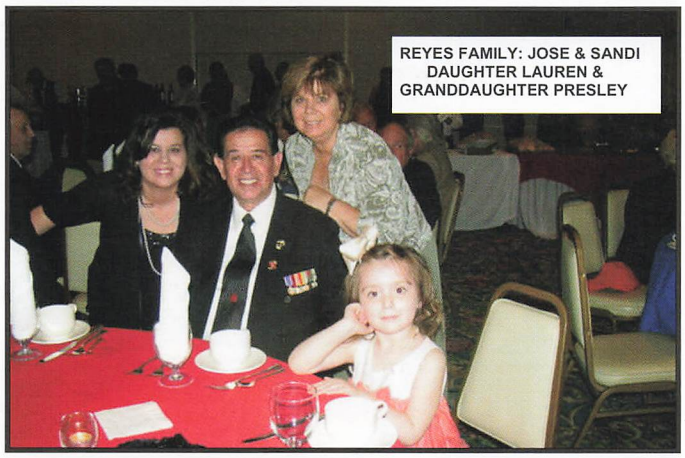


TOM & ROSE HARVEY
HQ BTRY 1/13

ERNIE & JO HAMNER
B/1/1 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT
BN 1958 OKINAWA

BILL & JOANNE EICHLER
BROTHER & SISTER-IN-LAW OF
TOM EICHLER

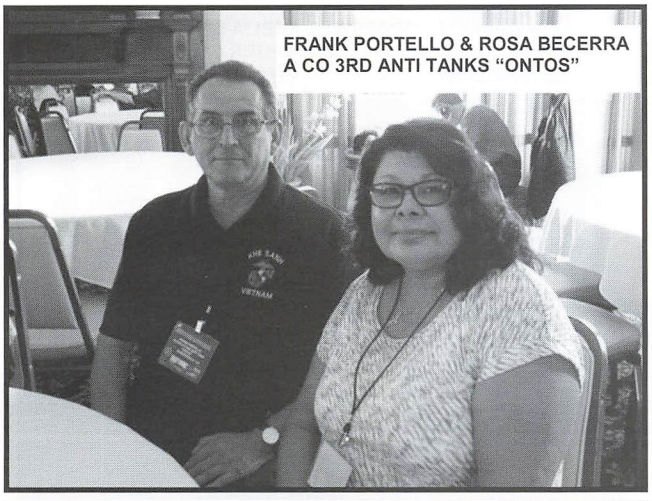




REYES FAMILY: JOSE & SANDI
DAUGHTER LAUREN &
GRANDDAUGHTER PRESLEY

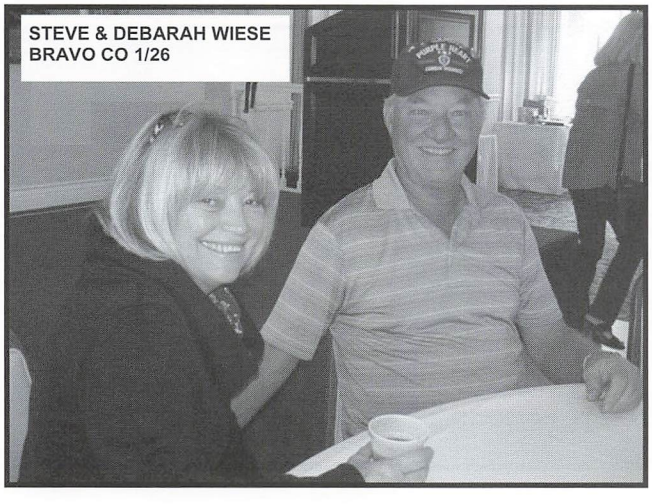
OUR HONORED GUEST & FAMILY MEMBERS

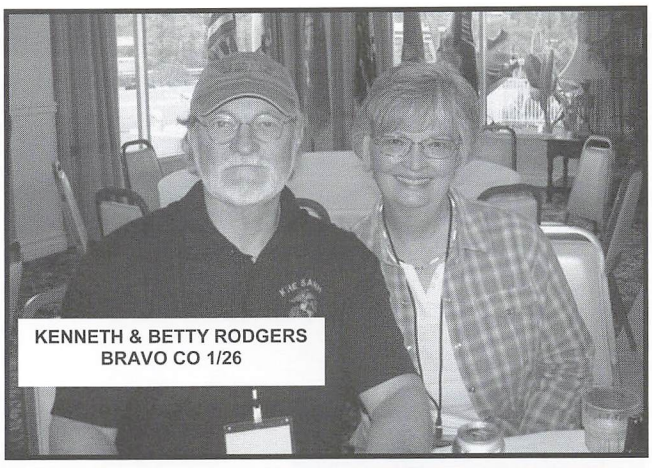
L-R: JUDY JOHNSON, JOAN KROLAK, COLONEL THOMAS JOHNSON, JOE MUSSO.SECOND ROW: CARRIE JOHNSON, THOMAS JOHNSON JR., ANNA JONES, BRUCE JONES

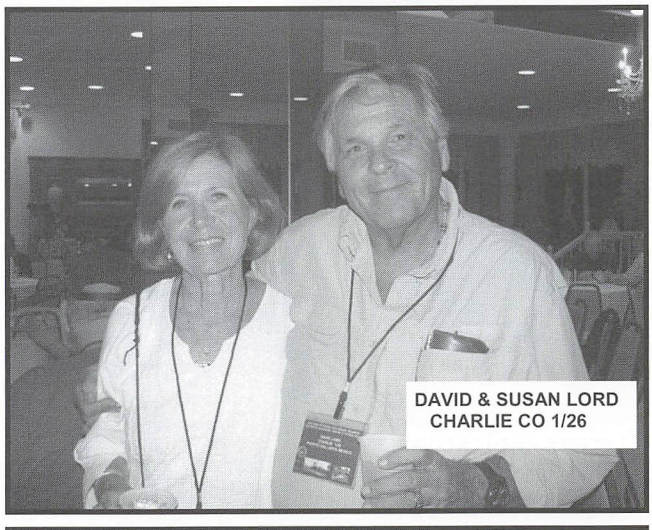

FRANK PORTELLO & ROSA BECERRA
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS "ONTOS"

HANS & GALINA GRANQVIST
HQ BTRY 1/13

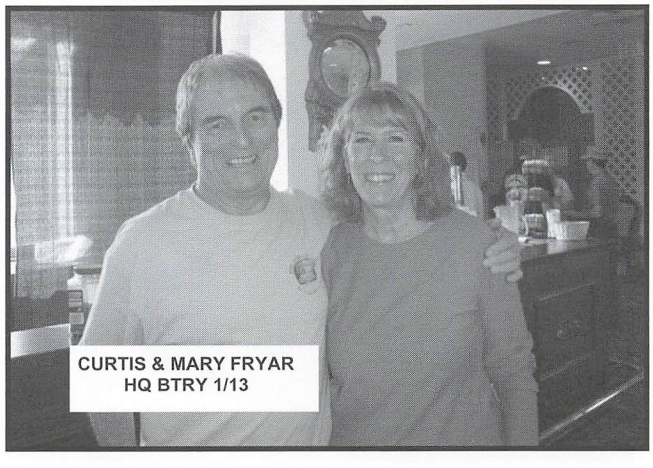
JIM & LINDA BEALL
"DOC"
BRAVO CO 1/26 & 1/26 BAS

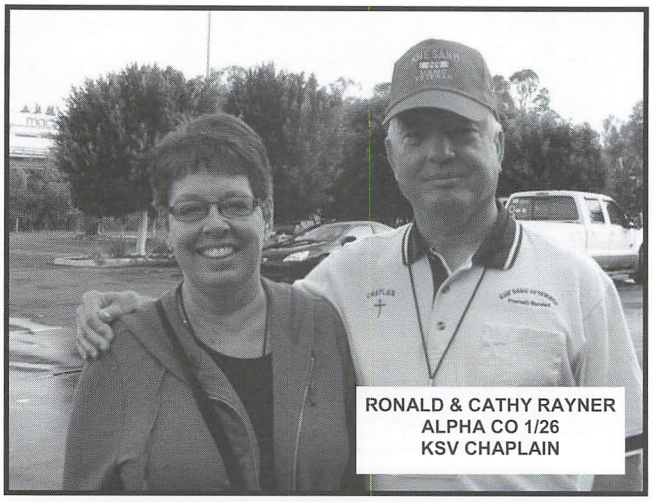

STEVE & DEBARAH WIESE
BRAVO CO 1/26


KENNETH & BETTY RODGERS
BRAVO CO 1/26


DAVID & SUSAN LORD
CHARLIE CO 1/26

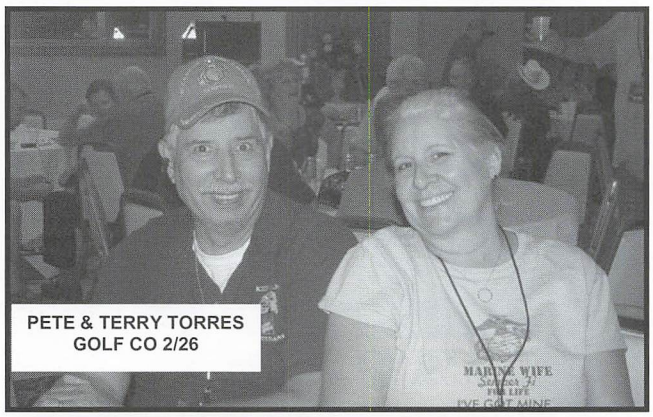
MERLE & RITA MORITZ
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A


CURTIS & MARY FRYAR
HQ BTRY 1/13

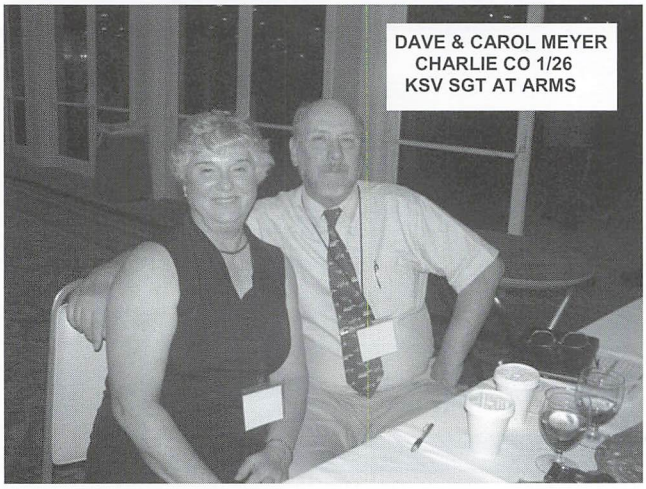


RONALD & CATHY RAYNER
ALPHA CO 1/26
KSV CHAPLAIN

IRVIN & KATHY NOWACKI
BRAVO BTRY 1/13



PETE & TERRY TORRES
GOLF CO 2/26



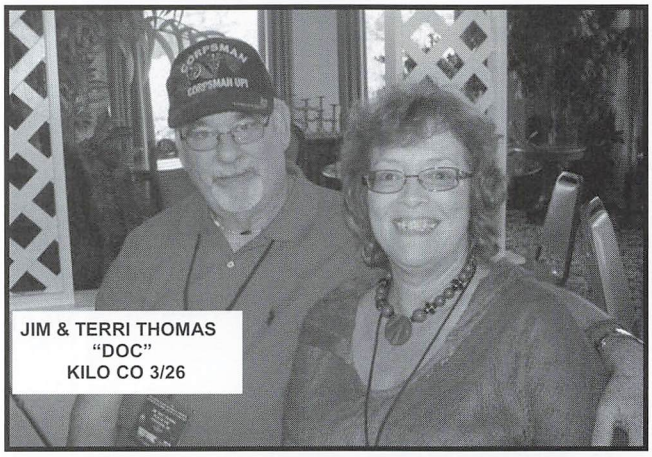
DAVE & CAROL MEYER
CHARLIE CO 1/26
KSV SGT AT ARMS

MODESTO & AMELIA DE LOS SANTOS &
DAUGHTER CYNTHIA
BRAVO BTRY 1/13

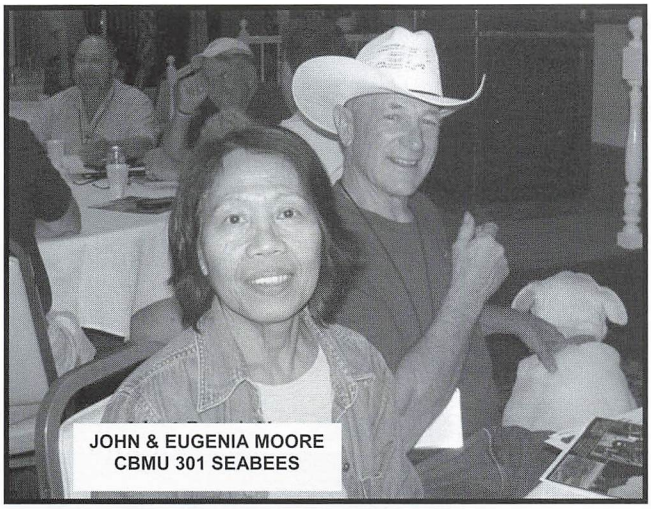
ROBERT & LINDA LONGCRANE
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A

MARIE PONTON

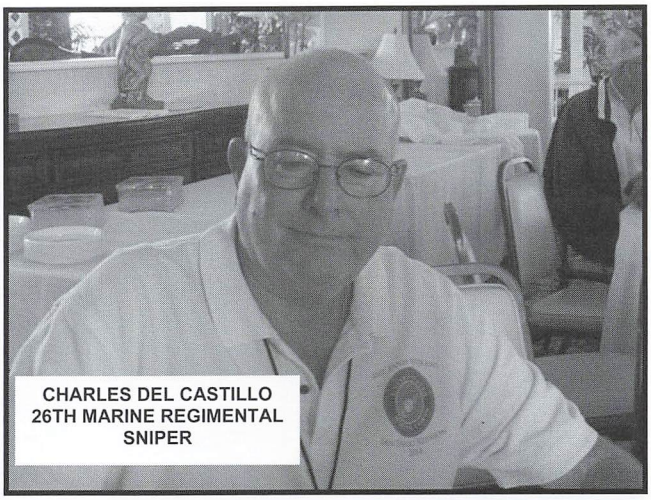
KEN & SHARON PIPES
C/O BRAVO CO 1/26



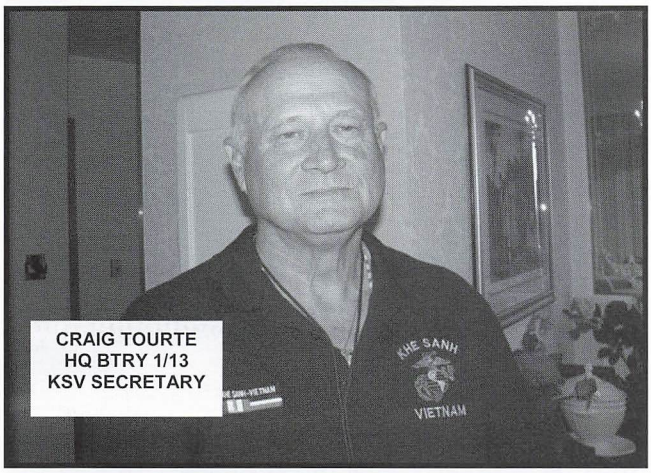
JIM & TERRI THOMAS
"DOC"
KILO CO 3/26



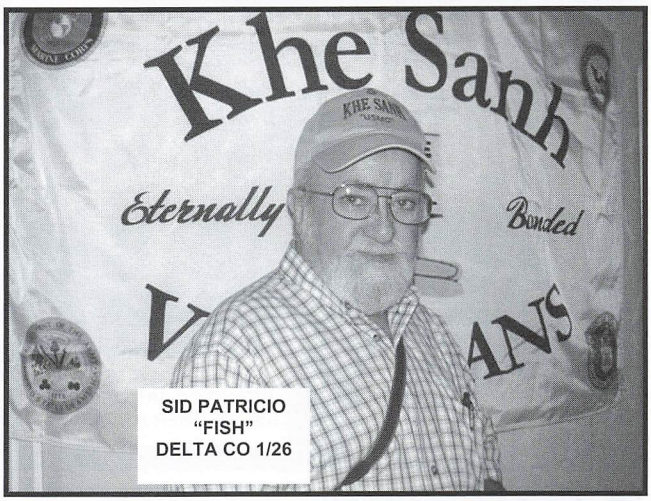
JOHN & EUGENIA MOORE
CBMU 301 SEABEES



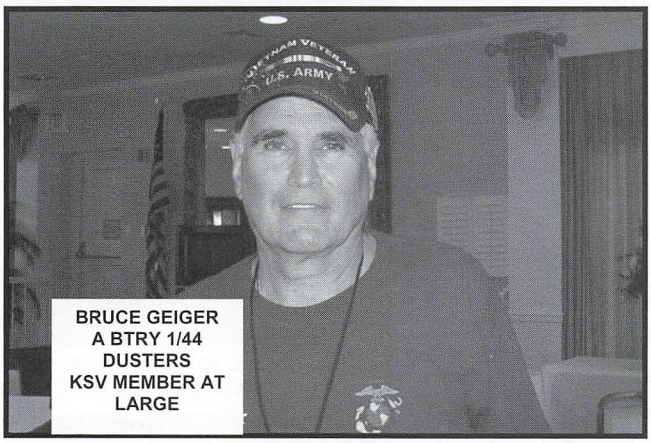
CHARLES DEL CASTILLO
26TH MARINE REGIMENTAL
SNIPER



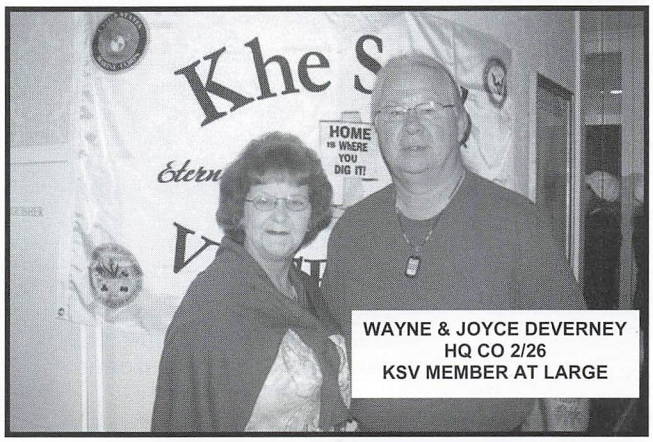
CRAIG TOURTE
HQ BTRY 1/13
KSV SECRETARY



SID PATRICIO
"FISH"
DELTA CO 1/26

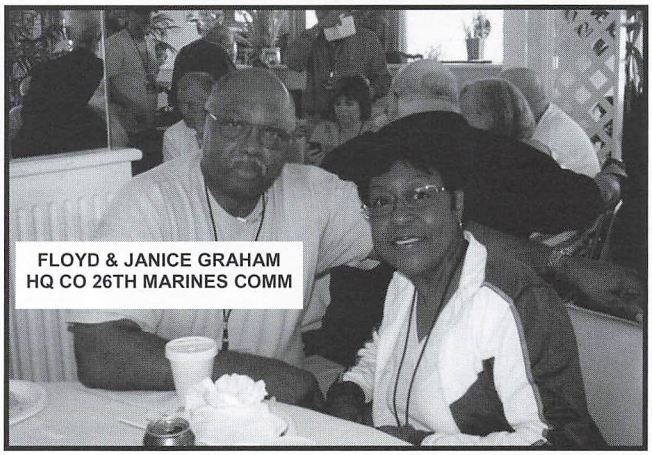


BRUCE GEIGER
A BTRY 1/44
DUSTERS
KSV MEMBER AT
LARGE

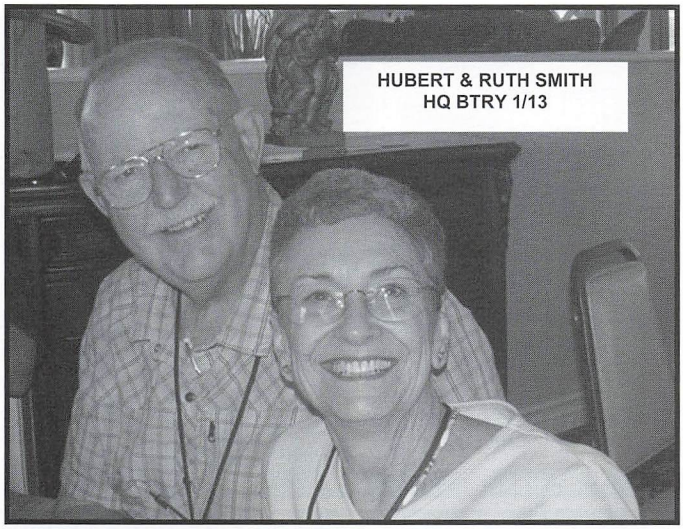


WAYNE & JOYCE DEVERNEY
HQ CO 2/26
KSV MEMBER AT LARGE

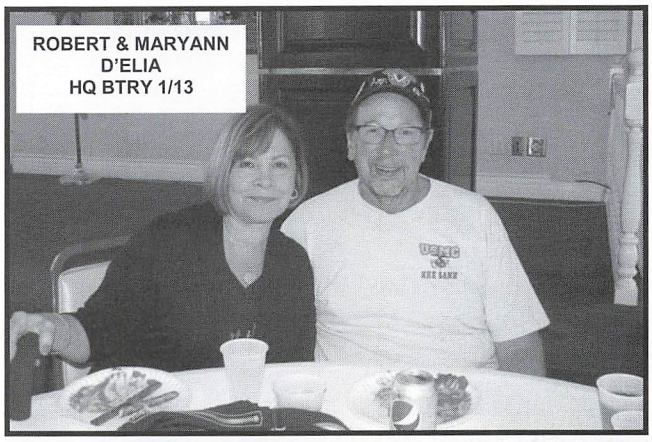
RON & DARLENE PARSONS
USAF 15 AERIAL PORT SQD



FLOYD & JANICE GRAHAM
HQ CO 26TH MARINES COMM



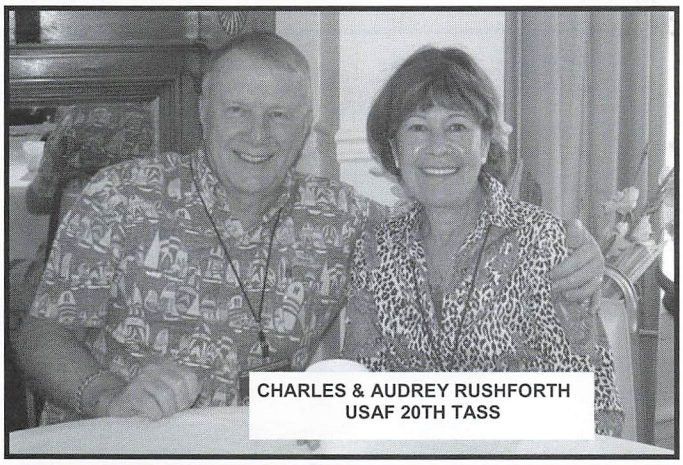
HUBERT & RUTH SMITH
HQ BTRY 1/13



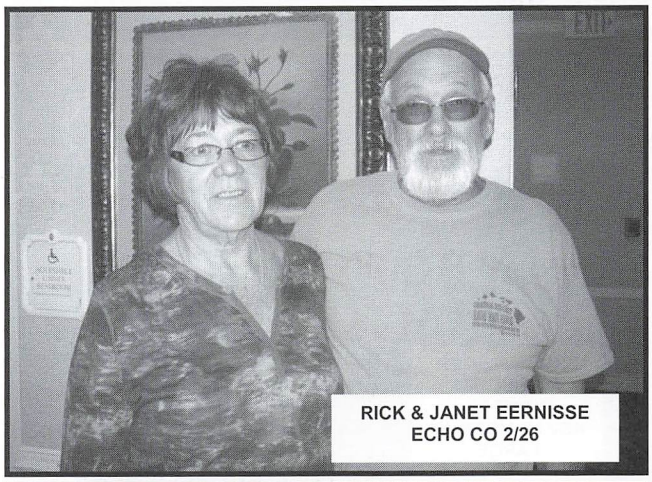
ROBERT & MARYANN
D'ELIA
HQ BTRY 1/13

KEN & LINDA MARTIN
BRAVO CO 3RD RECON
KSV MEMBER AT LARGE

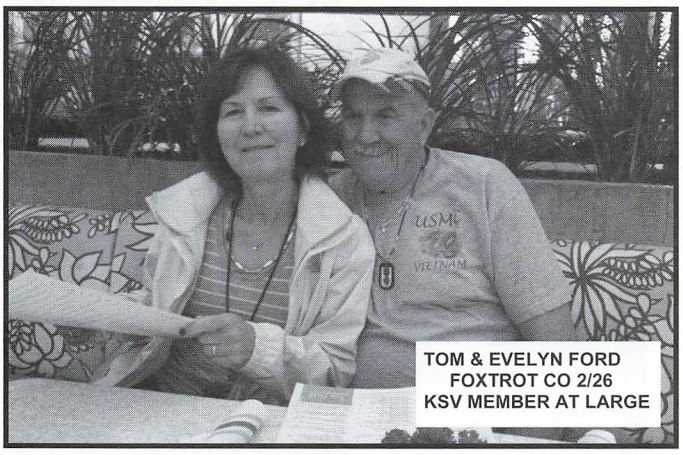
ALEX & BARBARA
SADOWSKI
H&S CO 2/26



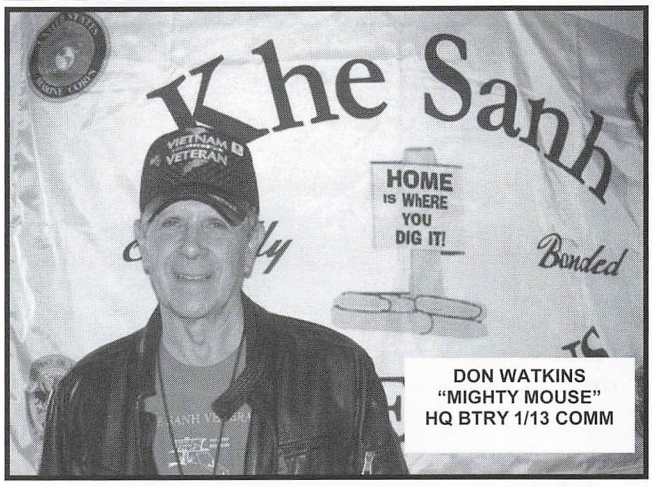
CHARLES & AUDREY RUSHFORTH
USAF 20TH TASS



RICK & JANET EERNISSE
ECHO CO 2/26

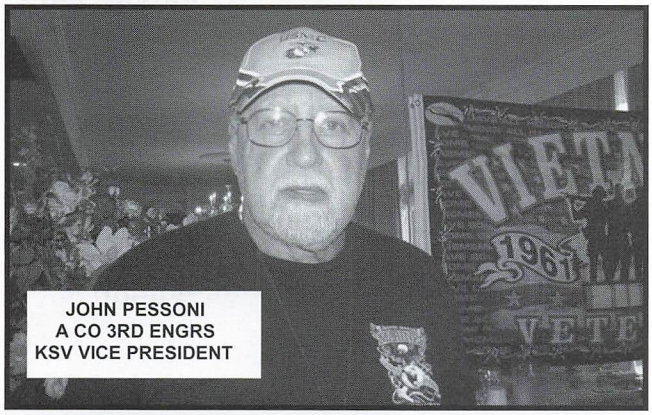


TOM & EVELYN FORD
FOXTROT CO 2/26
KSV MEMBER AT LARGE



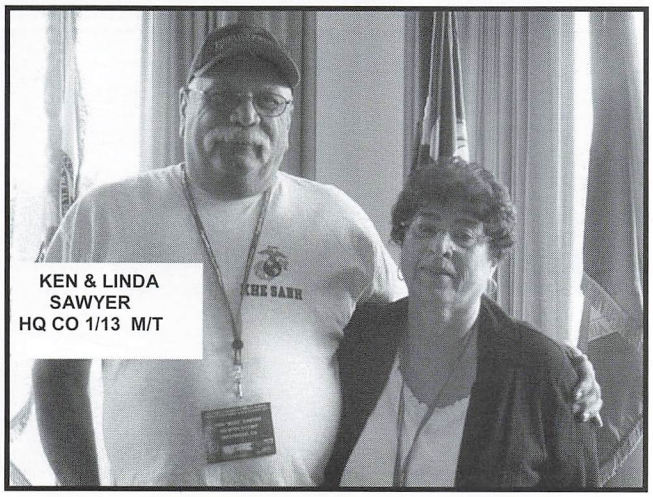
DON WATKINS
"MIGHTY MOUSE"
HQ BTRY 1/13 COMM

THOMAS JOHNSON
USAF B-52 PILOT
456TH BOMB WING

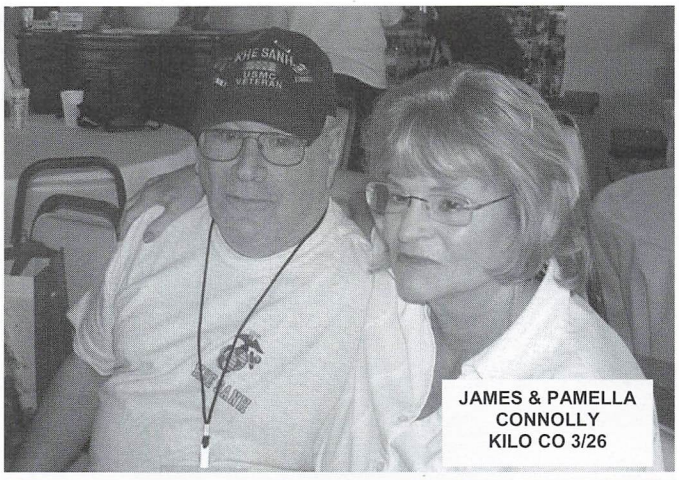


JOHN PESSONI
A CO 3RD ENGRS
KSV VICE PRESIDENT

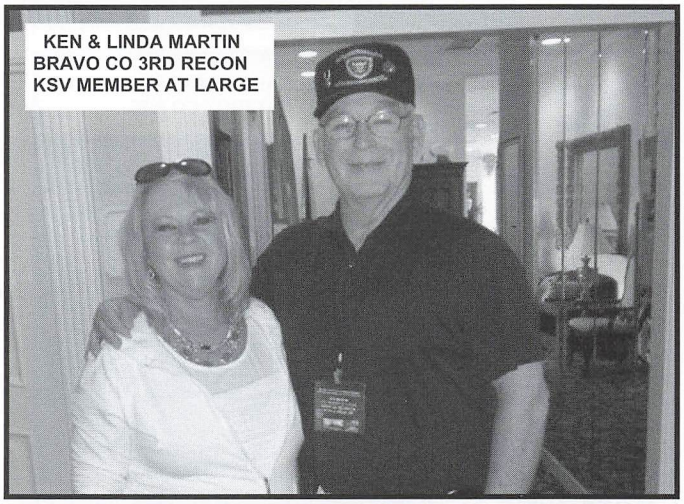
TOM EICHLER
E CO 2/26 HILL 861A
KSV PRESIDENT &
TREASURER



KEN & LINDA
SAWYER
HQ CO 1/13 M/T

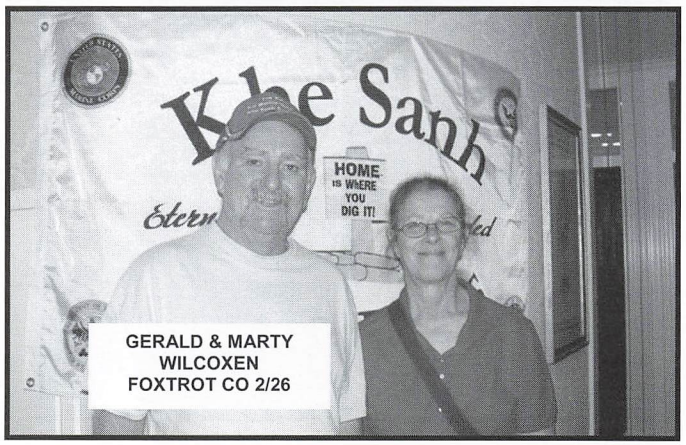


JAMES & PAMELLA
CONNOLLY
KILO CO 3/26



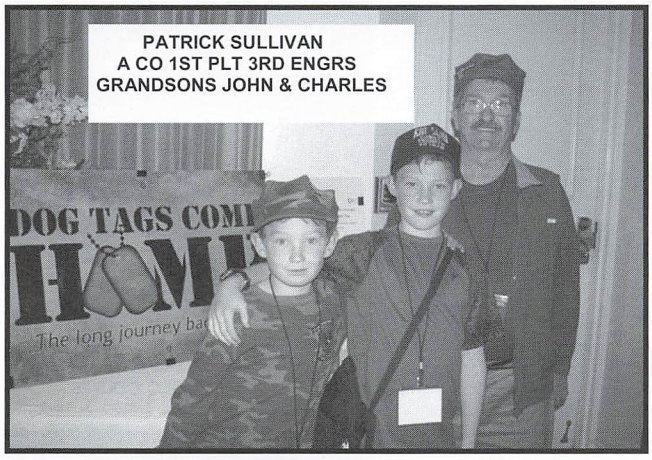
KEN & LINDA MARTIN
BRAVO CO 3RD RECON
KSV MEMBER AT LARGE

MARCO & MONICA
SOTO
ALPHA CO 1/26



GERALD & MARTY
WILCOXEN
FOXTROT CO 2/26

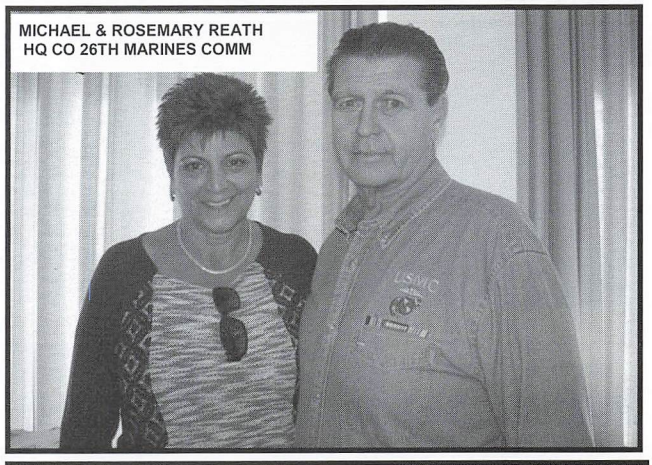
KHE SANH VETERANS ENJOYING THEMSELVES & MEETING NEW FRIENDS



PATRICK SULLIVAN
A CO 1ST PLT 3RD ENGRS
GRANDSONS JOHN & CHARLES

JOHN & GUINN WOLFE
3/26 SCOUT/SNIPER
9TH MAB

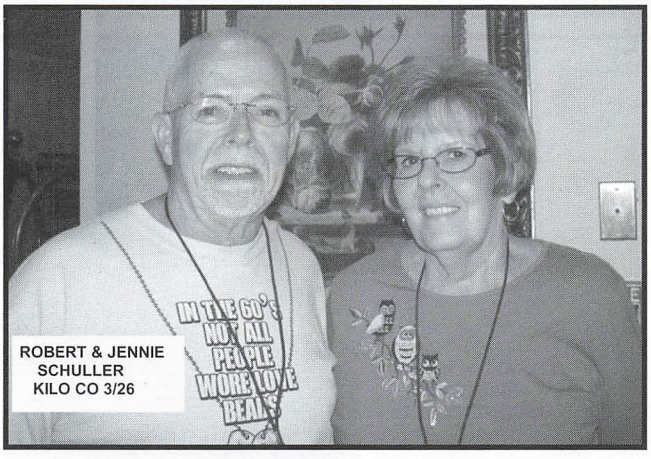
RICHARD & JERRYNE SOTO
FOXTROT CO 2/26



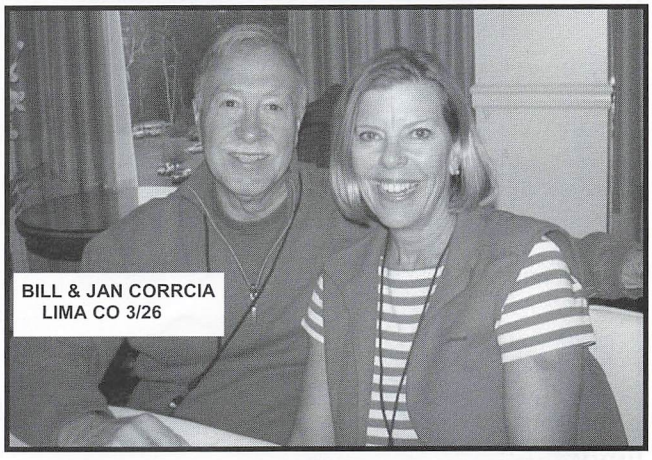
MICHAEL & ROSEMARY REATH
HQ CO 26TH MARINES COMM

BENJAMIN & JACQALINE
LEITH
GOLF CO 2/26

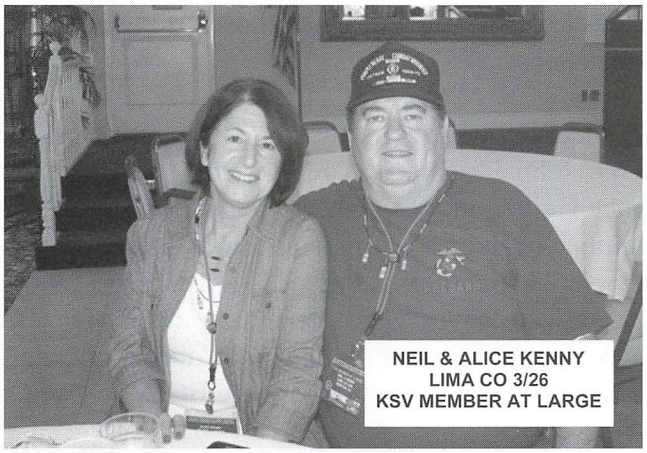
THOMAS & CARRIE
JOHNSON JR.



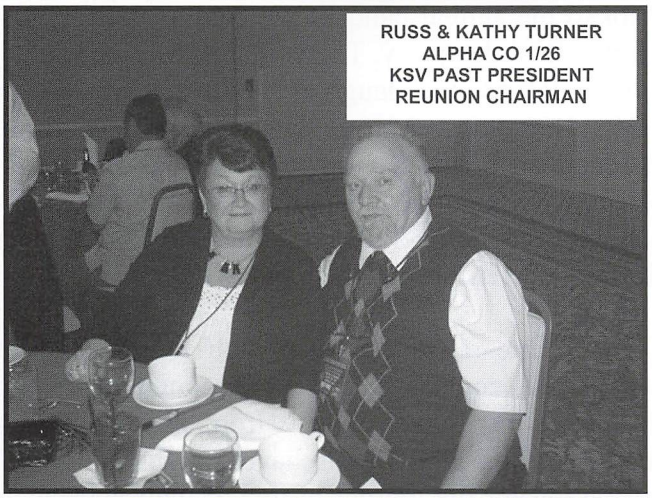
ROBERT & JENNIE
SCHULLER
KILO CO 3/26



BILL & JAN CORRCIA
LIMA CO 3/26

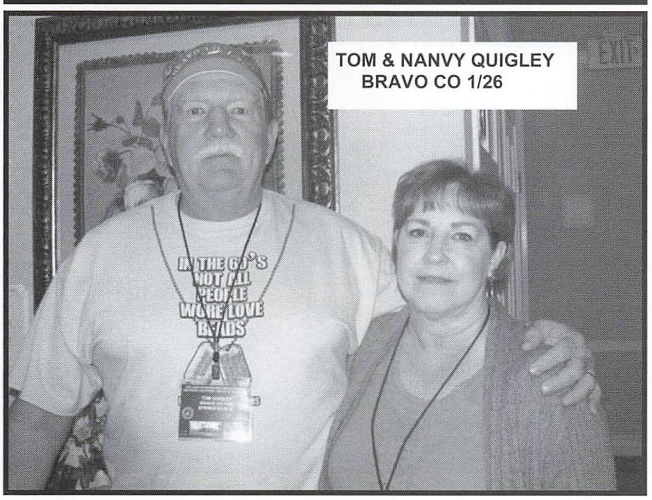


NEIL & ALICE KENNY
LIMA CO 3/26
KSV MEMBER AT LARGE

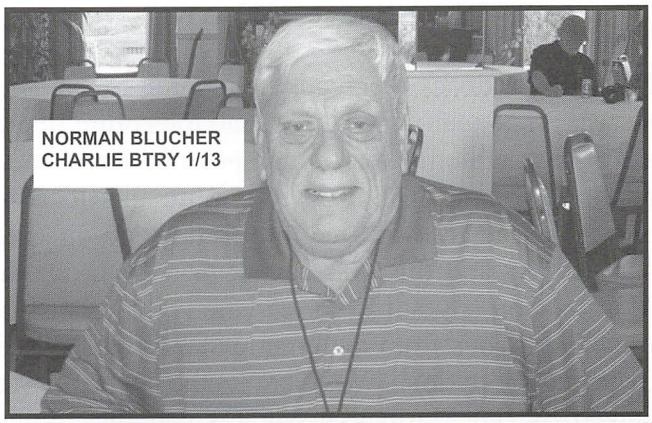


RUSS & KATHY TURNER
ALPHA CO 1/26
KSV PAST PRESIDENT
REUNION CHAIRMAN

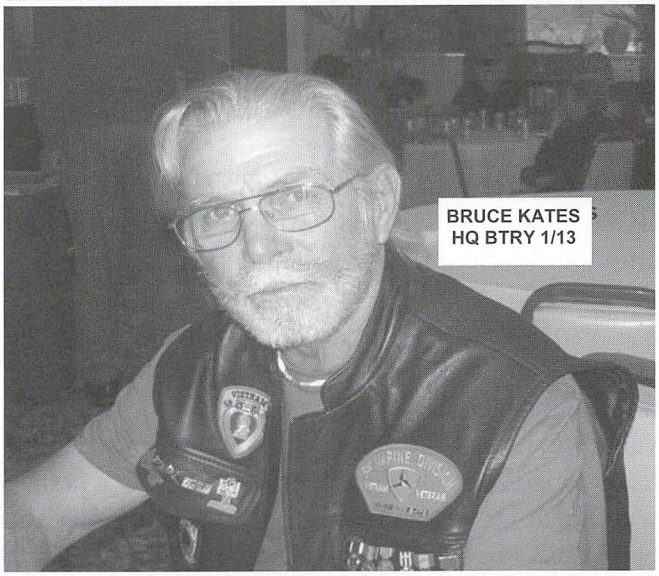
RICHARD & ANN BOTTARI
BRAVO BTRY 1/13



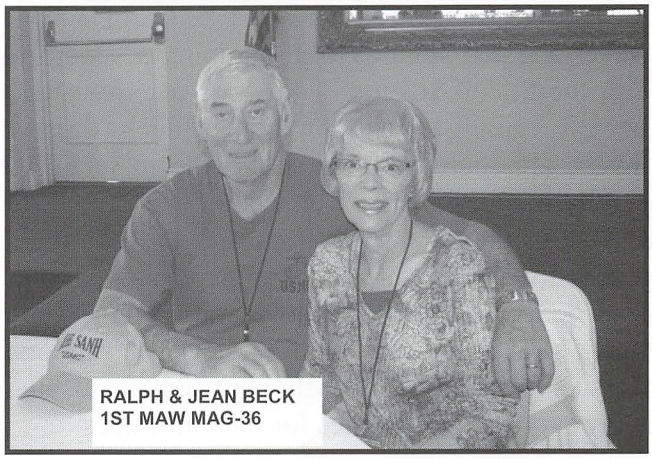
TOM & NANVY QUIGLEY
BRAVO CO 1/26



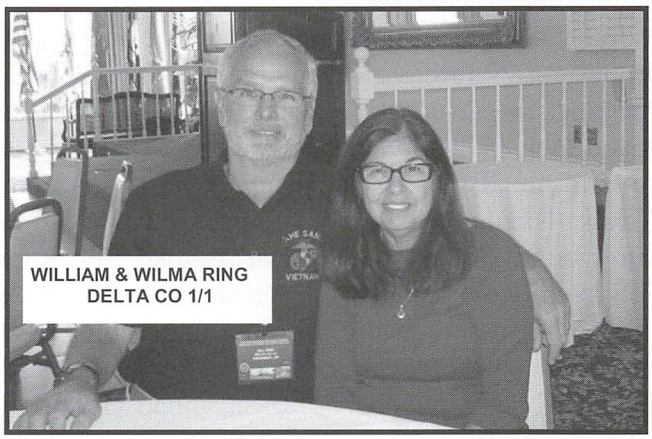
NORMAN BLUCHER
CHARLIE BTRY 1/13



BRUCE KATES
HQ BTRY 1/13



RALPH & JEAN BECK
1ST MAW MAG-36



WILLIAM & WILMA RING
DELTA CO 1/1

014 REUNION SUMMARY

From the feedback received, the reunion in San Diego was an unqualified success, and the committee as a whole is grateful to all who spoke or wrote to us about their time in San Diego. With this location and all it had to offer, we only scheduled one off-site activity and that was a visit to MCRD for the Marine Corps graduation ceremony. Most of us travelled by bus from the hotel, but a few used their own transportation. We were enthusiastically received by the Marines at MCRD and the civilian guests of the graduating platoons. In addition, we were recognized for our Khe Sanh service, which was met with an outstanding ovation from those in attendance on that Friday. Joining us for lunch on the base afterward, Commanding General, MCRD, BGen James W. Bierman Jr., delivered a heartfelt, emotional welcome to the membership.

Many of those in attendance at the reunion who ventured out from the hotel to see and experience all that San Diego had to offer utilized the passenger vans we rented for small groups. We particularly have to give a big thank you to Roland Kutzbach who spent the entire reunion chauffeuring the vans. Our Vice President John Pessoni as usual, did an outstanding job with the KSV PX. Carol & Dave Meyer assisted John as well as doing a superb job with the Silent Auction. Tom Ford also assisted in the PX, giving Big John some much deserved breaks, although there are some who maintain that Big John gets too many breaks as it is. LOL. The KSV PX, the Silent Auction, and the continuous generosity of the membership, contributed much needed funds for the Scholarship Fund. Rita & Merle Moritz and our main "get everything done," Michael Fishbaugh, tirelessly operated the hospitality room providing goodies for the multitudes.

While the membership gathered in the Hospitality Room on Saturday for the general membership meeting, the distaff side of the Khe Sanh Vets enjoyed their ladies luncheon. The membership voted to hold the 2016 Khe Sanh reunion in San Antonio Texas. The dates have not been set, but we can assure you it will not be in July or August! We know full well the meaning of "those repeating history..." The membership informed the reunion committee they wanted us to arrange a visit to Parris Island while in attendance in Savannah Georgia in August 2015. We will make those arrangements as soon as possible.

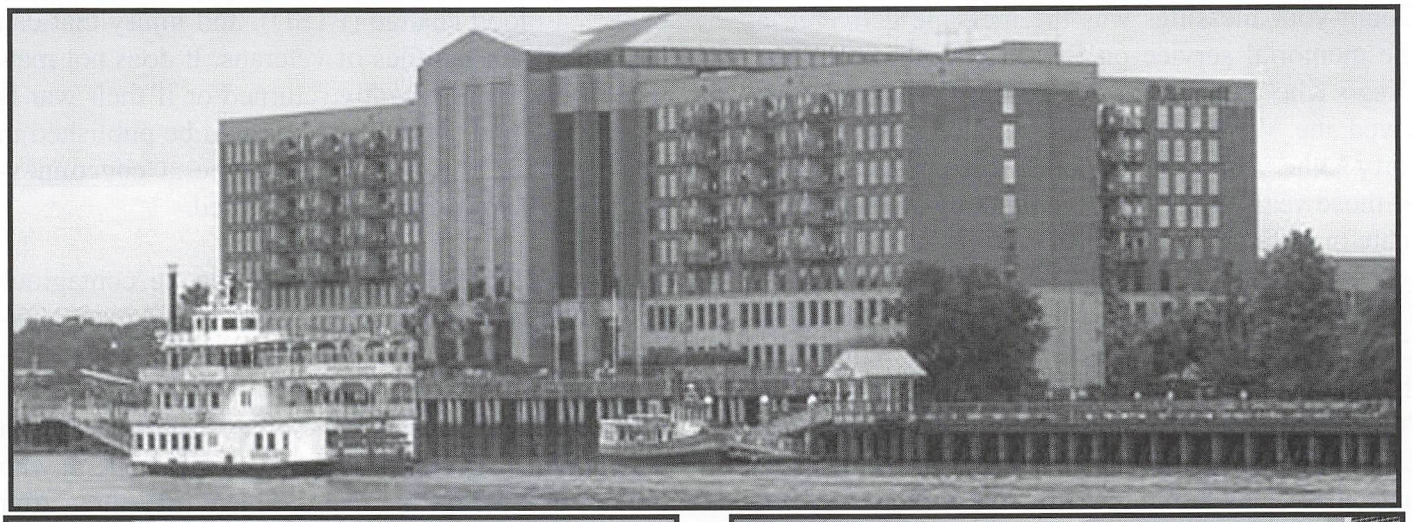
An election was held for positions on the KSV BOD. John Pessoni was re-elected Vice President. Bruce Geiger and Ken Martin retained their seats as Members at Large. Craig Tourte was elected Secretary, replacing Jack Haigwood and Wayne Deverney & Jose Reyes were elected to the BOD. Big thank you's to Jack & Leland who did an outstanding job during their tenure with the BOD.

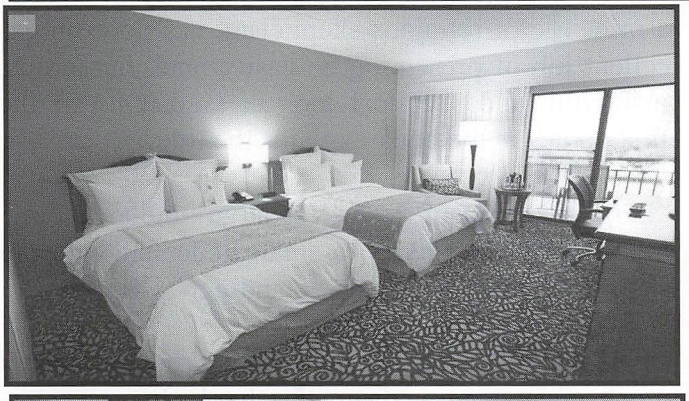
Prior to the annual banquet we held a small 239th-Marine Birthday party. The youngest Marine was Lauren Reyes, the daughter of Jose Reyes E Co 2/26. The oldest Marine was Ret. GySgt Ernie Hamner, an honored guest from B/1/1, 1st Transplacement Battalion, Okinawa 1958.We also honored Retired Colonel Thomas Johnson USAF, who flew B-52 Missions at Khe Sanh.

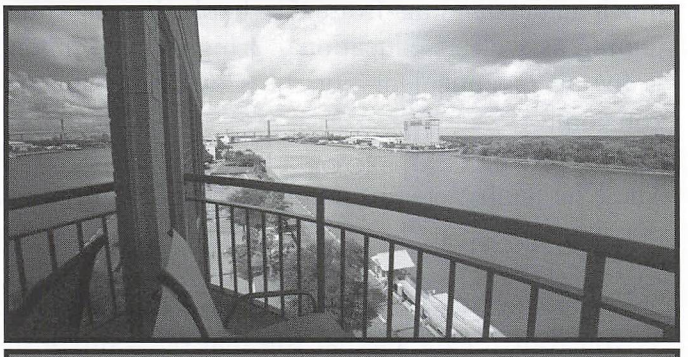
Craig Tourte ran a couple of golf tournaments at nearby golf courses. We want to congratulate him for protecting Steven Wiese from any California snake cousins who might have sought additional retribution for the murder of one of their cousins in Vietnam.

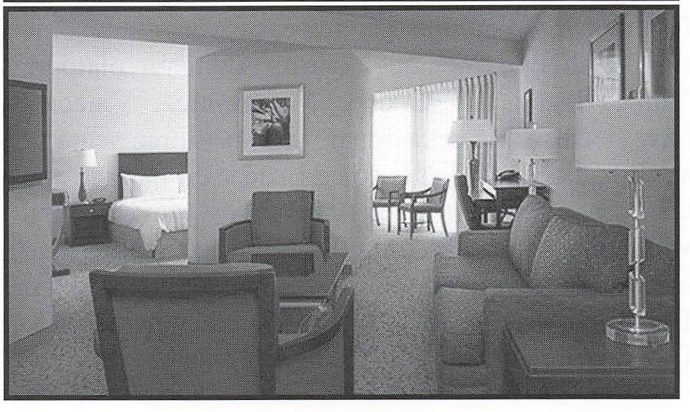
Last but not least, a real vote of thanks must go to the lovely Kathy Turner who is the glue in putting these reunions together. Her tireless efforts and her extraordinary patience and trouble-solving skills are the reason these reunions work at all. Every individual attending our reunions owes a great deal to her. Kathy: there was a certain amount of luck in getting out of Khe Sanh alive. That same luck includes having you and your talents to make these reunions the success that they are.

MARRIOTT, SAVANNAH RIVERFRONT HOTEL, 100 GENERAL MCINTOSH BLVD. SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31401. PHONE # 912-233-7722. 2015 KSV REUNION, SAVANNAH GA. AUG 16-23. RATES 105.00 A DAY FREE PARKING RATES GOOD FOR 3 DAYS BEFORE AND 3 DAYS AFTER REUNION DATES. PET FRIENDLY, HANDICAPPED ACCESABLE ROOMS









CHAPLAIN'S CORNER
WINTER 2015
COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS
By Khe Sanh Veterans Chaplain Ron Rayner

Count your blessings was the message delivered at the memorial service on Saturday at the 2014 San Diego Khe Sanh Veteran's reunion. We, who survived the Vietnam War and our lives for the last forty some years, should ponder the positive aspects of those years when negative thinking starts to dominate our life.

I have been diagnosed with Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder. If I allow it, negative thinking will fill my thoughts. I was introduced to a process called "thought stopping" during group sessions at the *Vet Center in Detroit, MI.* Simply put, I have to recognize that I am looking at life the wrong way and think about the positive things I have experienced and am experiencing. Some mistake I made years ago should not bother me today. I just have count my many blessings to get my mind headed in the right direction. Count your blessings if negative feelings control you. This is not very original but I know I need to be reminded quite often.

The Reverend Ray Stubbe provided a parable for the service. I had called him in Wisconsin to update him on the reunion and he told me the story about the minister who visited a parishioner that had not been to church in a long time. The minister simply went over to the fireplace and drew a hot coal away from the main portion of the fire. The coal cooled off and turned black. The minister then moved the coal close to the flames and it glowed again. The parishioner then stated he would be in church on Sunday. It is the same way with the reunions. The people at this year's reunion glowed with the fellowship of seeing old friends and making new ones.

I personally had the privilege of spending some time with two members of my Vietnam platoon, Vince Begay and George Miramontez. Vince, I have been seeing occasionally the last three years or so. It had been 46 years since I had seen George and we were able help each other clarify events that were foggy to both of us. Long buried feeling and events were relived. Second platoon Alpha First Battalion Twenty-sixth Marines meeting face to face once again was a fulfilling experience.

Connie Gibbons, wife of KSV Gregg Gibbon, spoke during the Memorial Service about her children's book, ***Mom Told Me You Were A Hero.*** This book will encourage discussion bridging generations about trauma induced anger, rage, lost memory, unexpected mood change (PTSD), and injury that can happen within families of veterans. It does not matter if the warrior recently returned or if their war is decades behind them. The book will be published in Spring 2015. Please contact Connie at **cogconnexion@gmail.com** if you are interested.

I personally believe that PTSD can be contagious and believe a book such as Connie's is long overdue.

Khe Sanh Veteran Larkin Spivey has published a new book, ***A Skeptic's Guide To God.*** Larkin, who did not become a Christian until age fifty-three after a prior life of religious skepticism, has done an excellent job of presenting an easily read, humorous, insightful, and skeptical look at God. One of the first quotes in the book explains the title.

"Large skepticism leads to large understanding. Small skepticism leads to small understanding. No skepticism leads to no understanding." Xi Zhi

I personally am a religious skeptic who has gained much understanding from this book. It was entertaining as well as educational. I highly recommend it for all, skeptical or not. It is available at amazon.com.

The Khe Sanh Veterans and their families are in my prayers.

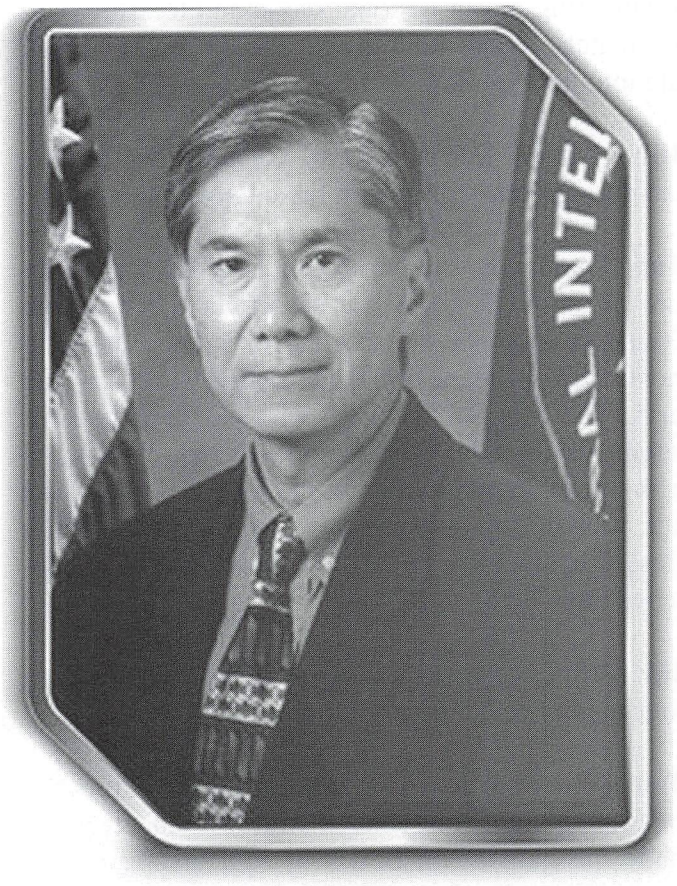
"Live in such a way that God's love can bless you as you wait for the eternal life that our Lord Jesus Christ in his mercy is going to give you."
Jude 21 (NLT)

KHE SANH VETERAN IN THE NEWS

HON LEE KHE SANH VETERAN
DELTA CO 1/26 & 1/13 FO
5TH 155

HON LEE: SCHOLAR, WARRIOR, SPY, TEACHER AND HEALER

An Interview by Bill Reddy, LAc, Dipl. Ac.



Bill: Please share with me a little about your childhood in New York.

Hon: It was fun. Growing up in New York's Chinatown was like living in a Chinese village that had been transplanted to a five square block area in southern Manhattan.

The thing I liked most about the city, and still do, is it's rich cultural diversity. The neighborhood was a culinary paradise, with Chinese noodle shops and Italian pizzerias within a five-minute walk, and great Kosher Delies a bit further north. I went to school on the lower East Side, a tough neighborhood and I took up martial arts to defend myself after getting beat up.

Bill: What's your martial arts background?

Hon: When I was a kid, my uncle claimed he knew kung fu. He showed me how to punch and kick and made me stand in a low crouch called a horse stance until my thighs burned and my whole body ached. But, I didn't take him or my lessons seriously because he didn't look like my cinema kung fu heroes. It wasn't until I got into high school that I took formal lessons, but in Japanese karate, not Chinese kung fu. The classes in karate seemed better organized than what I found in Chinatown. I continued training in the Marine Corps, but it wasn't until I moved to Washington D.C. that I returned to my Chinese roots to study kung fu. This was before anyone had heard of Bruce Lee and people thought kung fu was something you ate at a Chinese restaurant.

Bill: What were some of the highlights of your Vietnam service as a Marine?

Hon: Combat was a transformative experience. The man I replaced and the man who replaced me were both killed in action. So many of the men I had served with came home broken, physically or emotionally. I'm glad that today's veterans are returning to a warmer welcome than the hostile reception Vietnam vets received. But I feel we have to go beyond just saying, "thank you for your service." A 2008 RAND Corporation study concluded that 31% of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan suffered from PTSD, depression or traumatic brain injury. That's why I appreciate the work so many in our acupuncture community are doing to help veterans, and I applaud the Acupuncture Without Borders "Military Stress Recovery Project," and similar initiatives.

Bill: What drew you into working with the CIA?

Hon: Military service whetted my appetite for travel and adventure. After the exhilaration of combat, I wasn't ready to settle down to a routine 9-to-5 job. And who could resist playing James Bond? Having witnessed the futility of war and the strategic myopia that got our country entangled in the so-called Vietnam quagmire, I had hoped that by joining the CIA I could help provide U.S. policy makers with the intelligence they'd need to avoid the future

squandering of our national blood and treasure. Unfortunately, good intelligence doesn't always translate into good policy.

Bill: Can you tell me of any "close calls" you've had during your tenure with the company?

Hon: What you see on screen is a distorted picture of the CIA. I was a case officer. Unlike Tom Cruise, unless it's a war zone or hostile environment, CIA officers don't go around shooting bad guys. The agents I handled, who put their lives or careers on the line, were the ones at risk. I was never in mortal danger while on the job. The only close call was during a burglary, when I had a knife pressed against my throat. But that could have happened anywhere.

Bill: What were the circumstances surrounding your pursuit of Chinese Medicine?

Hon: When I was a kid, I got so sick my mother took me to the Chinese herbalist down the street and made me gulp down bowls of foul tasting decoctions that restored my health. It was like magic, something I knew i had to learn. Also, the founders of my martial arts systems were Chinese medicine physicians. I'd inherited a manual of "secret" formulas, so I felt obligated to learn enough so I could use them responsibly. Moreover, according to Chinese martial arts ethics, if you know how hurt someone, you should also know how to heal them.

Bill: Have you had any qigong exposure? If so, what style(s)?

Hon: I'd practiced qigong as part of kung fu training to develop internal power and as a form of self-cultivation. It wasn't until I took a required qigong class in acupuncture school that I discovered that it's a pillar of classical Chinese medicine and can be used to heal people. Since then, I've learned several styles and completed a three-year program in Medical Qigong Therapy. I personally practice and teach Spring Forest Qigong, created by Chunyi Lin, whose vision is: "A healer in every family and a world without pain." I recommend it to all my patients as a way to heal physically, emotionally and spiritually. What I like most about this particular style is that it's profoundly powerful yet very simple to learn. If it's not simple, my patients won't do it consistently (if they do it at all).

Bill: What skills in your previous careers have come in handy as a Licensed Acupuncturist?

Hon: I think good people skills, i.e., our ability to communicate and build rapport with others, are essential in being successful in any profession. It's a set of skills I tried to develop to be a more effective military commander, CIA manager and martial arts instructor and that I continue to hone as an acupuncturist. In treating patients, especially those with chronic illnesses, I'm more effective if I can change mental, emotional or spiritual patterns that may be at the heart of their problems. And to effect change requires gaining their trust and confidence.

Bill: What do you like most about being an acupuncturist?

Hon: I just published my memoir describing the seemingly divergent paths I travelled that finally lead to fulfilling my boyhood dream of practicing Chinese medicine. Along the way, I discovered that my true purpose in life is to serve others. Being an acupuncturist provides me the tools to do just that, to help people lead stronger, happier and healthier lives.

Bill: Any parting thoughts for our readers?

Hon: Albert Schweitzer said, "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve." I know my fellow acupuncturists feel the same way. That's why it's such privilege to work with and learn from a community of like-minded people who are passionate about helping others.

OBIT

LAST OF NAVAJO "CODE TALKERS" DIES IN NEW MEXICO

CHESTER NEZ, USMC

Reuters) - The last of 29 Navajo Americans who developed an unbreakable code that helped Allied forces win the second World War died in New Mexico on Wednesday of kidney failure at the age of 93. Chester Nez was the last remaining survivor of an original group of 29 Navajos recruited by the U.S. Marine Corps to create a code based on their language that the Japanese could not crack.

His son, Michael Nez, said his father died peacefully in his sleep at their home in Albuquerque.

"He had been battling kidney disease and it seems like the disease won," Michael Nez told Reuters. "He's the last of a great era, a great part of history."

About 400 code talkers would go on to use their unique battlefield cipher to encrypt messages sent from field telephones and radios throughout the Pacific theater during the war.

It was regarded as secure from Japanese military code breakers because the language was spoken only in the U.S. Southwest, was known by fewer than 30 non-Navajo people, and had no written form.

The Navajos' skill, speed and accuracy under fire in ferocious battles from the Marshall Islands to Iwo Jima is credited with saving thousands of U.S. servicemen's lives and helping shorten the war. Their work was celebrated in the 2002 movie Windtalkers."

The president of the Navajo Nation, Ben Shelly, said he had ordered flags to be flown at half staff in memory of Nez. "It saddens me to hear the last of the original code talkers has died," Shelly said. "We are proud of these young men in defending the country they loved using their Navajo language." Last November, the American Veterans Center honored Nez for bravery and valor above and beyond the call of duty, awarding him the Audie Murphy Award for distinguished service.

"I was very proud to say that the Japanese did everything in their power to break that code but they never did," Nez said in an interview with the Stars and Stripes newspaper the day before receiving the award.

Nez and his young fellow recruits were called communications specialists by the Marines and were taught Morse code, semaphore and "blinker," a system using lights to send the code they developed substituted Navajo words for military terms. CHAY-DA-GAHI, which translates to "turtle," came to mean a tank while a GINI, "chicken hawk" in English, became a dive bomber. America was NE-HE-MAH, "our mother."

The code talkers served in all six Marine divisions and 13 were killed in World War Two.

Nez also volunteered to serve two more years during the Korean War. He retired in 1974 after a 25-

year career as a painter at the Veterans Administration hospital in Albuquerque.

Shelly said the Navajo Nation was drafting a proclamation in honor of Nez that it plans to present, along with the Navajo Nation flag, to the code talker's relatives. Nez is expected to be buried at the Santa Fe National Cemetery next week.

(Additional reporting and writing by Daniel Wallis in Denver; Editing by Cynthia Johnston, Bill Trott and Sandra Maler)

RELATED ARTICLES

WASHINGTON -- The 29 U.S. Marines dodged bullets at the front -- first in the Pacific and then in Germany -- passing top-secret messages to each other in a code that the enemy couldn't crack.

The warriors, Navajo Code Talkers, relied on their their native language to develop the code, which helped to turn the course of World War II in the favor of the Allies. Of the original group, only one was still alive: Chester Nez.

On Nov. 9, the American Veterans Center honored Nez and six other veterans for bravery and valor above and beyond the call of duty during combat. Nez received the Audie Murphy Award for distinguished service in the military during World War II. "I was very proud to say that the Japanese did everything in their power to break that code but they never did," Nez said in an interview with Stars and Stripes the day before the award ceremony.

If the Code Talkers had been caught, he said, they would be tortured and their tongues cut out. They risked everything for the United States, even though they were raised in military boarding schools that prohibited them from speaking their native language.

Nez was raised at a time when the government required every Native American to have a census number and be accounted for. His grandson, Latham, described it as a "bad time" for Native Americans. Part of the effort involved taking children off reservations and putting them into boarding schools. Once there, children were forbidden to speak Navajo and were beaten or had their mouths washed out with soap if they were caught.

That didn't stop them from whispering Navajo to each other in secret, said Latham Nez, who travels with his grandfather helping him tell his story. Their language, however, would serve the United States well later, in 1942, when Americans were dying in rising numbers overseas, especially in the Pacific. The Japanese seemed to know what the U.S. military was planning well before it took place.

That's where the Code Talkers came in, recruited from boarding schools to join the Marines and use their unique skills to develop an unbreakable code to pass messages.

"Even some of our town tribe wouldn't understand what we were talking about," Nez said in the interview.

World War I veteran Philip Johnston, who came up with the idea to develop the Navajo Code in 1941, came to Nez' boarding school to recruit. The volunteers went directly into basic training without any goodbyes. Nez left behind his sister Dora, his father and his beloved grandmother, who wouldn't know he was fighting until two years after he left.

When the Code Talkers got out of the service, "they told us not to talk about what we did," Nez said.

The Navajo men received no fanfare, and many struggled, said Judith Avila, who co-wrote Nez's memoir "Code Talker: The First and Only Memoir By One of the Original Talkers of WWII" and helped Nez during the Nov. 8 interview.

Instead of people thanking them for their service, they faced discrimination and insults, she said. When Nez wore his Marine Corps uniform to register for his Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood -- required for all Native Americans -- the clerk told Nez he wasn't a real citizen.

"I wish I had my .45 with me," Nez recalled saying at the time, according to Avila, "because if I did, I would shoot you in the face."

Without support, suffering from what most now know to be post-traumatic stress, many Code Talk-

ers turned to alcohol and lived on the streets. There were about 420 Code Talkers that followed the original 29 into service. Of that group, about 30 are still alive.

Nez said he was one of the lucky ones. When he returned, he was embraced by his family. He got a job at the VA, which he kept until the 1970s.

Nez still has good memories of his time with the Marines, whom he said treated the Code Talkers very well. Latham Nez, who accompanied his grandfather to the awards, said the Marines saw the Navajo men as "damn good Marines" who were already warriors when they left for basic training.

A modest man, Nez doesn't talk a lot. His grandson said that he was raised not to discuss his life, which made the book very special. It's also what makes the Audie Murphy award so fantastic.

"His normal response was a big smile, and saying, 'Good, good.' I know deep down it's the story that's important (to him)," Latham Nez said.

AT SANTA FE NM. CEMETERY, A MONUMENT TO NAVAJO CODE TALKERS

Published: March 22, 2013

By T.S. Last

Albuquerque Journal, N.M

SANTA FE, N.M. — Wind is thought of as a spiritual force in Navajo folklore and tradition. It also represents a means of communication. So it was appropriate that the spring wind was blowing hard Thursday during the dedication ceremony for a monument honoring Navajo Code Talkers at Santa Fe National Cemetery.

Cliff Shields, the cemetery's director, also said the Santa Fe cemetery is a fitting site for the new memorial.

When he was approached by the New Mexico State Organization Daughters of the American Revolution, "I thought how appropriate it would be to have the monument in New Mexico," he said, which encompasses a significant portion of the Navajo Nation.

From Left, BGen Andrew Salas, Navajo Code Talker Bill Toledo, Santa Fe National Cemetery Director Cliff Shields and Daughters Of The American Revolution state regent Zadeea Jean Graham Harris unveil a new monument to Navajo Code Talkers on 21 March , 2013 at the National Cemetery

The Navajo Code Talkers served as secret weapons for American forces in the Pacific Theatre during World War II. Using variations of the Diné language, they communicated messages through use of a code in the Pacific war theatre. The code was never broken and the code talkers' contributions are said to have helped bring an end to the war and saved thousands of lives.

A plaque mounted on a stone foundation simply reads: "In honor of the Navajo Code Talkers for their sacrifice and courage to help ensure the United States' victory during World War II."

"It will pass on the legacy for what we were honored to do to our children, grandchildren and everyone down the line," said Roy Hawthorne, of Lupton, Ariz.

Hawthorne was one of three code talkers present for the ceremony. Another was 91-year-old Chester Nez, who grew up near Gallup and now makes his home in Albuquerque, the last of the 29 original code talkers recruited by the U.S. Marines to carry out the task.

Brigadier General Andrew Salas of the New Mexico National Guard gave the keynote address, saying "their contributions will not be forgotten and are treasured in our hearts now and always."

Zadeea Jean Graham Harris, the state regent for the Daughters of the American Revolution, said she always loved and respected the code talkers. Through her research, she found that there were no monuments for the Navajo Code Talkers in New Mexico and decided to do something about it. "When people heard who it was for, I had no problem raising money," she said.

There are other code talker memorials elsewhere, including in the Navajo national capital of Window Rock, Ariz.

Shields said the Santa Fe monument will serve as the centerpiece for a new memorial wall and walkway to be located at the cemetery. He said there's space for 20 other monuments at the site, some of which will recognize military service branches.

A STATEWIDE PROGRAM TO HONOR DISTINGUISHED VETERANS WAS SPARKED BY A SCHUYLER COUNTY MAN.

Vietnam veteran **Philip J. Swaney** of Cayuta braved explosions and gunshots to save seven critically injured soldiers during a heated battle on Oct. 14, 1967, in Vietnam. His bravery, Philip earned a Silver Star.

Fast-forward a few decades to his latest battle with the New York State Legislature where Philip and his late wife **Marilyn** advocated for a bill to allow Silver and Gold Star recipients to receive a distinguished emblem on state license plates.

The bill remained stagnant in the Legislature for years over a moratorium on distinctive plates. Only recipients of the military's highest award, the Medal of Honor, and the Purple Heart, awarded to the wounded, are allowed the distinctive plates, according to a news release from the state Assembly.

"We were surprised and disappointed that these brave men and women who fought for our nation were being deprived of this simple recognition for their exceptional deeds because of some legal dispute in Albany," Assemblyman **Marc Butler**, R-Newport, stated.

During a press conference held in November at American Legion Robert Lee Walsh Post 337 in Broadalbin, Marc announced a new state-wide program to honor distinguished veterans — window stickers.

The "Honor Our Heroes" program administered through the Broadalbin American Legion Post, will provide free of any charge to veterans distinctive, full-color window stickers designating the medal awards for Silver Star, Bronze Star, Navy Cross, Coast Guard Cross, Distinguished Service Cross and Distinguished Flying Cross. The stickers are available to any New York state veteran who is a verified recipient of the medal.

"Mr. Swaney played a key role in developing this award program," Butler stated. "He really pressed our office to make it a reality and his perseverance in moving this forward is remarkable."

Philip was the first to be honored in the new program. During a small ceremony at the news conference, Philip thanked three people. His father, who fought during World War II's Battle of the Bulge, his mother who instilled in him a sense of patriotism, and his wife who stood by his side until her death.

Details of the program will made available to all New York Legislators. To learn more, contact Marc's district offices at (518) 762-6486, (315) 866-1632 or (518) 455-5393.

2d BATTALION, 9th MARINES IN 1967 "HELL IN A HELMET"

By Beth Crumley
August 2011

Early last week, I received an email from an acquaintance of mine, an active duty Marine officer, who commented on my HMM-262 blog. He said he was pleased to see me writing on Vietnam, since the Vietnam veterans had been ignored, or held in disdain, for so long. He added that his father had been with Echo Company, 2d Battalion, 9th Marines in 1967. I was surprised to hear that, and a bit taken

aback. I knew that was a hell of a year for 2/9… Operation Hickory, Operation Kingfisher, heavy fighting in the hills around Khe Sanh Combat Base, and at Con Thien. My curiosity got the best of me, and I started to look more closely at battalion operations for the 1967 period…and it is an understatement to say it was a hell of a year for the unit that called themselves "Hell in a Helmet."

In the early spring of 1967, 2/9 was operating south of Hue. The commanding officer of Echo Company, Captain William B. Terrill, received word that his company was flying back to Phu Bai. Once there, he was briefed on the growing enemy presence around Khe Sanh Combat Base. Elements of the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines were reporting frequent contacts in the area, and it was believed that two NVA regiments were operating in the area. Echo Company was heading to Khe Sanh to reinforce the Marines already there.

Marines Of Echo Company, 2nd Battalion Ninth Marines on a sweep south of Hue, February. 1967.

Neither Captain Terrill, nor his seasoned commander of 1st platoon, Staff Sergeant Spencer Olsen believed the reports of heavy NVA activity in the area. Said Olsen, "It seemed every time we were briefed about a new operation, there were two NVA regiments waiting for us. All of these briefings seemed canned."

On March 7, much to the relief of the Marines of 1/9, Echo Company, 2/9 arrived at Khe Sanh. It was not long before they realized the reports of enemy activity in the area were not exaggerated.

Eight days later, on 15 March, SSgt Olsen received orders to conduct his second patrol. The first has taken Olsen and his Marines south of Hill 881S. This time, he was to scout the north side of the hill. The plan was to follow a trail west of the base, and

Marines of 2/9 move along a North Vietnamese trench, March 1967

in the course of a week, to cross Hill 861, and patrol the area north of 881S and west of 861.

Olsen's patrol, comprised of about 40 Marines, departed the relative safety of Khe Sanh Combat Base near dusk. Moving in a staggered column, Olsen halted the patrol about a quarter of the way up Hill 861, and took the radio handset to report in. He later said, "Vietnamese voices filled every frequency....There was just so much NVA radio traffic in the area that it was bleeding over onto all my frequencies." It was a portent of things to come, and it was, for the Marines, an uneasy, sleepless night.

On the morning of 16 March, the patrol continued its advance up 861. Cautiously moving through thick vegetation, the Marines could hear Vietnamese voices. SSgt Olsen halted the patrol and called for artillery support. Within minutes 105mm rounds impacted the far side of the hill. As the patrol continued, the trail leveled off below the crescent of hill before it descended down the west side of 861. The lead squad, led by Sergeant Donald Lord, disappeared from Olsen's sight. As they approached a fork in the trail, the point man, Private First Class George D. Johnson, asked "Which way?" Corporal Julian McKee pointed to the left. Thirty meters down the trail, they came to a second fork. As Johnson turned to ask which trail to take, he saw several hundred NVA. A blast of small arms fire killed Cpl McKee instantly. PFC Johnson was mortally wounded. As Private First Class Ivory Puckett watched his best friend dying, he opened fire. A momentary silence followed, then the hill erupted, spewing enemy fire on the Marines. Concussion grenades fell among them.

SSgt Olsen called for artillery support. Lance Corporal James Chase "started the rounds on the eastern slope of Hill 861 and walked them over the top." As the rounds exploded, Olsen made contact with Marine air assets operating in the area, and handed the handset to LCpl Chase. Chase, who had never directed an airstrike before, brought the jets in but twice called for them to abort. The jets came in for a third time and released canisters of napalm. To Chase, it seemed the canister were far too close. In a second, the landscaped changed from lush, green jungle to one of flames.

SSgt Olsen now began to concentrate on assisting his wounded Marines. One of his corpsmen was seriously wounded. The other, despite shrapnel wounded to his arms and legs, continued to treat the patrol's casualties. As medevacs were called in, Captain Michael Sayers, commanding Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, diverted a patrol and ordered them to Echo Company's position.

Olsen had succeeded in gathering most of his casualties around a suitable landing zone. As a CH-46, escorted by Huey gunships, landed, a mortar round exploded. SSgt Olsen was catapulted through the air. He said, "Wide streams of blood were running down both my arms. There was so much blood..." Wounded by shrapnel in both arms and the backs of his legs, he was told that seven wounded Marines had gotten out aboard the helicopter. Incoming enemy mortar fire had, however, wounded several more. He called for another medevac.

As the second helicopter landed, mortar rounds once again pounded the Marines. Said LCpl Chase, "I looked around. The chopper was gone...Several newly wounded guys staggered around the LZ, blood pouring from their wounds. It was horrible." SSgt Olsen was faced with a decision. Both times he had called in medevacs, the enemy had hit them hard, causing more casualties. However, there were simply not enough able-bodied men left to carry the wounded. He radioed Captain Terrill and told him they needed help.

By 1500, a column of Marines, a platoon from Bravo, 1/9 came into view. As they did, the unmistakable sound of incoming mortars was heard. The enemy fire had a devastating effect on the approaching Marines. As the smoke lifted, dead and wounded were strewn about the hill.

As the Marines worked to gather the dead and wounded into a perimeter, a third helicopter approached carrying additional troops from Bravo Company. One of them, Private First Class David Hendry, felt the helicopter shudder and saw holes appear in the fuselage. The CH-46 tumbled from the sky. It hit the ground nose-first, flipped and finally came to rest some 700 meters down the side of Hill 861.

Captain Terrill and his command group flew into the battlefield from Khe Sanh. Corporal Robert

This photo of Hill 861 was taken in July, 1967 but clearly shows the terrain in which 2/9 was operating

Slattery stated, "Dead and wounded Marines were everywhere. SSgt Olsen had that thousand yard stare of a man who's seen too much death and destruction."

It took the rest of the evening and into the night to evacuate the wounded. In the morning, helicopters arrived to take the dead. Subsequent patrols combed the area between Hills 881S and 881N. There was no sign of the enemy. They had simply vanished. Marine casualties totaled 19 dead, and 59 wounded, all of whom had belonged to Echo Company. Depleted by fighting, the company returned to Dong Ha on 26 March to rebuild.

In early May, Con Thien, south of the Demilitarized Zone, came under heavy attack. Enemy activity in the "Leatherneck Square" area intensified and while clearing Route 561 between Cam Lo and Con Thien, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines Made contact with a large NVA force. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) authorized the III Marine Amphibious Force to conduct ground operations in the south half of the Demilitarized Zone. The planned attacks called for combined USMC-ARVN attacks along parallel routes. Code names for the operation were Hickory for Marine forces, and Lam Son 54 for ARVN forces.

By mid-May of 1967, a large force of US and South

A wounded Marine is carried to a MedEvac during operation Hickory

Vietnamese troops were poised south of the Demilitarized Zone. In total, some eight Marine infantry battalions, including two afloat, and five South Vietnamese battalions (three airborne and two infantry) were ready to go on the offensive. Among those was the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, which had arrived from Phu Bai on 16 May.

Operation Hickory launched on the morning of 18 May, 1967. 2d Battalion, 26th Marines, and 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, under the command of LtCol John Peeler, were supported by tanks from Alpha and Bravo Companies, 3d Tank Battalion. As they moved northward from Con Thien, 2/26 made contact with a large NVA force, estimated to be two battalions, positioned in well-defended bunkers and trenches. The right flank came under blistering automatic weapons and mortar fire. Casualties were heavy and the Marines of 2/9 moved up to reinforce the flank, immediately engaging the enemy. As night fell, the Marines broke contact and pulled back to evacuate the dead and wounded.

That night airstrikes hit enemy positions and as the day dawned on 19 May, artillery fire fell on enemy defenses. Both battalions jumped of in the attack at 0700. Within minutes, the advance of 2/26 was halted from withering fire to the front and right. 2/9 moved forward against light resistance and was able to relieve the pressure on 2/26's right flank. By 1030, the Marines had overrun the enemy bunker complex and continued the advance.

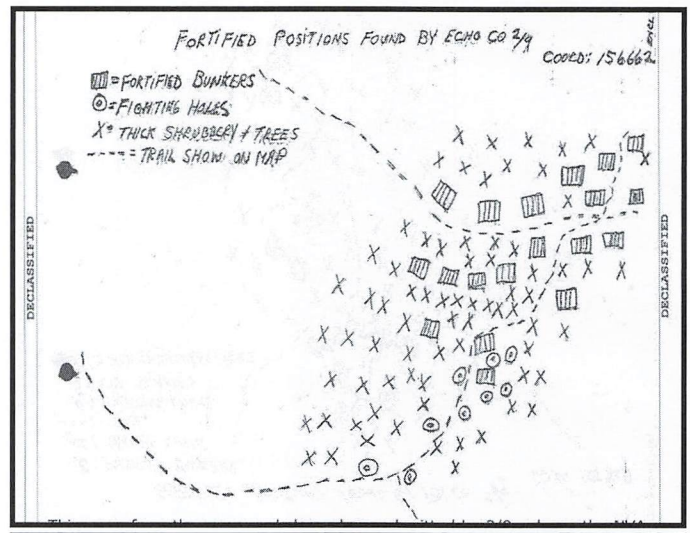
Three hours later, Company H, 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, on the easternmost flank of the advance came under heavy attack near the intersection of Route 606 and 561. Heavy automatic weapons and mortar fire emanated from the east. Shortly thereafter, they began taking heavy fire from a tree line 60 meters to the front. Several Marines in the point squad had been shot and were lying in the open. Corporal Robert Gillingham ran through savage enemy fire to rescue one of the wounded Marines. Hit three times in the effort, he dragged the man to safety, but later succumbed to his wounds. He was posthumously awarded a Navy Cross for his actions.

Tanks from Alpha Company, 3d Tank Battalion, were brought in to support the attack. Almost immediately the first tank, "Earth Moving Mama," was hit. The gunner was killed instantly, and the tank commander was mortally wounded. A second tank moved into the fray and was immediately hit by RPG fire, knocking it out of the battle. Captain Robert J. Thompson, commanding Company H, moved the entire company forward to retrieve the dead and the wounded. As the company pulled back, he called in supporting arms. The action left 7 Marines dead, and another 10 wounded.

The next day, 2/9 faced Gia Binh, an abandoned village some 2500 meters northeast of Con Thien, where the NVA has established an extensive bunker complex off Route 561. Accompanied by tanks, 2/9 started the attack at 0930. One flame tank torched the bunker while another fired canister rounds and machine guns. Surprising, enemy resistance was very light. The NVA had pulled back from their fortified positions around Con Thien.

The command chronology for the month of May states, "During Operation Hickory, well-equipped and well-trained NVA troops fighting from fortified bunkers and positions were encountered. These positions had interlocking fields of machine gun fire and defensive concentrations of mortar fire. Camouflaged and placed at strategic locations, they formed formidable obstacles to friendly offensive movement. "Casualties for the operation totaled 22 killed in action, and another 116 wounded.

By 28 July 1967, 2/9 found itself involved in Operation Kingfisher, yet another operation along the DMZ, designed to block NVA entry into Quang Tri



This map, from the command chronology submitted by 2/9, shows the NVA fighting positions during operation Hickory

Province. Reinforced by a platoon of tanks, three Ontos, LVTEs and engineers, the Marines moved north along Route 606. Companies E and G provided security on the flanks.

Moving through a narrow stretch of land bordered by the Ben Hai River on the west and north and a stream to the east, terrain dictated that the tanks remain on the road. Thick vegetation made movement on the flanks very difficult. Unbeknownst to the Marines, who would be forced to return by the same route, the NVA were already moving units into positions covering Route 606.

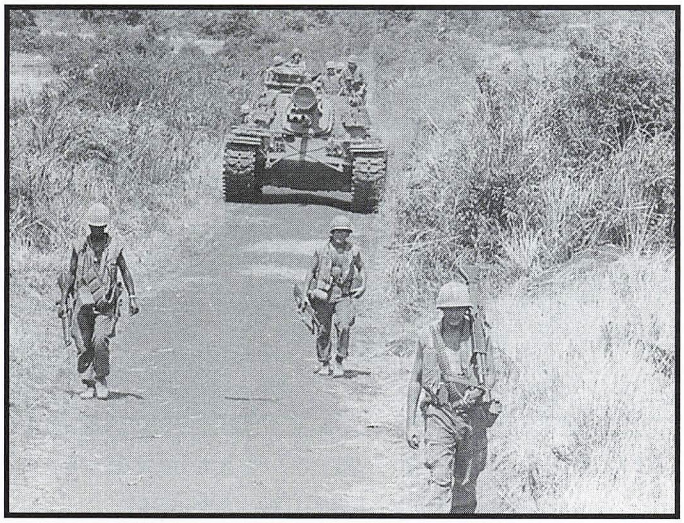
Marine of 2/9 during operation Kingfisher, north of Con Thien

On the morning of 29 July, 2/9 reached its objec-

tive. By late morning the battalion began moving south out of the Demilitarized Zone, led by Echo Company. At 1115, the enemy detonated a 250-pound bomb buried in the road, wounding 5 Marines. The engineers soon found a second bomb and destroyed it.

As the second bomb detonated, the NVA opened fire with small arms, machine guns and mortars, beginning a running battle that lasted until darkness fell. The NVA had established several strongpoints along the road. Some Marines dove off the road, only to land on NVA booby traps that had been placed there overnight.

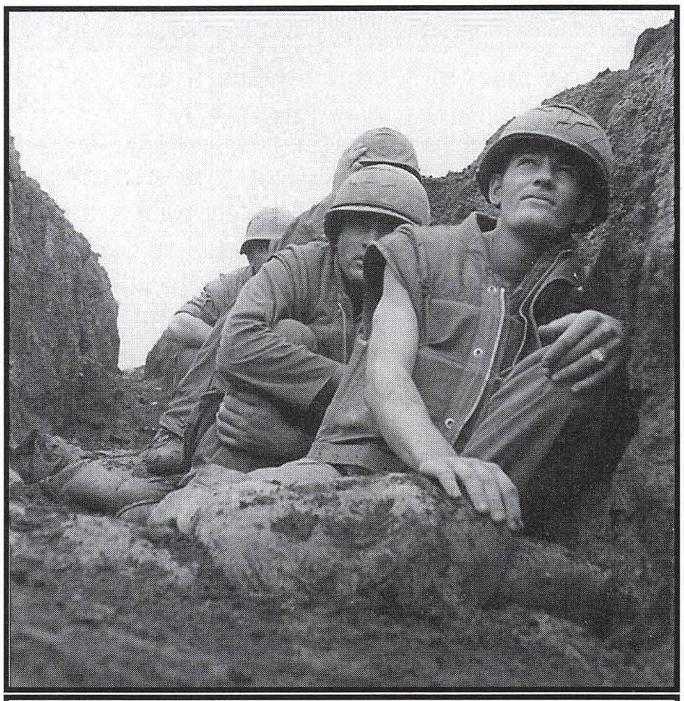
Given the situation, and the terrain, the tracked vehicles became a liability rather than an asset. Company F was ordered to establish a helicopter landing zone to evacuate the dead and wounded. When the tanks entered the area, the enemy rained down a tor-



During Operation Kingfisher, Marines were supported by Tanks of the 3RD Tank Battalion.

rent of fire. Machine guns, RPGs and mortar fire swept the entire landing zone. Corporal Miguel Rivera Sotomayor, wounded by shrapnel knocked out an enemy machine gun position. He braved the enemy fire to man an M-60 when the gunner was badly wounded. When he ran out of ammunition, he picked up a rifle and continud to fire before being badly wounded. (Corporal Sotomayor survived and was later awarded a Navy Cross for his actions.) In addition to the casualties they had already taken, another 7 Marines were killed, and another 31 were wounded.

By late afternoon, Echo Company and Command Group A managed to break through the enemy gauntlet. Two squads of Echo Company could not move due to intense enemy fire that had killed 2 Marines and wounded 9 others. Other companies of 2/9 were unable to move, pinned down by enemy fire and with too many casualties.



The enemy pummeled Con Thien with rockets, artillery & mortar fire

Hotel Company, commanded by Captain Frank Southard, pulled back to join with Company F. The two squads from Echo joined them, as did two squads from Golf Company. The remainder of Golf Company, bringing up the rear had successfully fought off the NVA during the day, but found themselves separated from the main body by 1000 meters.

Mike Company, 3d Battalion, 4th Marines moved back up the road to defensive perimeter. In the morning, meeting no resistance, they were able to link up with the remainder of 2/9. Once again, the NVA had disappeared into the jungle.

Helicopters began evacuating the wounded and the dead. The After Action Report submitted by 2/9 clearly states, "It is believed the mission of the enemy force was to isolate the battalion, separate the column and then destroy-as an initial phase in the long sought after victory over the forward Marine

Marines of 2/9 during Operation Kentucky, along the DMZ

outpost at Con Thien. His concept of operation was to conduct ambushes at several strong points, utilizing terrain features to his advantage, At these the enemy had pre-registered mortar concentrations. In all cases the strongpoints were covered by intense automatic weapons fire."

Ina three day period, 2d Battalion, 9th Marines had suffered the loss of 23 killed in action and 191 wounded. Those Marines who survived returned to the "Leatherneck Square" area harboring feelings of bitterness and betrayal.

Throughout August, the battalion operated in "Leatherneck Square," a free-fire zone bordered by Con Thien and Gio Linh to the north and Dong Ha and Cam Lo to the south. It was a relatively quiet time for the battalion. However, by September, enemy activity began to intensify around Con Thien. Said UPI photojournalist David Powell, "When I think of Con Thien, I get a knot in my stomach and I feel echoes of the fear I felt. God, it could be terrifying."

On the morning of 12 September, 2/9 was awakened by a barrage of 82mm mortar fire. Several Marines were wounded. As the helicopters arrived to medevac the wounded, the battalion was subjected to second barrage. Both the commanding officer, LtCol William D. Kent and his executive officer were wounded.

By 15 September, the battalion moved to some 2000 meters south of Con Thien, closer to the main supply route. Pounded by enemy fire, the Marines also endured heavy rains. Said Lance Corporal Jack Hartzel, "I don't remember a day in which we didn't get hit with incoming rounds of some sort. We also suffered something that was almost unheard of elsewhere inSouth Vietnam. It was called "shell shock" and it was not unusual. The constant pounding every day could make you do nuts. You would sit there on edge, wondering if the next round that came in would have your name on it. We were in holes in the mud. Our holes would fill with water; we'd have to bail them out four or five times a day. We also had immersion foot and your feet would bleed and hurt like hell. Then there was the damned mud! You walked in it, you sat in it, you slept in it

PFC R.L. Crumrine learned of his best friend's death during Operation Hickory

and you even ate it. There was just no escaping it." Enemy fire was so heavy, so constant, that the Marines of 2/9 was not regularly resupplied. Over the course of nine days, Con Thien was hit with more than thousand rounds of artillery fire, rockets and mortars. At one point they were forced to scrounge in their own trash pits for something to eat.

Throughout September, the enemy kept up the pressure and Marine casualties mounted. Con Thien averaged 50 wounded and 2 Marines killed by incoming every day. 2/9, now operating outside the wire, was taking almost as many casualties.

On the morning of 25 September, at 0715, Con

Thien was pummeled by hundreds of rockets, mortars, artillery rounds and recoilless rifle fire. 122mm rockets landed in the midst of 2/9. Said LCpl Hartzel, "The thing I remember about September 25 that really sticks in my mind is a picture of a Marine sitting in a puddle of blood and battle dressings on a poncho with his legs blown off from the waist down. He was numb from morphine and in shock from loss of blood. He was smoking a cigarette very calmly as if nothing has even happened. He was waiting for a medevac. He probably died on the shopper ride back...Our platoon arrived at Con Thien with 45 men. When we left we only had twelve. Now you wonder why we called it "The Meatgrinder!"

The following day, 2/9 was pulled out of Con Thien after two months in the field as part of Operation Kingfisher.

Late fall would find the battalion embroiled in Operation Kentucky, and once again, caught in a fierce daylong battle near Gia Binh, were they had faced the enemy in May.

It had, indeed, been a hell of a year for the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines. The coming year would prove just as difficult, if not more. The battalion would see action in Operation Scotland, the defense of Khe Sanh Combat Base. They would also see action near The Rockpile and Vandegrift Combat Base.

There is no doubt that those Marines who served in 2d Battalion, 9th Marines were extraordinary. Those who survived lived together, fought together, and all-too-often bled together. I find myself reminded of the Saint Crispin's Day speech in Henry V:"From this day to the ending of the world, But we in it shall be remembered; We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; For he to-day that sheds his blood with me Shall be my brother;"

Let us remember those who served with 2/9. Let us remember their hardships and their sacrifices. And rest assured, they will not be forgotten.

NEW YEAR'S EVE 1967

By Dennis Mannion

So, Kilo has been on 861 for almost a week since our arrival on 26Dec67, and there has been a long-range patrol (over 3000 meters, reinforced platoon) and a short-range patrol (smaller sized and less than 800 meters) every day starting on the 27th. As the FO team, my RTO Dave Kron and I go on all the long-range ones, and New Years Eve day was no exception. Instead of west or north, we go south this time over to the 689 ridge line and back.

31Dec67 starts out sunny, partially cloudy, and surprisingly cool, and as we slog south through the elephant grass, Dave and I occasionally smile to each other. Man, do we have a New Years Eve feast planned for that night. Back in our above-ground bunker, we've set aside the last of our home-packaged Christmas goodies as well as "select" C-ration items. As soon as this F'in patrol is over, we can bring 1967 to a festive conclusion and ring in 1968.

By mid-morn we are across Hill 700 heading downhill towards 689 (photo), but by noon the sunlight & heat is intense and the humidity rising up from the wet leaves and grass is taking its toll on everyone. We're almost to our objective -- a small hill just in front of 689 -- when the column, now in almost triple-canopy jungle, just seems to stop. "FO up" is passed down the line, and Dave and I push past exhausted, sweat-stained, filthy Marines as we struggle to keep our footing in the soft ooze of the

the of the jungle floor. We reach the CP group and the Lt. in charge ask me if I know exactly where we were. (Kilo had some flat out, terrific LT's but this individual seemed to be the weakest and the least unsure).

I told him that I had a good idea, but that without getting onto some high ground and better visibility, I could not be sure. The only other solution was to conduct a fire mission using illumination rounds and adjust the parachute flare to pop overhead. Then have C/1/13 tell us where the target grid coordinates were plotted. I was told to give that a try as the patrol was NOT going any further. It took a bit of adjusting, but Charlie Battery gave us a good reading on our location. As we progressed back to the north and northwest -- you do not want to retrace your steps at all -- it became clear to me that we were not making significant progress and that we were using up a lot of precious sunlight. Two or three times we stopped for many minutes at a time, and at one point in late afternoon I was again ordered to the front of the column. A Staff Sergeant now seemed to be in charge, and he asked me to speak on the radio with Kilo's CO back on 861. I was told in no uncertain terms to help the E-6 get us back "home." It was a long, drawn out afternoon as we pushed our way back towards 861. The shadows got longer and we were still 1200 meters out. Going faster -- uphill all the way -- was simply not going to work. Back on 861, Captain Jasper had to make a decision: Leave us out all night in a defensive 360 or fire illumination to light our way back. He opted for illum.

By 8:30 p.m. -- I know that's 2030hrs -- we were on the approach in near darkness to the ridge line 500 meters to the west of 861....still an hour away from relative safety. Despite the real danger of highlighting us for the NVA, the 60mm & 81mm mortar guys began to fire round after round of illumination. We scrambled, clawed, and staggered across the western ridge, but it was never a full-out sprint as there was the constant danger of leaving Marines behind in the dark. Illum is tricky in that it lights your way, but the flares swinging beneath their parachutes make the ground seem to sway and pitch like being on a ship. Very disorienting to say the least.

It was less than 2 hours before 1968 when Dave and I got thru the gate in our protective wire, and it was closer to midnight before we concluded our debrief at the CP bunker. We only had 15 minutes to celebrate the end of 1967, and there was no time, energy, or desire for food or festivities. We shed our 782 gear, and exhausted beyond all measure, wrapped ourselves in poncho liners, clicked our canteens together and wished each other Happy New Year. It was still 1967 when I was fast asleep.

At the point in the jungle near 689 when we turned back for 861.**HAPPY NEW YEAR** to all.

REPLIES:

NEW YEARS EVE 1967

I always thought you guys up front were lost when we left the gate. 3rd platoon weapons was always bringing up the a rear. We called those leading a lot of names that day and they wasn't nice.

HAPPY NEW YEAR. Posted on December 31, 2014 at 11:41:24 PM by **Edgar J. Mickelson**

NEW YEARS EVE 1967

Posted on December 31, 2014 at 08:17:35 PM by Doc Jim Thomas

Still the early days for me! Bunker building, listening to every story from OLD SALT Corpsman! Thoughts of what the year held for me! No way of knowing the treasures of experiences I would go through, nor knowing what GREAT Friendships would happen because of Khe Sanh! But here we are, just a few hours away from a New Year, and I'm able to look back and honestly be thankful that I met you guys! So **HAPPY NEW YEAR** to the most wonderful Guys on Earth!

Doc T.

CHANGES

ANDERSON, DAVID M.
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC M CO 3/26 2ND PLT
Address 2245 BLUEBIRD DR
MISSOULA MT 59808
Phone 406-728-0949
Cell SAME
Email DA2335123@BRESNAN.NET

ANDRES, GREGORY R
Nickname ANDY
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 1/26
81MM & S-1
Address 27215 SE 12TH PL
SAMMAMISH WA 98075-5964
Phone 402-278-0558
Cell Fax
Email GSANDRES@HUNTEL.NET

ANTOINE, GARY V
Nickname DOC
Branch/Unit USN B CO 1/26 2ND PLT HN
Address 40922 ACACIA LN
POLSON MT 59860 –7515
Phone 310-320-6324
Cell Fax
Email GARY551@EARTHLINK.NET

ARCHER, MICHAEL J
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC COMM 26TH MARINES
Address 10735 STONE HOLLOW DR
RENO NV 89521
Phone 775-827-5158
Cell Fax
Email ARCHER@APATCHOFGROUND.COM
Email ARCHERZ@SBCGLOBAL.NET

ARENDER, LOYDE P
Nickname SNAKE
Branch/Unit USMC K CO 3/26
Address 201 DOGWOOD LN
FARMERVILLE LA 71241-7641
Phone 318-322-1687
Cell Fax
Email KAYBRAN@WEBTV.NET

ASHFORD, RICHARD E
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC H CO 2/1 3RD PLT
Address 2151 INDUSTRIAL BLVD # 101
LAKE HAVASU CITY AZ 86403
Phone
Cell 928-266-7967 Fax
Email ENIRAM21@GMAIL.COM

ATKINSON, WALTER H
Nickname
Branch//Unit USMC G CO 2/26 WPNS PLT&
H&S 106's
Address 804 ARBOR GREENE DR
GARNER NC 27529
Phone 919-327-6479
Cell 919-274-4161 Fax
Email SSGTUSMCWALTER@AOL.COM

BAEHREN, STEPHEN S
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 2/26
FAC ATT TO E CO 2/26
Address 3963 W BANCROFT ST
TOLEDO OH 43606-2558
Phone 419-535-7177
Cell 419-340-7375 Fax 419-531-7222
Work 419-531-8243
Email BAHRENCO@GMAIL.COM

BAKER, STEVEN L
Nickname PHOTO
Branch/Unit USAF 600TH PHOTO
SQUADRON FAC DET 7
Address 9565 KEY LARGO DR
FAIRHOP AL 36532
Phone 251-928-6678
Cell 251-232-2223 Fax
Email SBAKER325@YAHOO.COM

BARBER, MICHAEL F
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC C CO 3RD ENGINEERS
1ST PLATOON
Address PO BOX 68890
TUCSON AZ 85739
Phone 520-638-7140
Cell 303-618-3517
Phone Wisconsin 715-282-6079
Email MFBARBER@EARTHLINK.NET

BATES, ROBERT G
Nickname BOB
Branch/Unit USMC W BTRY 1/13
4.2 MORTARS
Address 6149 FERRIS RD
EATON RAPIDS MI 48827-9658
Phone 517-663-2635
Cell 517-202-9812 Fax
Email lrbates113@gmail.com

BERG, DENNIS S
Nickname
Branch/unit USA 2ND BN 94TH
ARTY 175 MM GUNS
Address 7265 APPLEGATE DR
HELENA MT 59602
Phone 406-458-1153
Cell 406-422-3518 Fax
Email namvet-59501@yahoo.com

BERNAL, DANIEL C
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC 3/9 I CO 3RD PLT
Address 8438 VENTURA BLVD
SELMA TX 78154
Phone 210-332-8383
Cell 210-332-8383
Email GOBROWNS48@GMAIL.COM

BERSANO, JOHN J
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC D CO 1/26 3RD PLT GUNS
Address 515 CARLA DR
SHOREWOOD IL 60404
Phone 815-641-1108
Cell Fax
Email JOHN.BERSANO@YAHOO.COM

BUENROSTRO, JOSEPH L
Nickname SQUEAKY
Branch/Unit USMC B BTRY 1/13
Address 3080 ELEANOR ST
PORTAGE IN 46368
Phone 773-882-7007
Cell 219-448-3737 Fax
Email BUENOFISHING@AOL.COM

CARNAHAN, ROBERT
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC C BTRY 1/13
Address 12419 BEARTRAP LN
AUSTIN TX 78729-7938
Phone 512-388-4558
Cell Fax
Email

CARTER, DAVID O
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC C CO 1/9
Address 1419 CATALINA
LAGUNA BEACH CA 92651-3154
Phone 949-494-2847
Cell Fax
Email DCARTER799@AOL.COM

CASEY, MAURICE M (LTCOL)
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 1/9 81 MM & C
CO 1/9 2ND PLT
Address 100 CHERRY LANE
CAMPBELL CA 95008-3416
Phone 408-379-7270
Cell 408-923-8450 Fax 408-379-2316
Email RANCH672@COMCAST.NET

CAUSEY, HUBERT L (LTCOL)
Nickname LACE
Branch/Unit USMC MACTU-66/ 68 OIC
PROV MAG-39
Address 23068 BIG TEE DR
CANYON LAKE CA 92587
Phone 951-244-1603
Cell 951-249-6139 Fax 951-244-8744
Email HLC37@OUTLOOK.COM

CHOC, CHARLES W
Nickname WES
Branch/Unit USMC A CO 1/26 HILL 55
Address 2636 W CROWN KING DR
TUCSON AZ 85741-2568
Phone 520-797-2513
Cell 520-425-0233 Fax
Email W@CHOCS.US

COWAN, WILLIAM V III
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC I CO 3/26
Address 681 LIME MARL LN
BERRYVILLE VA 22611
Phone 540-785-5463
Cell Fax
Email WVC3@EARTHLINK.NET

CRAWFORD, DANIEL C
Nickname DANNY BOY
Branch/Unit USN MCB-5 SEABEES
Address 35 TRELLIS CIRCLE
SPRINGVILLE AL
Phone 205-577-1480
Cell Fax
Email DANNYBOYEIRE317@GMAIL.COM

CUMMINGS, MICHAEL D
Nickname MIKE
Branch/Unit USAF 20TH TASS
Address 655 ESSINGTON DR
ROUND LAKE IL 60073
Phone 217-414-3675
Cell Fax
Email CUMMINGS72@HOTMAIL.COM

DAVIS, CHARLES E III
Nickname CHARLIE
Branch/Unit USMC 1/26 X/O S3 C CO CMDR
Address SHELTER COVE LN
APT 262
HILTON HEAD ISLE SC 29928
Phone 803-939-1146
Cell 803-261-7138 Fax 803-261-7138
Email CEDAVIS3@AOL.COM

DOEHRMAN, DAVID
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC B CO 3RD RECON
Address 5424 HIGHVIEW DR
FORT WAYNE IN 46818
Phone
Cell 260-750-0223 Fax
Email DAVE@KHESANH.COM

DWORSKY, RICHARD F
Nickname DICK
Branch/Unit USMC I CO 3/26
Address 3264 MONTPELIER CT
ANCHORAGE AK 99503
Phone 907-344-7870
Cell 907-229-5603
Email RFDWORSKY@GMAIL.COM

FISH, JOHN L
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 3/26 ATTACHED TO KILO CO
Address PO BOX 4074
CANTON GA 30114
Phone
Cell 678-542-4848 Fax
Email JLFISHJR@YAHOO.COM

FROVARP, RAYMOND M
Nickname RAY
Branch/Unit USA FOB-3 SOG
Address 4072 ARDENWOODS DR
FAYETTEVILLE NC 28306-8344
Phone 910-425-1425
Cell 910-850-6023 Fax
Email RMFROVARP@NC.RR.COM

FULLER, JOSEPH H SR
Nickname JOE
Branch/Unit USMC HQ BTRY 1/13
Address PO BOX 863 ST RTE 30
NORTH BLENHEIM NY 12131
Phone 518-827-4392
Cell 518-231-2321 Fax
Email FULLERBARB61@YAHOO.COM

GILKEY, WILLIAM K
Nickname BILL
Branch/Unit USMC F CO 2/3 3RD PLT
Address 5953 AMOS AVE
LAKEWOOD CA 90712-1322
Phone 562-867-1163
Cell 562-480-8655 Fax
Email JLGILKEY@MSN.COM

GOULD, DAVID W
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC VMFA-314-122, FAC 3/26
Address 8901 WOODCREEK CIR
WILMINGTON NC 28411
Phone 910-319-7021
Cell Fax
Email DGOULD321@YAHOO.COM

GRAYEAGLE, JOSEPH G
Nickname CHIEF
Branch/Unit USMC 3/26 TAD 3RD RECON
Address 6351 RIVERSIDE DR APT 18
CHINO CA 91710
Phone 909-627-8653
Cell 909-703-9260 Fax
Email SKYWARRIORGYSGT@AOL.COM

GULLEY, JOHN T
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS ONTOS
Address 135 HOLLY BEND CT
BALLWIN MO 63021-6535
Phone 636-227-7539
Cell 314-412-2636 Fax
Email JOHNGULLEY@GMAIL.COM

GUESS, MICHAEL J
Nickname MIKE
Branch/Unit USMC C CO 1/9 2ND PLT
Address N 6060 HAMMER RD.
ALBANY WI 53502-9323
Phone
Cell 760-613-7141 Fax
Email SEMPERFIOSCARMIKE@GMAIL.COM

HAGAMAN, HARRY T (BRIG GEN)
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC C/O VMFA-323 MAG 13
Address 625 27-1/2 RD 253
GRAND JUNCTION CO 81506
Phone 970-241-0734
Cell Fax 970-241-0734
Email HARRYGRET@AOLCOM

HANNA, ROBERT W III
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC B CO 1/26 60MM
Address 1326 LOMEDA LN
BEAVERCREEK OH 45434
Phone 615-390-7660
Cell 513-400-1226 Fax
Work 615-885-7828
Email BHANNA@OVSSR.ORG

HIESHIMA, HOWARD Y
Nickname
Branch/Unit USA SOG
Address 5618 N RICHMOND ST 2ND
CHICAGO IL 60659-4825
Phone 773-767-5213
Cell 773-814-8095 Fax 847-251-3738
Work 847-251-3600
Email HHCNP1183@GMAIL.COM

HOLLOWAY, BENNY L
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC FLSG-BRAVO
Address 13 TALQUIN TRACE LN
SOPCHOPPY FL 32358
Phone 850-962-2358
Cell 334-798-1382 Fax
Email REDHORSE1225@GMAIL.COM

KERSHNER, JERRY L
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC 1ST MARINES S-4
Address 2025 LAKELAND WAY
EUGENE OR 97408
Phone 541-968-9925
Cell 541-915-1744 Fax
Email JERRY _KERSHNER@HOTMAIL.COM

KING, DANIEL F
Nickname DAN
Branch/Unit USMC K CO 3/4
Address 104 # 2 MEADOW RIDGE DR
HERMON ME 04468
Phone
Cell 207-478-4184 Fax
Email KILO3BRAVO@ROADRUNNER.COM

KUFELDT, EDWARD
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC VMO-6
Address 8200 CHANCERY CT
ALEXANDRIA VA 22308-1513
Phone 703-360-7873
Cell 703-250-1514 Fax
Email ED@KUFELDT.COM

LARSEN, LARRY L
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC SUB UNIT 5 COMM PLT
Address 4175 ROAD 351/2
GREYBULL WY 82426
Phone 307-765-2018
Cell 307-272-1010 Fax
Email LLARSEN44@TCTWEST.NET

MANN, RUSSELL S
Nickname RUSS
Branch/Unit USA FOB-3 SOG
Address 2338 SUNRISE DR
RENO NV 89509
Phone
Cell 530-412-1067 Fax
Email RMANNRN@GMAIL.COM

MARSHALL, EDWARD N
Nickname EDDIE
Branch/Unit USMC W BTRY 1/13 4.2 MORTARS
Address 1000 11TH AV N 132
N MYRTLE BEACH SC 29582
Phone 843-427-7815
Cell 843-315-4917 Fax
Email EMARSH1948@AOL.COM

MCINTYRE, CHARLES M
Nickname MIKE
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 1/26 81MM
Address 4601 NW 154TH ST
EDMOND OK 73013
Phone 405-664-8887
Cell Fax
Email MCINTYRECM@ICLOUD.COM

MCNEAL, DENNIS E
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 1/26 COMM
Address 26138 AVENIDA LAS COLINAS
HOWEY IN THE HILLS FL 34737
Phone 352-324-6181
Cell Fax
Email XDIPI@COMCAST.NET

MINK, JAMES B
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC G CO 2/26
Address 812 16TH ST CT N
PORT BYRON IL 61275-9448
Phone 309-496-2344
Cell 309-737-3724 Fax
Email MINKJC@YAHOO.COM

MOODY, FREDERICK A
Nickname RICK
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 3/26
Address 50 NEWMARKER RD
VERNON CT 06066
Phone 860-875-7148
Cell 860-214-1808 Fax
Email RICKMOODY46@YAHOO.COM

MYERS, JOHN D
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC 26TH MARINES SCOUT/SNIPERS
Address 705 TENNIS ST APT D 31
KERRVILLE, TX 78028
Phone 830-832-8473
Cell Fax
Email NO1MYERS@YAHOO.COM

NANGEL, JAMES T
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC E CO 2/26 HILL 861A
Address 1218 CONCORD AVE
DREXELVILLE PA 19026
Phone 610-789-2162
Cell Fax
Email ELSPARKOS1@HOTMAIL.COM

OKSNEE, CARL H
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO & A CO 1/9
Address 1566 TOWN RD BB
FLORENCE WI 54121
Phone 262-748-0032 SAME
Fax 262-748-0032 CELL
Email KSVETPX@AOL.COM

ORGAN, MICHAEL D
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC 5TH COMM
Address 182 COUNTRY CHARM RD.
MOUNTAIN VIEW AR 72560
Phone
Cell 810-305-0544 Fax
Email MDORGAN44@AOL.COM

OTOOLE, DAVID F
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC B BTRY 1/13
Address 109 HOLLINWELL
WILLIAMSBURG VA 23188
Phone 757-220-4715
Cell 914-319-5349 Fax
Email DFOTOOLE@GMAIL.COM

PAGANO, ROBERT E
Nickname PJ
Branch/Unit USMC B CO 3RD RECON
Address 286 DEPOT HILL RD
HENNIKER NH 03242-3290
Phone 603-428-7549
Cell 603-630-3524 Fax
Email TANGOYANKEE_LLC@YAHOO.COM

PELON, SHARON L
Nickname LYNN
Branch/Unit CIV HONOR OF JAMES
NEIL TYCZ KIA KSB
Address 6540 W ENGLISH MEADOWS DR
J202
GREENFIELD WI 53120
Phone 414-587-7922
Cell 414-587-7922 Fax
Email DIENTAE@YAHOO.COM

POGUE, GERALD P
Nickname POGO
Branch/Unit USMC M CO 3/26 F/O
Address 7534 BERNA LN
LAND O LAKES FL 34637
Phone
Cell 813-505-5053 Fax
Email POGUE. MAJOR@GMAIL.COM

RAGSDALE, HOMER C
Nickname CHIP
Branch/Unit USMC F CO 2/1
Address 14859 ROLLING RIDGE DR
CHINO HILLS CA 91709
Phone 909-229-8589
Cell 909-229-8589 Fax
Email HRAGS@MSN.COM

RAUCH, JOHN M
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC A CO 1/26 2ND PLT
Address 1933 RAINTREE AVE SE
PALM BAY FL 32909
Phone 321-373-2274
Cell 321-557-8798 Fax
Email KHESANH68@EARTHLINK.NET

RAY, MICHAEL A
Nickname DOC
Branch/Unit USN I CO 3/26 3RD PLT
Address 1425 N ZENITH AVE
DAVENPORT IA 52804
Phone 563-381-4117
Cell Fax
Email BMRSMIKE@YAHOO.COM

REYES, JOSE L
Nickname CISCO
Branch/Unit USMC E CO 2/26 HILL 861A
Address 26 RIDGE DR
HICKORY CREEK TX 75065
Phone 940-498-2221
Cell 940-808-9455 Fax
Email JSREYES79@YAHOO.COM

ROBERTSON, WILLIAM A
Nickname ROBBIE
Branch/Unit USMC FLC FLSG-A AMMO PLT
Address 2851 FOUNTAIN RIDGE RD
NORTH PRINCE GEORGE, VA 23860
Phone 804-458-4324
Cell Fax
Email warobbie@verizon.net

ROGERS, ROBERT H
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC HQ BTRY 1/13 S-4
Address 555 SUMMIT LN
EAST MARION NY 11939
Phone 631-808-3062
Cell 732-245-4751 Fax
Email SCHOOLHOUSELI@VERIZON. NET

ROUSE, EDWARD
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC GOLD STAR NEPHEW
ROBERT BRETT KIA KSB
Address 5628 TREVINO DR
MILTON FL 32570
Phone 850-393-3507
Cell 850-393-3507 Fax 850-626-9602
Work 850-623-3250
Email EROUSECPA@BELLSOUTH.NET

RUECKERT, JOHN G
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC B CO 3RD RECON
Address 2141 CASCADE CT
RICHLAND WA 99352-1801
Phone 509-375-0542
Cell 509-308-6908 Fax
Email JOHNGR@HOTMAIL.COM

SCHULLER, ROBERT L
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC KILO CO 3/26
Address 1557 REED AVE
SPRINGFIELD IL 62704
Phone 217-726-8909
Cell 217-494-0695
Email KILOCO3/26@GMAIL.COM

SEARING, EDWARD F (DR)
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC HMM-163-HMM-363
Address 3919 DUTCH CREEK LN
JOHNSBURG IL 60050-1084
Phone 815-344-5396 Fax
Cell 847-921-8464
Email EFSEARING@NETZERO.COM

SMITH, HENRY M MR & MRS
Nickname
Branch/Unit CIV GOLD STAR PARENTS
TERRY SMITH KIA KSB
Address 31 EXECUTIVE PARK DR
APT 132
HENDERSONVILLE TN 37075
Phone 615-242-5756
Cell Fax
Email

SOERENSEN, THOMAS K
Nickname KEN
Branch/Unit USMC A BTRY 1/13
& ALPHA -6 F/O TEAM I CO 3/26
Address 3295 HILDALE AVE
OROVILLE CA 95966
Phone 530-533-8566
Cell 530-282-9470 Fax
Email TK.SOERENSEN@AOL.COM

THIBAULT, RAYMOND
Nickname SGT T
Branch/Unit USMC B CO 1/9
Address 329 HCR 3372
HUBBARD TX 76648
Phone 903-738-3865
Cell Fax
Email TBOW10@OUTLOOK.COM

THORNTON, JAMES D
Nickname SPANKY
Branch/Unit USMC D CO 1/26
Address 407- FELLOWSHIP CH RD
SILER CITY NC 27344
Phone 919-663-3686
Cell Fax
Email JDONALD25@EMBARGMAIL.COM

THORPE, DONALD G
Nickname DON
Branch/Unit USMC TEAM CHIEF AN/TRC-97
RADIO RELAY ATT TO 26 MARINES
Address 261 SALEM AVE
PALM HARBOR FL 34684
Phone 727-729-8871
Cell 727-515-8032
Email bcecil@tampabay.rr.com

VANSICKLE, DONALD W
Nickname VAN
Branch/Unit USMC A CO 1/26
Address 6471 SW 80TH PL
OCALA FL 34476
Phone 352-445-0629
Cell
Email DEVROCKY@AOL.COM

VARGO, CLAUDE R
Nickname CHRIS
Branch/Unit USMC B CO 3RD TANKS
Address 204 WAGON WAY
BASTROP TX 78602
Phone
Cell 832-545-7600 Fax
Email CRVARGO@GMAIL.COM

WASSON, RONALD E
Nickname RON
Branch/Unit USMC HQ BTRY 1/13
5TH FAG 5TH PROVISIONAL
BTRY 155 GUNS
Address 5012 NW 61ST PLACE
OKLAHOMA CITY OK 73122
Phone 405-721-0301
Cell Fax
Email WAZOO-OKC@SBCGLOBAL.NET

WHITLATCH, SAMUEL E
Nickname ARIZONA
Branch/Unit USMC I CO 3/26
Address 1354 E FRAZIER RD
TUCSON AZ 85756
Phone 520-889-2174
Cell Fax
Email

WILKERSON, RICHARD J (LT COL)
Nickname DICK
Branch/Unit USMC SUBSCRIBER
Address 813 FAN PALM CT
SAN JOSE CA 95133-3006
Phone 408-453-0110
Cell 408-623-0943 Fax
Work 408-623-0943
Email JARHEAD05@AOL.COM

WILLIAMSON, JAMES B
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC 3RD BN RECON
& F/O C BTRY 1/13
Address 387 SANDPIPER DR
BOILING SPRINGS SC 29316
Phone 864-814-1806
Cell 864-415-0496 Fax
Email JIMBSON8@GMAIL.COM

WITT, EDWARD J
Nickname
Branch/Unit USN VO-67 FLIGHT SUPPORT
Address 2591 BUSBY RD
OAK HARBOR WA 98277
Phone 360-675-2055
Cell 360-929-0117
Work 360-679-3673
Email WITTEJ9220@COMCAST.NET

ADDITIONS

ALEXANDER, JAMES F
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 2/26 & G CO 2/26
Address 551 ROYAL POINCIANA
PUNTA GORDA FL 33955
Phone 941-505-4242
Cell Fax
Email JALEX65@CENTURYLINK.NET

ARRIAGA, RAMON
Nickname SPADE
Branch/Unit USMC H&S & F CO 2/4
Address 1715 NW 69TH TERRACE
MARGATE FL 33063-2426
Phone 954-353-9717
Cell 201-212-0016
Email JARHEAD301@GMAIL.COM

BERGREN, WAYNE A
Nickname BERGIE
Branch/Unit USAF FAC 01 BIRDDOGS
02A'S UNCLE MILTIES
FLYING CIRCUS
Address 5216 149TH ST SW
APPLE VALLEY, MN 55124
Phone 612-968-1669
Cell
Email ICUMCDUPPY@GMAIL.COM

BULLEIGH, ROGER A
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC MASS-3
KING LEAR BRAVO 3/5
Address 6201 WEST ORLANDO ST
BROKEN ARROW OK 74011
Phone 918-791-3600
Cell 918-519-9769
Email MABULLY2@COX.NET

CALDERON, DANIEL
Nickname KHE SANH DAN
Branch/Unit USMC HQDR 3/26 COMM
RADIOMAN
Address 801 W. COVINA BLVD SP 75
SAN DIMAS CA 91773
Phone 626-274-4814
Cell
Email WINDWALKERVN@GMAIL.COM

CAUGHRON, VIRGIL S
Nickname WOLFMAN
Branch/Unit USMC 1/11 HQRTS BTRY
Address 11739 RUSSET MEADOW DR
ST LOUIS MO 63146
Phone 314-432-4015
Cell Fax
Email blessthis4@earthlink.net

CLEVELAND, CORNELIUS C
Nickname NEIL
Branch/Unit USN VO-67 CREW-6
Address 592 EAST ST
WALPOLE MA 02081-3625
Phone 508-668-0662
Cell
Email NCLEVE1033@VERIZON.NET

DEVOE, BRYAN E
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC 5TH COMM & 2/7
Address PO BOX 390
TRUCKEE CA 96160
Phone 530-587-8101
Cell 530-320-8105
Email BRYANNE@PACBELL.NET

CONLON, JOSEPH M
Nickname PIG PEN
Branch/Unit USA CCN 5TH SFG FOB -3 VN 68
L/CPL USMC JUN 60- JUN 64
Address 196 WALNUT ST APT 1
MANCHESTER NH 03104
Phone 603-682-2884
Cell
Email

DONNELLY, WILLIAM G
Nickname BILL
Branch/Unit USMC D CO 3RD RECON &
A CO 1/9 ON HILL 869
Address 846 SUNNINGDALE DR
OCEANSIDE CA 92057-5022
Phone 760-721-3704
Cell 760-613-3704
Email

DUNAGAN, JOE H
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC
Address 1211 PIONEER CIRCLE
WATKINSVILLE, GA 30677
Phone 706-769-6273
Cell
Email

GRANQVIST, HANS G
Nickname
Branch/ Unit USMC HQ BTRY 1/13
Address NORDENS VAG 24
UDDEVALLA SWEDEN
S-45143
Phone
Cell 46 707-593-972
Email HANS.GRANQUIST@TELIA.COM

HAFNER, FREDRICK P
Nickname
Branch/Unit USN H CO 2/3 HN
Address 4000 DRYDEN DR
NORTH OLMSTED OH 44070
Phone 440-864-8880
Cell Fax
Email FPHAFNER@AOL.COM

HANSEN, DAVID L.
Nickname
Branch, Unit USA 237TH MED DET
(DUSTOFF)
Address 638 CAJEHA TRL
IVINS, UT 84738
Phone 435-674-5515
Cell 435-668-0628
Email DHANSEN702@GMAIL.COM

JOHNSON, THOMAS L COL
Nickname
Branch/Unit USAF 3RD AD GUAM B-52
ARC-LIGHT
Address 8591 BAY HARBOR RD
ELBERTA AL 36530
Phone 251-987-5939
Cell
Email Y2K70@HOTMAIL.COM

KALAMA, JULIAN P
Nickname PUA
Branch/Unit USMC B CO 3RD RECON
Address 14269 TIBURON RD
SAN LEANDRO CA 94577
Phone 510-593-3699
Cell
Email JPK7309@GMAIL.COM

KILROY, JOSEPH M
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC 3RD ENGRS A CO 1ST PLT
Address 11549 CREEKSTONE LANE
SAN DIEGO CA 92128
Phone 858-375-7716
Cell 619-948-0515
Work 858-523-4000
Email JKILROY@CATHEDRALCATHOLIC.ORG

KLING, JOHN M
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 3/3
Address 28792 CALLE POSADA
SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO CA
Phone 949-248-8724
Cell 949-378-4711
Work 800-734-7111
Email JOHNKLING@YAHOO.COM

LANDON, CHARLES H
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC 2/26 HEADQUARTERS
Address 7 PECAN CT
LEWES DE 19958
Phone 302-542-1082
Cell
Email CHAS2508@GMAIL.COM

MANGUAL, JOSE A
Nickname TONY
Branch/Unit USMC L CO 3/36
Address 8054 MICHENER AVE
PHILADELPHIA PA 19150-1223
Phone 215-927-2445
Cell 215-264-2749
Email TONYMANGUAL@COMCAST.NET

MUSSO, MICHAEL V
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC 1ST MAW-MAG 16
Address PO BOX 4040
OCENSIDE CA 92052
Phone 877-520-1425 (Work)
Cell 760-639-2992
Email MIKE@CALLMIKE.TV

NELSON, GEORGE J
Nickname JOEL
Branch/Unit USA 1ST AIR CAV
Address 209 GARDNERS MILL RD
AUGUSTA GA 30907-3719
Phone 706-860-0615
Cell Fax
Email SNANDJN@AOL.COM

RHYNE, STEPHEN K
Nickname
Branch/Unit USA 326 ENGINEERS TF
Address 620 HEMPSTEAD PL
CHARLOTTE NC 28207
Phone 704-372-7088
Cell 704-331-7441 Fax 704-307-7280
Email STEVE.RHYNE@KLGATES.COM

ROBERTSON, ISIDOR
Nickname ROBBY
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 1/26
Address 3116 CORDOBA ST
SILVER SPRING MD 20904
Phone 301-572-1520 Fax
Cell 301-908-22022
Email BLACKBUD6@GMAIL.COM

SCHENCK, EDWARD C JR.
Nickname
Branch/Unit USA AMERICAL-GOER TRANS
Address 409 W NORT ST
ABINGDON IL 61410
Phone 309-462-2917
Cell 309-337-2731
Email EDBON66@FRONTEIR.COM

SMITH, JOHN W
Nickname SMITTY
Branch/Unit USA MACV SOG FOB-3 5TH SFG
Address 4315 SE 147TH DR
HAWTHORNE FL 32640
Phone 352-481-9330
Cell 352-281-1101
Email

STADIG, CONRAD E
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC HDQRS 1/11
Address 23937 CLOVER SPRING RD
TEHACHAPI CA 93561-9578
Phone 661-822-2643
Cell 661-333-9630
Email TMSTADIG@ATT.NET

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student **OR** who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post-secondary curriculum.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a 501(c)(19) charitable organization.

3. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/2015 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW;

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, -1MN 55128317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the **legal child or grandchild** of a paid up member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (See member definition in the KSV Association bylaws.) This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if family members are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children or grandchildren of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, character, citizenship, leadership experience and personal essay. A point selection system is included in the application forms.
Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities or in service to the community, church or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the ***"Red Clay"*** Newsletter.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The amount of financial award per applicant will be determined by the Review Committee's scoring results. The awards will be granted for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each continuous year applied.

Achievement Award Levels are:

The Col. David E. Lownds Award – for top achievement in Application Review (one award or tie)
The Sgt. Major James T. Gaynor Award – for high achievement in Application Review (5 awards)
The Col. William H. Dabney Award – for honorable achievement in Application Review (6 awards)

2. The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to the chairman's address on page one of this application.

Scholarship Guidelines and Purpose

1. The financial award is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees and books at an accredited institution of the applicant's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

3. The KSVSF Committee Chair and the Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the full years' award amount to the selected students upon final approval by the KSV President.

4. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of August of the coming school year.

5. **Scholarship Applications must be received by the Committee Chair on or before *MAY 1* of the school year applied for.** ***** (This is an important, NEW change to previous years)*****

6. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

7. Criteria: Point Selection System /Maximum of 100 regular points or 115 with bonus points
a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points max. (Please attach last school GPA transcript) example below:
A GPA of 4.0 x 10 = 40 points or a GPA of 3.0 x 10 = 30 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 30 points total
Description of personal experience in the following type of activities (Be specific!);

Student government = 10 points max.
Community related services = 10 points max.
Other (i.e. work experience, sports) = 10 points max.

c. KSV SCHOLARHIP ESSAY (250 words min. to 400 words max) on educational goals, career goals = 30 points max.
Over decades countless adjectives have tried to describe Khe Sanh Veterans and their historic accomplishments. Please review the six suggested adjectives below, select one or more that might relate to you in some manner to explain how this is evident in your life's experiences and will help you in meeting your educational and career goals.

TENACIOUS FAITHFUL UNDAUNTED STEADFAST RESOLUTE INNOVATIVE

d. Bonus Points = 10 bonus points for being a military veteran
= 5 bonus points for an accredited college GPA (Grade Point Average) transcript

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation

Application Form

Date of Application:_____

1. Applicant Information: (PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLY!!)

Name: last_____, first_____ MI_____

Address: street_____, city_____ state_____zip_____
Home phone:_____ E-mail address:_____
Applicant Birthdate:_____

2. KSV Sponsor Information (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran, Inc. Regular or Life Member):
Name: last_____ first name_____
Relationship to applicant;_____
Branch of service_____
Unit served at Khe Sanh_____dates served there_____

3. School Information: (School to be attending)
School name: _____
School Address: street_____, city_____
State_____ zip code_____
School Phone number:_____
Curriculum/intended course of study_____
School year to be funded_____

4. Applicant Personal History (Be specific!)
a. School Activities participated in: (athletics, publishing, music, art, communications, offices held, academic honors and prizes, student government participation, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. Community Activities participated in; (military service, volunteer service to community, church, government, environmental, health, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

c. Mailing Packet (Due *MAY 1*)!!

c. Mailing Packet (Due *MAY 1*)!!

*ENCLOSE THESE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS,
*A COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT,
*A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF,
*A PERSONAL ESSAY (250 WORDS min. to 400 WORDS max.) TELLING OF YOUR ACADEMIC, COMMUNITY, VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND CAREER PLANS.

!! BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL YOUR FORMS AND DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS BEFORE MAILING !!

I, SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE;

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant Actual Signature of Khe Sanh Veteran Parent or Grandparent

Note* IMPORTANT!! APPLICATION DEADLINE *MAY 1ST* OF THE SCHOOL YEAR APPLIED

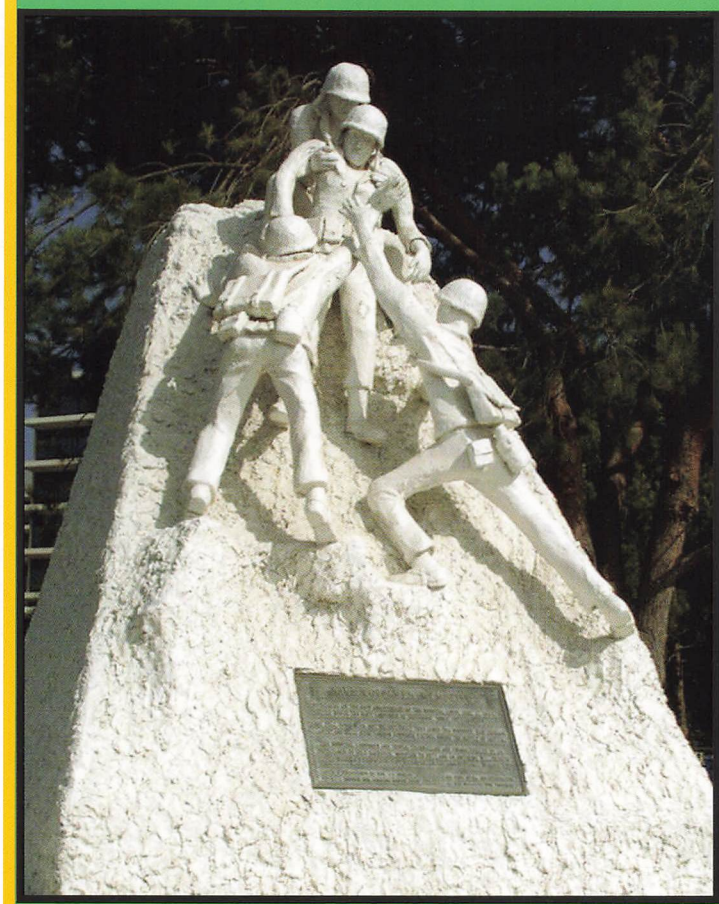
IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO KHE SANH VETERANS,INC.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Approved:

_____
Dan Fisher, Chairman, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Committee

_____
Tom Eichler, President Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

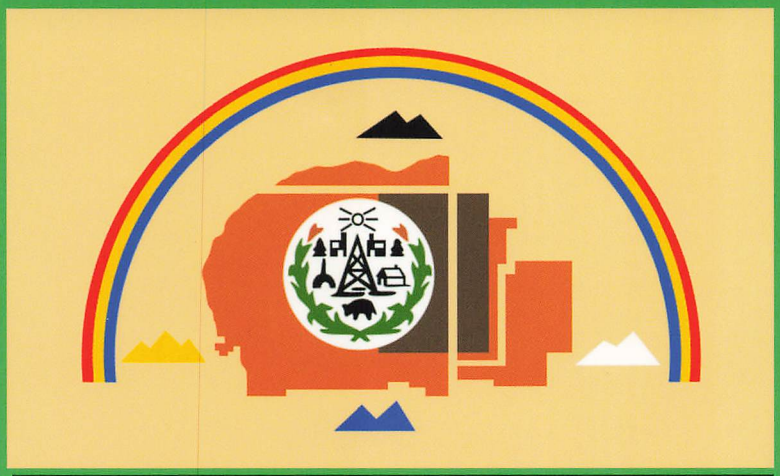


Raul Avina created a corpsmen monument in 1983. (Photo On Left) The monument was in front of the Naval Regional Medical Center Camp Pendleton for 31 years. Last year a new Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton opened on the base. Attempts to move Avina's sculpture didn't go well and a new monument was created from Avina's original. (Photo On Right) An unveiling was held Friday at the base. Many of Avina's family members were on hand for the event. Corpsman are the Marines "docs" in combat and have saved countless lives over the decades.

STORIES AND ADDITIONAL PHOTOS PAGE 29-32

NAVAJO CODE TALKERS MONUMENT DEDICATED 21 MARCH 2013, AT THE NATIONAL CEMETERY, SANTA FE NEW MEXICO

STORY & PICTUREs ON PAGES 77-80



NAVAJO NATION FLAG

SEAL OF NAVAJO NATION